

GLIMPSES OF PENANG'S PAST



Reprint of Articles from *JSBRAS* and *JMBRAS*

*Selected and Introduction by
Badriyah Hj Salleh and Loh Wei Leng*

ISBN 978-967-9948-62-2

Published by the Malaysian Branch of the
Royal Asiatic Society
© 2015 JMBRAS

All rights reserved. No part of this
publication may be transmitted or stored
in a retrieval system in any form or by any
means, electronic, mechanical, photocopy,
recording or otherwise, without prior written
consent of the Council of Malaysian Branch
of the Royal Asiatic Society

Visit our website: www.mbras.org.my
Email: mbras@tm.net.my

Reprint No. 33
Date: 2015 or

Printed by
Printer's Co. and Address...

CONTENTS

Introduction	v
Early Settlement	
1. Memoir of Captain Francis Light, Who Founded Penang by A.M.S.	1
2. Early Days In Penang by the Rev. Keppel Garnier	16
3. The Settlement of Penang by James Scott, edited by K.J. Fielding	26
4. Francis Light and Penang by R. Bonney	43
Administrative and Economic Development	
5. Plan for a Volunteer Force in the Muda Districts, Province Wellesley by the late J.R. Logan	70
6. A Note on Early Legislation in Penang by Tan Soo Chye	104
7. The Early Land Administration and Agricultural Development of Penang by K.G. Tregonning	116
8. Governor Bannerman and the Penang Tin Scheme 1818–19 by C.D. Cowan	136
9. Chinese-Malay Socio-Economic Networks in the Penang-Kedah- North Sumatra Triangle, 1880–1909: A Case Study of the Entrepreneur Lim Leng Cheak by Wu Xiao An	173
10. Ordering of Housing and the Urbanization Process: Shophouses in Colonial Penang by Mai-Lin Tjoa-Bonatz	207
People and Culture	
11. Memorandum on the Various Tribes inhabiting Penang and Province Wellesley by J.R. Logan	221
12. Buddhist Temples and Associations in Penang by Benny Liow Woon Khin	231
13. Malay Words in Baba Hokkien of Penang by Teoh Boon Seong & Lim Beng Soon	268
14. Malays and the Red and White Flag Societies in Penang, 1830s–1920s by Mahani Musa	288

INTRODUCTION

This selection of articles on Penang from very early issues of *JMBRAS*, and its predecessor *JSBRAS*, is aimed at making them accessible to the general reader who would have difficulty in locating those individual issues of the journal. In particular, many would be hard pressed to acquire the earlier articles, especially those contained in *JSBRAS*, now out of print.

As the objective is to make available articles from the earlier journals, most of which can only be bought in specialist antiquarian bookshops, or at flea markets where second hand items can be found, those in more recent issues are not included as they are available for purchase. Consequently, there are gaps in the coverage as particular topics and aspects of history, which can be found in the later issues, are not part of this selection.

As we turn to Penang and its history in the pre-independent era, we need to continually switch between the local and the regional as a colonial perspective necessarily requires locating the local within its region, and within the empire. Themes of commodity production, of the promotion of commerce, among other considerations, were important concerns in territorial acquisition. This is by no means an ad hoc measure but part and parcel of wider processes of imperial expansion as the Penang experience will serve to illuminate in an examination of the factors in the East India Company's calculation to make it a British possession. Unavoidably, the interaction between local and global dimensions also came into play as impulses emanating from the metropolitan centre in Europe form part of the narrative.

Long-distance trade¹ has been of significant proportions for Southeast Asia, an integral location in east-west maritime routes since the early centuries of the first millennium when the overland 'Silk Road' was no longer safe for travellers from circa third to seventh centuries CE till powerful Muslim and Chinese dynasties emerged to provide for safe journeys (Hall 2011, Park 2012). What merits mention is that Kedah ports – appearing in records as early as the seventh century with Chinese pilgrim Yiqing's visits to Kedah in 672 and 689 in journeys to and from Buddhist sites in India – were

in use before Penang under the East India Company (EIC) became the port of choice in the northern Straits of Melaka (Sen 2006).

Indeed, along the lines of Geoffrey Gunn's *History without Borders: The Making of an Asian World Region, 1000-1800*, which speaks to the fluidity and ambiguity of physical and cultural boundaries in the pre nation-state era of Southeast Asia (2011, 2), this scenario resonates with the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural make-up of port cities like Penang. Their cosmopolitanism lend themselves to microhistories of different communities (for example, essays by Garnier, Logan, Liow), to topics on cross-cultural encounters (Wu, Teoh and Lim, Mahani Musa), and to narratives which blend the local with transnational spaces. The final articles relate consultation with senior officials of the EIC in India and London – besides Skinner, Scott, Bonney and Cowan, other essays which touch on the framing of policies in Penang that inevitably required the sanction of higher authorities are the articles by Tan Soo Chye on law and by Tregonning on land administration. In Wu's essay, in addition to an examination of Anglo-Siamese relations, there is an overlap with the second theme where Chinese business links with Malay rulers are traced.

The first section on 'Early Settlement' comprises three articles from contemporaneous writers, Allan Maclean Skinner, Resident Councillor of Penang (1887-1897), Reverend Keppel Garnier who served during the 'Early Days' as Colonial Chaplain at Penang from 1911 to 1936, and James Scott, Francis Light's partner, with an introduction by K. J. Fielding. The first presents a blow-by-blow account of Light's exertions from 1771 towards British acquisition of a base in insular Southeast Asia and his administration of Penang until his death in 1794. Scott continues the narrative on the conditions in Penang from 1794 in his report to Henry Dundas, President of the Board of Control, which, together with the EIC Court of Directors, were the two bodies in charge of Indian affairs in London. Scott begins in praise of the 'founder' and his achievements before making a case for the company's continued backing for the settlement as a marine and mercantile port "Eastward to the Bay of Bengall", rather than the Andamans, acquired by the EIC in 1787. Scott, the acknowledged leader of the mercantile community, tasked to voice its anxiety over the rumour that the company might pull out of Penang, as yet unable to be self-financing let alone turn a profit, provides

a reference to the economic motives and the naval and security dimension of empire which were expected of Penang.² On a lighter note, with the briefest mention of some notable Asian personalities – Nacodah Kechil, [Low] Amee – Rev. Garnier commented on the goings-on within European social circles, their baptisms, marriages, deaths, a veritable who's who and a sketch of the pecking order!

The fourth essay, a scholarly effort by Rollins Bonney from his larger study on Kedah, presents an opposing version to the favourable picture on Light's efforts drawn from the first three. Not all Europeans were supportive of every British measure and we learn that there were those who were critical of the EIC's policy and of Light's role vis-a-vis Kedah, namely J. Anderson (1824), P. J. Begbie (1834), J. H. Moor (1837) and F. Swettenham (1907). Indeed, Bonney's bibliographical references supply the reader with the range of requisite historiography for this early period, from nineteenth-century authors to the historical scholarship up until his own study. The title of his monograph, *Kedah, 1771-1812: The Search for Security and Independence* (1971), is an apt inference to the perspective of the Kedah rulers besieged on different fronts: the Siamese overlord in the north, with demands to attack Perak and to contribute to Siam's expedition against Burma, and in the south, the Dutch and the Bugis.

From these four articles, the following locations and peoples crop up in discussions in terms of interaction and exchanges: Penang's hinterland and neighbours – from the north-western littoral of Southeast Asia (Burma, Siam, Sumatra) down to the eastern archipelago (the Malay Peninsula south of Kedah to the Moluccas); west to report to and consult with the Governor-General in Calcutta, as well as with the Court of Directors in London; and east to respond to the competition from European rivals, the Dutch in Batavia and the French in Indochina, including mention of China, with its perennially attractive market and source of the fabled silks, ceramics and tea.

The second section provides a picture of how the 'business of empire'³ could be served by the provision of the essential infrastructure of law and order so as to meet the objective of attracting trade and settlers, not to mention maintaining colonial rule. Of interest is K. G. Tregonning's assessment, from his review of the exchanges between Light and Bengal, that, "As with the ad-

ministration of justice, so with land administration. Bengal was indifferent..." Tan Soo Chye's "Note on Early Legislation in Penang" reveals that, due in large part to the administrative machinery being grossly understaffed, coupled with the fact that "many systems of law were in force" before the first Charter of 1807 which "seemed to have been but rarely acted upon" (Kyshe 1885, 13),⁴ the following observation by John Anderson, Secretary to Government, 1826-1828, well acquainted with legal issues in that era, is thus not surprising:

When the Court of Judicature was first established in Penang in 1808, its population amounted to 21,965 souls. The administration of the laws had, in the preceding twenty years, been very lax and ineffective, so much so that the subjects were too apt to take the law into their own hands (1840, vol.31, 176).

On the question of security, the absence of a full-time Police Commissioner as late as 1857 - the Resident Councillor in charge of the police as well as serving as judge, with Penang remaining the judicial centre of the Straits Settlements until 1856 (Turnbull 1970, 37) - speaks volumes on the state of affairs. It also explains the need to consider a volunteer force for Province Wellesley, with J. R. Logan submitting a plan to the Lieutenant-Governor in 1867 to address the lawlessness encountered by the rural populace. What may also have prompted the requirement of a police force was the growth in population (many crossing the border from Kedah after the Siamese invasion in 1821) together with the development of sugar plantations from the 1820s by Chinese planters, and from the 1840s by European planters.⁵

Certainly, the situation with regard to law and order was unsatisfactory in the early years when commerce (read the China trade) was a priority with the idea of a naval shipyard in Penang eventually abandoned in 1807, Trincomalee⁶ preferred.

As for matters relating to economic development, this was equally crucial for the new territory's long-term well-being. K. G. Tregonning traced the haphazard process towards the setting-up of a mechanism for land administration and the related agricultural development to supply food for

the settlement and for “ships bound for China”. In the first forty years, the experiment with cash crops met with “failure and frustration” (Cowan 1950, 53) starting with pepper (successful for the first ten years until 1806), cotton, coffee, which to some extent met with better prospects, betel nut, spices (cloves and nutmeg). However, what is clear is that the transformation of Penang’s landscape, from jungle to agricultural, thereafter urban, had started in 1786 for cultivation of the daily requirements of the inhabitants.

In order for Penang to meet the EIC’s goal to facilitate the China trade, a sound material foundation was essential. Hence, in addition to efforts to develop agricultural production, both for consumption and for sale, it was hoped that Penang would become a commercial centre, and benefit from a steady inflow of products from its hinterland for re-export to markets further afield. In light of this, when problems arose in the form of a decrease in the supply of tin from the Malay peninsula, Governor Bannerman decided to intervene in spite of the EIC policy of free trade⁷ and minimal governmental interference in economic matters. C.D. Cowan’s essay, “Governor Bannerman and the Penang Tin Scheme 1818-19”, recounts the EIC’s rare attempt to trade, abandoning its practice of letting private enterprise bear the risks of trade. While Bannerman’s aspiration of Penang becoming the “great tin mart of the East” was not met, Penang’s entrepot trade thrived.⁸

Supplying empirical evidence of Penang functioning as a centre for the distribution of foreign goods and the collection of Southeast Asian products for transshipment to markets further east and west, Wu Xiao An’s essay, “Chinese-Malay Socio-Economic Networks in the Penang-Kedah-North Sumatra Triangle, 1880-1909: A Case Study of the Entrepreneur Lim Leng Cheak”, presents an example of Chinese business ignoring national boundaries. Drawing on scholarship in Southeast Asian studies from the 1970s to conceptualize historical units of analysis beyond the nation-state, Wu posits the need to acknowledge the Atjeh-Penang-Kedah and surrounding states as a geo-economic entity - with the current resurrection of growth triangles in ASEAN endorsing the usefulness of investigating broader economic zones.

Mai-Lin Tjoa-Bonatz’s “Ordering of Housing and the Urbanization Process: Shophouses in Colonial Penang” examined a “residential-cum-commercial” type of building, which addressed the housing and business require-

ments of Asian settlers to provide a slice of urban and architectural history against some noteworthy developments. Evidence of its existence since 1793 and its subsequent transformation are recorded in terminology which has emerged – the “Hindu-Chinese houses” in European travel literature to the “five-foot-way” for the shophouse façade in planning regulations. New legislation charted responses to the times as in the fire-safety regulations prohibiting the use of attap consequent to the fires of 1808, 1812, 1813, 1818. Thereafter, at the turn of the twentieth century, public health measures were taken after outbreaks of cholera epidemics and bubonic plague from overcrowded conditions due to a sharp influx of Indian labour for the emerging rubber industry – an increase of 84.6 percent between the 1891 and 1901 censuses.

Moving to the essays in the third section on ‘People and Culture’, firmly grounded in the local area, they supply alternative accounts to earlier Eurocentric colonial narratives with their focus on metropolitan and imperial imperatives and institutional structures to run their territorial possessions. J. R. Logan’s “Memorandum on the Various Tribes inhabiting Penang and Province Wellesley” touches on the Simang, Binua, Malay and Siamese. His ethnographic account of the Simang (also known as Semang and Negrito in later scholarly work)⁹ “has evidently been the result of personal observation” from his visit to one of the Kedah rivers in 1851 (Earl 1853, 156). Worthy of note is that while linguists are of the view that “the language died out in the late nineteenth century”, nonetheless “its dialects were once spoken over a relatively large area extending along the western coast of Malaya close to Penang Island” (Hajek 1996, 141).

From the essays “Buddhist Temples and Associations in Penang” and “Malay Words in Baba Hokkien of Penang”, readers will get a glimpse of some of the locality’s history of shared religious practices and language among the inhabitants as well as an indication of the process of settlement, the earlier to later arrivals. Benny Liow Woon Khin’s study established that the Thai, Burmese and Singhalese communities set up Theravada temples to meet their spiritual needs with Chinese devotees becoming the majority by the 1920s. The oldest Theravada temple is Burmese, founded in 1828, followed by a Thai temple in 1845, originally meant for both Thais and Burmese.¹⁰ The location of the two temples reflects the residence of early Burmese and Thais in the vicinity of Pulau Tikus. As activities such as the Sunday school were

conducted in English, Straits-born Chinese preferred the Theravada school of Buddhism while Chinese-educated Buddhists frequented the Mahayana temples where the language used was Mandarin. One of the most well-known Mahayana temples, the Kek Lok Si, is also one of the largest Buddhist temples in Southeast Asia, officially opened in 1905. As for the Buddhist associations, they functioned as charitable bodies, the Phor Tay Institute running an orphanage, and primary and secondary schools while the Penang Buddhist Association also carried out activities to promote the religion.

The term 'Baba Malay' as the language of the Straits-born Peranakan Chinese had been coined by earlier writers such as Shellabear (1913) and Tan Chee Beng (1980). In contrast, linguists Teoh Boon Seong and Lim Beng Soon use another term 'Baba Hokkien', the result of their study, a two-month participant observation of a Peranakan family in Penang in 1998 to conclude that "Baba Hokkien of Penang is essentially a Hokkien dialect with some Malay elements". This distinction between the language of the Peranakan Chinese of Penang and those of Melaka and Singapore is due to different historical circumstances. Chinese traders who have settled in Melaka since the fifteenth century lived in the midst of a large native population and married local women, hence the emergence of a creolised language, a situation which is applicable to Penang in the period prior to the large influx of migrants for the tin mines in Perak from the 1840s. Thenceforth, Baba Hokkien "supplanted Baba Malay", the latter shaped by interaction with the Malay populace.

The 1857 and 1867 riots in Penang were defining events in Colonial Malaya, spawning legislation to register and control 'secret societies', remnants of the earlier Societies Ordinances (1889 and subsequent amendments) still evident currently. Due to the preoccupation of colonial officials with Chinese secret societies and the literature on them,¹¹ less is known about Malay societies. Mahani Musa's "Malays and the Red and White Flag Societies in Penang, 1830s-1920s" traces their formation in the 1830s by the Indian Muslim and Jawi Pekan communities for religious and social reasons and their transformation in the 1850s to protect their communities in light of the rise in crime. Their alliances with Ghee Hin, Hai San and Toa Pek Kong illustrate "Chinese and Muslim societies as natural allies",¹² their close cooperation in 1867 an example of business links transcending ethnicity.

To conclude, it has to be acknowledged that this selection only provides a bird's eye view of Penang's past. However, if the articles are read alongside available writing on the history of Penang,¹³ and the sizeable corpus of recent literature on colonial and imperial history,¹⁴ this reprint should serve to whet the appetite of those seeking a more nuanced understanding on a number of broad themes, including but not confined to: (1) the British imperial enterprise and the incorporation of their Southeast Asian settlements into the world economy as suppliers of raw materials and importers of western manufactures, (2) the agency of local actors in the face of Anglo-Dutch rivalry, and (3) the myriad consequences of imperialism – political, economic, social and cultural.¹⁵

Of the three themes, the last two subjects are in keeping with shifts in historiographical perspective, from metropolitan concerns and colonial administrators towards a focus on local actors and initiatives in imperial history and from economic and commercial aspects towards social history and cultural issues in historical research, the latter a trend visible from the last few decades (Van Niel 1990). Indeed, as has been suggested, imperialism continues to resonate as it serves as a metaphor for globalisation, centred on the flows of peoples, products, ideas and institutions and their resultant impact, with parallels in the history of empires (Peers 2002, 451, 455).

It is our hope that a reading of these articles can serve to stimulate further research and suggest new avenues for historical inquiry, as in revisiting topics, however well mined, with fresh eyes.

References

- Anderson, John (1824) *Political and Commercial Considerations Relative to the Malayan Peninsula and the British Settlements in the Straits of Malacca*. Prince of Wales Island: William Cox.
- Anderson, John (1840) "On the administration of justice in the British Settlements in the Straits of Malacca, and the Government of Penang, Singapore and Malacca", *Asiatic Journal*, 31, 121: 175–184, 249–258; 32, 124: 132–139.

- Arasaratnam, S. (1986) *Merchants, Companies, and Commerce on the Coromandel Coast, 1650–1740*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bastin, John (1959) “Historical Sketch of Penang in 1794”, *JMBRAS*, 32, 1: 1–32.
- Begbie, P. J. (1834) *The Malayan Peninsula*. Madras: The Veprey Mission Press.
- Benjamin, Geoffrey (2002) “On Being Tribal in the Malay World” in Benjamin, Geoffrey and Cynthia Chou, eds., *Tribal Communities in the Malay World: Historical, Cultural, and Social Perspectives*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 7–76.
- Blythe, W. L. (1969) *The Impact of Chinese Secret Societies in Malaya. A Historical Study*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press.
- Bonney, R. (1971) *Kedah, 1771–1812: The Search for Security and Independence*. Kuala Lumpur and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bowen, Hugh V. (2007) *The Business of Empire: The East India Company and Imperial Britain 1756–1833*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Braddell, Thomas (1850) “Notices of Pinang”, *Journal of the Indian Archipelago*, 4: 629–644.
- Brook, Timothy and Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, eds. (2000) *Opium Regimes: China, Britain, and Japan, 1839–1952*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Burroughs, Peter and A. J. Stockwell, eds. (2013) *Managing the Business of Empire: Essays in Honour of David Fieldhouse*. New York: Routledge.
- Courtwright, David T. (2001) *Forces of Habit: Drugs and the Making of the Modern World*. Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University Press.
- Earl, G.W. (1853) *The Native Races of the Indian Archipelago: Papuans*. London: H. Bailliere.
- Flynn, Dennis O. and Arturo Giráldez (2002) “Cycles of Silver: Global Economic Unity through the Mid-Eighteenth Century”, *Journal of World History*, 13, 2: 391–427.
- Gascoigne, J. (2006) “The Expanding Historiography of British Imperialism”, *The Historical Journal*, 49, 2: 577–592.
- Grove, Linda and Mark Selden, eds. (2008) *China, East Asia and the Global Economy: Regional and Historical Perspectives by Takeshi Hamashita*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Gunn, Geoffrey C. (2011) *History without Borders: The Making of an Asian World Region, 1000–1800*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

- Hajek, John (1996) "Unravelling Lowland Semang", *Oceanic Linguistics* 35, 1: 138-141.
- Hall, Kenneth R. (2011) *A History of Early Southeast Asia: Maritime Trade and Societal Development, 100-1500*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Hopkins, A. G. (1999) "Back to the Future: From National History to Imperial History", *Past and Present*, 164: 198-243.
- Howe, Stephen, ed. (2009) *The New Imperial Histories Reader*. New York: Routledge.
- Kyshe, J. W. N. (1885) *Cases Heard and Determined in Her Majesty's Supreme Court of the Straits Settlements 1808-84, Vol. I. Civil Cases*. Singapore: Singapore and Straits Printing Office.
- Langdon, Marcus (2013) *Penang: The Fourth Presidency 1805-1830. Vol. I, Ships, Men and Mansions*. Penang: Areca Books.
- Leith, Sir George (1804) *Short Account of the Settlement, Produce and Commerce of Prince of Wales Island, in the Straits of Malacca*. London: John Booth.
- Lim Chong Keat (1986) *Penang Views, 1770-1860*, Singapore: Summer Times Publishing.
- Liu Xinru (1988) *Ancient India and Ancient China: Trade and Religious Exchanges, AD 1-600*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Low, James (1836) *A Dissertation on the Soil & Agriculture of the British Settlement of Penang, or Prince of Wales Island, in the Straits of Malacca; including Province Wellesley on the Malayan Peninsula*. Singapore: Free Press Office.
- Macalister, Norman (1803) *Historical Memoir Relative to Prince of Wales Island in the Straits of Malacca*. London: J. Hart.
- Mann, Michael. Review of Bowen, Hugh V., *The Business of Empire: The East India Company and Imperial Britain, 1756-1833* and McGilvary, George K., *East India Patronage and the British State: The Scottish Elite and Politics in the Eighteenth Century* and McGilvary, George K., *Guardian of the East India Company: The Life of Laurence Sullivan and Webster, Anthony, The Twilight of the East India Company: The Evolution of Anglo-Asian Commerce and Politics, 1790-1860* and Webster, Anthony, *The Richest East India Merchant: The Life and Business of John Palmer of Calcutta, 1767-1836*. H-Soz-u-Kult, H-Net Reviews. February, 2011. URL: <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=32643>.

- Mills, L. A. (1960) "British Malaya 1824-1867", *JMBRAS*, 33, 3: 9-326, with a "Bibliography of writings in English on British Malaya, 1786-1867" by C. M. Turnbull, 327-424 (first published *JMBRAS*, 3, 2, 1925).
- Moor, J.H. (1837) *Notices of the Indian Archipelago and Adjacent Countries*. Singapore: Singapore Chronicle.
- Morrah, Patrick (1963) "The History of the Malayan Police", *JMBRAS*, 36, 2: 3-172.
- Newbold, T. J. (1839) *Political and Statistical Account of the British Settlements in the Straits of Malacca*. London: John Murray.
- Park, Hyunhee (2012) *Mapping the Chinese and Islamic Worlds. Cross-Cultural Exchange in Pre-Modern Asia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Peers, Douglas M. (2002) "Is Humpty Dumpty Back Together Again?: The Revival of Imperial History and the "Oxford History of the British Empire," *Journal of World History*, 13, 2: 451-467.
- Popham, Home (1805) *A Description of Prince of Wales Island in the Streights of Malacca, with its Real and Probable Advantages and Sources to Recommend it as a Marine Establishment*. London: J. Stockdale.
- Porter, Bernard (2012) "Cutting the British Empire Down to Size", *History Today*, 62, 10: 22-29.
- Prakash, Om (2012) "Aspects of Trade between India and Southeast Asia in the Early Modern Period", in Loh Wei Leng, T. N. Harper and Sunil S. Amrith, eds. *Proceedings of the Penang and Indian Ocean Conference*, September 2011. Penang: Think City, 24-30.
- Reid, A. (1988, 1993) *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450-1680: Volume One: The Lands below the Winds; Volume 2, Expansion and Crisis*. New Haven, Ct.: Yale University Press.
- Schebesta, P. (1927) "The Negritos of the Malay Peninsula. Subdivisions and Names", *Man*, 27: 89-94.
- Schebesta, P. (1973) *Among the Forest Dwarfs of Malaya*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press.
- Sen, Tansen (2003) *Buddhism, Diplomacy, and Trade: The Realignment of Sino-Indian Relations, 600-1400*. Honolulu: Association for Asian Studies and University of Hawai'i Press.
- Sen, Tansen (2006) "The Travel Records of Chinese Pilgrims Faxian, Xuanzang, and Yijing", *Education about Asia*, Volume 11, 3: 24-33.

- http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/special/travel_records.pdf (Accessed 30 April 2014.)
- Shellabear, W. G. (1913) "Baba Malay: An Introduction to the Language of the Straits Born Chinese", *JSBRAS*, 45: 49–63.
- Sugihara, Kaoru (2009) "The Resurgence of Intra-Asian Trade 1800–1850", in Riello, G. ed., *How India Clothed the World: The World of South Asian Textiles, 1500–1850*. Boston, MA: Brill Academic Publishers, 139–169.
- Swettenham, F. (1907) *British Malaya*. London: John Lane.
- Tan Chee Beng (1980) "Baba Malay Dialect", *JMBRAS*, 53, 1: 150–165.
- Tan, Joceline Poh Choo (1991) *History of Penang: A Selected and Annotated Bibliography*. Penang: Universiti Sains Malaysia.
- Tan Kim Hong (1981) "Chinese sugar planting and social mobility in nineteenth century Province Wellesley", *Malaysia in History*, 24: 24–38.
- Thomson, John Turnbull (1864), *Glimpses into Life in the Far East*, reprinted Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1984.
- Trocki, Carl. A. (1999) *Opium, Empire, and the Global Political Economy: A Study of the Asian Opium Trade*. New York: Routledge.
- Turnbull, C. M. (1970) "Internal Security in the Straits Settlements, 1826–1867", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 1, 1: 37–53.
- Turnbull, C. M. (1972) *The Straits Settlements 1826–67: Indian Presidency to Crown Colony*, London: Athlone Press.
- Van Niel, Robert (1990) "Colonialism Revisited: Recent Historiography", *Journal of World History*, 1, 1: 109–124.
- Wade, G.W. (2009) "An Early Age of Commerce in Southeast Asia, 900–1300 CE", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 40, 2: 221–265.
- Wynne, M. L. (1941) *Triad and Tribute*. Singapore: Government Printing Office.

Notes

1. Pre-modern precedents of the more obvious global currents of the nineteenth century were already evident in dynamic intra-Asian trade and inter-regional trade between South and East Asia (Gunn 2011, Hamashita in Grove and Selden 2008, Wade 2009, Liu 1988, Sen 2003, Prakash 2012) which fed into inter-hemispheric and Eurasian exchanges. In addition, there is a vast literature on drugs, commodities such as spices, specie, tea and opium in global and Asian trade from the early modern era, c. 1400–1800. See the bibliographies in Courtwright 2001, Gunn 2011, Hall 2011, Flynn and Giraldez 2002, Reid 1988, 1993, Trocki 1999, Brook and Wakabayashi 2000.
2. John Bastin wrote an introduction to another article, "Historical Sketch of Penang in 1794" (Bastin 1959),

GLIMPSES OF PENANG'S PAST

which he attributed to Scott. This is a longer version than Scott's report to Henry Dundas and was sent to Thomas Graham in Calcutta.

3. Hugh V. Bowen's examination of the transformation of the EIC from a commercial entity into an administrative organisation, 1756-1833, maps the changes taking place in London and India against which Penang's early phase can be situated. For more, see Langdon (2013).

4. See Tan Soo Chye's article (Chapter 6) for a discussion of the rationale for a lack of legal uniformity and the delegation of authority to leaders of the different communities. Three Captains (Chinese, Malay, Chulia) were appointed to carry out various administrative duties including the adjudication of petty civil cases, the more important cases being in the hands of a European magistrate. However, as the essay covers the period 1786 to 1807, a picture of the subsequent period has to rely on other works such as Kyshe (1885) and Turnbull whose chapter, "Structure of Government" (1972, 52-100), delves into personnel - executive, judiciary and other branches such as municipal government. Morrah (1963) has an account of the unruly conditions in Penang, only turning the corner by the second Charter of 1828 when some semblance of adherence to the law emerged, backed by enforcement by the police.

5. See Tan Kim Hong (1981). The the European rush into sugar planting was due to a more liberal land alienation policy in 1843 and lower tariffs for sugar imports into England in 1845.

6. Trincomalee port was reputed to be one of the best natural harbours in the Bay of Bengal (Arasaratnam 1986, 30). See also Langdon (2013, 14-183), which provides a detailed and meticulously researched account of shipbuilding in Penang.

7. As Bernard Porter (2012) explains, "Free trade was more than merely a commercial policy. It was tied in to a whole economic ideology, called 'political economy' then ... one tenet of which was that enterprise worked best if it was not taxed. Anything that required tax revenues was therefore discouraged. That is ... why colonies could not be allowed to become a direct burden on the British Treasury. They had to be 'self-sufficient': their revenues, even for their defence, raised locally."

8. Kaoru Sugihara (2009, 155) found that, "Until the 1820s Penang acted as a centre of long-distance and regional trade in the Bay of Bengal". Figure 5.13 throws light on Penang in intra-Asian trade, with the Southeast Asia component focusing on Sumatra, Siam and Burma (156). For a list of exports and imports in 1801-2, and their geographical distribution, see Leith (1804, 47-48).

9. Schebesta (1927) discussed the use of both terms. See also Geoffrey Benjamin's Introduction to Schebesta (1973) and Benjamin (2002).

10. In 1845, Governor W. L. Butterworth granted a five-acre piece of land to four trustees: two Thais and two Burmese. Thai monks continue to serve till today in many of the Theravada temples. Marcus Langdon has drawn my attention to the 1805 date on a print by Edward H. Locker of a Burmese stupa, and as Lim Chong Keat (1986, 62) puts it, "The date of Locker's view therefore shows that it predates the founding of the present temple."

11. Blythe (1969) and Wynne (1941) are two of the more well-known monographs.

12. The title of Mahani Musa's 2011 article in *Penang Monthly*.

13. See contemporaneous and scholarly accounts, the likes of Braddell (1850), Leith (1804), Low (1836), Macalister (1803), Newbold (1839), Popham (1805) to name but a few, and those of various travellers such as Thomson (1864) in the first group. In the second, C. M. Turnbull's extensive bibliography in Mills (1960) supplies the literature until 1960, thereafter Joceline Tan Poh Choo (1991).

14. For a survey of recent historiography, the following are a sample which capture academic writing from earlier canons to critiques from the periphery: Burroughs and Stockwell (2013); the introduction in Howe (2009); a review article by Michael Mann (2011) of five books on the EIC; and Gascoigne (2006). On Southeast Asia, see Robert Van Niel (1990).

15. Legacies in terms of colonial institutions, laws and language are but some of the elements which have played their part in shaping post-colonial Malaysia. As A. G. Hopkins (1999, 204) succinctly puts it, referring to empires, "the universality of the problems that are the residue of their demise" breathes new life to imperial history.

MEMOIR OF CAPTAIN FRANCIS LIGHT, WHO FOUNDED PENANG

[Died October 21st, 1794.]

Originally published in *JSBRAS*, No. 28, August 1895.

FRANCIS LIGHT was born at "Dallington (? Dallingho) in Suffolk" about 1745, and came to the East at an early age in the Marine Service of the East India Co.

There is scarcely one of our Straits worthies of whom so few personal particulars are known. He has of course left official records, and several of his private letters have been printed and preserved. There is also the official Diary he kept during the first few months in Penang, which is printed in Logan's Journal Vol. III; but this is all. Captain light belongs to the "active period" of the Straits, to which, as in other places, the "literary period" succeeded. The latter began with MARSDEN and LEYDEN of "many-languaged lore," who commenced his journeys in Sumatra and the Peninsula in 1805. During the next fifty years there was no lack of scholars and writers in these countries.

But before their time almost the only English literature of the Far East consisted of accounts by ship captains, like DAMPIER and FORREST, of their own and others' voyages. In these narratives there is much that is useful; but we miss the literary side and the personal details that make LEYDEN, MARSDEN and RAFFLES seem so much more familiar to us than their predecessors.

The first heard of Captain LIGHT is in 1771, when he states he entered into correspondence with WARREN HASTINGS as to the desirability of a repairing harbour in these waters, recommending Penang as a "convenient magazine for the Eastern trade." There was no doubt negotiation for many years after in the intervals of trading tours.

In 1779, we come across Captain LIGHT in one of these voyages; more than one reference being made to him in the Journal¹ of Dr. KOENIG, the Danish Botanist, during that year. He met Captain LIGHT trading at Junk Ceylon in May, and at Malacca in November, 1779; and he refers to him in terms that show there was friendship between them, and that the Botanist found him an enlightened and sympathetic companion. It is curious that this MS. also contains for the first time a tolerably full mention of Penang and of the

deep-water approaches in the North channel, which justified its selection by Captain LIGHT seven years later.

In 1780-1, a scheme had at last been matured for settling Junk Ceylon, through private subscription but with the consent of the Governor-General in Council (then WARREN HASTINGS). There is in the British Museum a Paper which bears on this scheme, being a description of Junk Ceylon transmitted by Captain LIGHT to Lord CORNWALLIS in his letter of 18th June, 1787.² The wars with the French and Dutch in 1781-3 delayed its execution, and shortly after Captain LIGHT decided on the superior merits of Penang harbour. He was at first for settling at one and the same time in both places; but when the friendly ruler of Junk Ceylon died in December, 1785, it was finally resolved by the Governor-General to make the experiment at Penang alone, which the young Raja of Kedah had offered to cede for \$6,000 a year.

In June, 1786, Captain LIGHT left Calcutta with Sir J. MACPHERSON'S authority to act. He was given 100 Native "new-raised Marines" and 30 Native Lascars, as well as 15 Artillerymen (European) and 5 Officers to support him in his undertaking to carry out the settlement of Penang. He first proceeded to Kedah. There he completed his negotiations, and provisioned his party. Sailing thence with three vessels on the evening of the 14th July, 1786, he anchored off Pulau Tikus the following day. The first two days he stayed on board, and was busy surveying the harbour and testing the anchorages. At last, on the 17th, he "disembarked Lieut. GRAY with the Marines upon Point Penagger—a low sandy point covered with wood—and employed them in clearing the ground." This ground is the present Esplanade, which with great foresight he reserved when so freely giving away all other lands. He took formal possession of the Island on the 11th³ August.

The place was practically unoccupied; the only Malay inhabitants heard of were 52 Malays who came over, apparently from near Tanjong Tokong, to help in felling the forest.

Shortly afterwards an ancient clearing with coco-nuts, fruit trees and a burial-ground came to notice at Datoh Kramat; and in 1795 a grant of this clearing (measuring 13 orlongs) was given to Maharaja SETIA, on the express ground that he was a "relation by descent of the Datoh Kramat who cleared the ground 90 years before."

With these exceptions, the whole place was one great jungle.⁴ Clearing went on with energy; wells were dug which yielded water that was fit to drink, but uninviting through being stained red by the roots of the penaga tree. Huts were run up for the marines and lascars, the tents which the settlers had brought not affording sufficient room. A month passed away quietly enough in the performance of these first labours, and the little party on the point was still unmolested by prying and undesirable intruders. But this was not to last long. Writing to MR. ANDREW ROSS of Madras, Captain LIGHT says: "Before we could get up any defence we had visitors of all kinds, some for curiosity, some for gain, and some for plunder."

No Malay wearing a *kris* was at first allowed ashore, and care was taken to confine to their boats parties of those Achinese and other warlike spirits who were above using the *bliong* in the jungle. Captain LIGHT had seen too many ruins of the old factories which these gentry had "cut off" to trust them as settlers. To encourage the wood-cutters, he is said to have ingeniously loaded a gun with a bag of dollars and fired it into the jungle. It is mentioned also that the Malays provided *nibongs* for the stockade which was the precursor of Fort Cornwallis. On the 10th August, two of the Company's ships, the *Vansittart* and the *Valentine*, hove in sight, and Captain LIGHT, thinking the occasion a favourable one for the christening of the infant colony, invited the Captains ashore to assist in the ceremony on the 11th August. "At noon," he tells us, "all the gentlemen assembled under the flagstaff, and unitedly hoisted the flag, taking possession of the island in the name of His Britannic Majesty and for the use of the Honourable East India Company, the artillery and ships firing a Royal salute, the marines three volleys." The following day being the birthday of the Prince of Wales, it occurred to our founder to name the island in his honour; but this name has been unable to compete with the shorter one of native origin, and exists only in official documents. Once the establishment of the Settlement became known, people began to flock in from all quarters to live under the protection of the British flag.

His work progressed favourably, especially in the matter of health. The early entries in his Diary often express surprise at the absence of all serious sickness; until the following year. Then the dry season affected many, and struck him down with fever very severely in January, 1787. About the same

time he began to feel the want of support from Calcutta. In February, 1787, he writes to Mr. A. Ross, of Madras:— "I have received nothing from the Bengal Government since my departure from Calcutta." But the Settlement prospered and grew notwithstanding, the number of settlers being stated at "about 10,000" by the end of 1789, and at over 20,000 in 1795.⁵

The task of governing this mixed multitude fell entirely on the shoulders of Captain LIGHT himself, for he received but little encouragement from the Indian Government, who long regarded the Establishment at Penang with doubts and even with jealousy. There had been a rival settlement formed at the Andamans in 1791, under the patronage of Admiral CORNWALLIS; but it never prospered, and in 1796, was abandoned. Meanwhile Penang had natural advantages which served it better than any patronage. The Superintendent, as he was called, lost no opportunity of assuring the East India Company of the success of his beloved Settlement as a commercial enterprise, and implored the Directors to establish a proper Government and to make provision for the administration of justice. This was a difficulty most keenly felt, but in spite of his earnest recommendation no proper remedy was applied. The sole tribunal up to the beginning of the 19th century was an informal kind of Court Martial, composed of Officers and respectable inhabitants. All the minor offences and petty disputes were adjudicated by the "Capitans" or headmen of the various nationalities inhabiting the island; and there was no regularly organised judicial system in the island till the establishment of the Recorder's Court in 1805. In Captain LIGHT's time persons convicted of murder were sent prisoners to Bengal; and by the express order of the Indian Government it was "made understood upon the island for the sake of example that they were to remain in slavery for life." This bugbear of slavery in Bengal was a childish subterfuge wherewith to maintain the majesty of the law; but LIGHT was no party to such folly; and continually urged his Government to provide proper Courts endowed with full authority.

Early in 1788, the financial question confronted the Superintendent of the new Colony. He was much averse to laying burdens on the people, and especially to interfering with the freedom of the port, and expresses his regret at the insistence of Government. In a despatch addressed to Lord CORNWALLIS, dated 20th June, 1788, he urges: "Some reasonable time should be allowed the

first settlers to enable them to bear the expense of building, &c. I arrived here in July, 1786. It is now almost two years, but the inhabitants have not slept in their houses more than twelve months. I should not have scrupled to give my word to them that they would not be taxed in three years, but as the necessities of government will not admit of a delay, I offer the following modes to your Lordship's consideration." He suggests twelve possible methods for raising revenue, including ground-rent on houses, shop-tax on retailers, a spirit farm, duties on alienation and succession, and import duties on foreign goods. The Government approved of these, but consented to postpone the evil day. Later on, however, in 1801 Penang became a "customs port"; and was not set free from this obstruction to its trade till 1826.

In 1789, Captain LIGHT went to Calcutta, and was closely questioned by the Government as to the capabilities of Penang. Thus challenged, he proved equal to the occasion, and eulogised his Settlement in a voluminous reply. He concludes a despatch by the following optimistic summary of such advantages as, he says, are visible and undeniable:—

- “1. A harbour with good anchorage, secured from bad weather and capable of containing any number of vessels.
2. An island well watered, of excellent soil, capable of sustaining 50,000 people and abounding in all necessary materials for their service and security.
3. A port favourable to commerce, the present imports amounting to upwards of \$600,000 per annum.
4. A place of refuge for merchant ships where they may refit and be supplied with provisions, wood and water, and protected from the insults of enemies.
5. An emporium centrally situated where the merchants of all nations may conveniently meet and exchange their commodities.”

LIGHT's instincts were true; yet he failed to convince his Government, and for many years the life of Penang hung on a thread; indeed it was not till recently that revenue began to cover expenditure, and that our founder's forecast was justified in this respect.

In 1790, LIGHT began to find that the duties of Superintendent of the growing Settlement were incompatible with his position as a merchant,⁶ while the small salary (Rs. 1,000 per month) which he received from Government was insufficient to warrant his giving up trade. So strongly did he feel this that we find him proposing to the authorities in Calcutta that he should be precluded from engaging in trade, receiving "such increase of salary as will support the office with decency and enable me to make a small provision for approaching old age." Few of his acts reveal an honourable and upright character more clearly than this. His combined position of Superintendent and principal merchant in Penang gave him abundant opportunity of enriching himself; and in those lax days, with examples like VANSITTART and MACPHERSON before him, such scruples must have seemed to many almost Quixotic. In the following year there was trouble with Kedah. The Raja of that country, grown jealous of the prosperous Settlement that had sprung up in his neighbourhood, collected a force, and in 1791 instigated a fleet of twenty Lanoon boats to enter Pry River. These were joined by the Kedah Bandahara. A land force also came down to the banks of the river and threw up entrenchments. LIGHT's force numbered 400 men, all well armed and disciplined. He took the initiative and attacked by land and sea the force at Kuala Pry, which had swelled to the number of over 8,000 Malays. After a few hours fighting the enemy were dispersed, notwithstanding their great preponderance of numbers. Since that day Penang has remained free from the attack of any enemy, native or foreign, even when the Siamese troops of the PHYA LIGOR were over-running Kedah in 1821. LIGHT was justly proud of his victory and called his next son FRANCIS LANOON LIGHT in honour of it.

In a despatch dated 24th August, 1792, Captain LIGHT continues to sound the trumpet of his little Colony and to predict for it that success which it has since attained. One admires the earnest way in which its earliest ruler stood forth as the champion of Penang. We have had other champions since, and ardent ones too, but must give FRANCIS LIGHT the palm. In the same despatch he alludes to the discovery of tin on Bukit Timah (the spur to the north of the Crag where the new Sanitarium of the Pulau Tikus College now stands), and the discovery of a wild nutmeg "whose fruit so nearly resembles a nutmeg that the Buggesses and a Dutchman who had been at the spice islands declared to

be the real nutmeg." He goes on to say: "I have great hopes that the fruit may be improved so as to become an article of commerce." This prediction was verified, but not for some years after, till Mr. CHRISTOPHER SMITH'S Agricultural Mission in 1802; and then it was the imported nutmeg plant from Amboyna which for a time flourished so greatly in the island. The whole tone of Captain LIGHT'S letters bears testimony to the singleness of purpose and administrative insight that characterised this remarkable man, and it is matter for deep regret that he was not spared longer to bring his labours to full fruition. The use he made of his short period of power in the Far East, and his great capacity as a leader of pioneer enterprise, prove him a worthy forerunner to Sir STAMFORD RAFFLES, who founded Singapore, 35 years later, on very similar lines.

Captain LIGHT died at Penang, like so many of the early Chiefs of the Settlement, on the 21st October, 1794. Some fever like that severe one recorded in his Journal in February, 1787, probably caused his death; at any rate he was able to make a Will on the previous day.

A letter to Government published in Vol. V of Logan's Journal, p.7, is the last official record of his work, bearing date 25th January, 1794. In this he pleaded that a Civil Assistant trained to the work might be his successor, "in case of his removal by death or otherwise," instead of the Officer Commanding as arranged in 1787. He also advocates "a mild and at the same time an active Government" as necessary for the "most wealthy and useful inhabitants"—that is, the Chinese, whose numbers he estimated at about 3,000.

He ends with the following characteristic paragraph:—"A regular form for administering justice is necessary, both for the peace and welfare of the society and for the honour of the nation who have granted them protection; it is likewise improper the Superintendent should have it in his power to exercise an arbitrary judgment upon persons and things; whether this judgment is iniquitous or not the mode is still arbitrary and disagreeable to society."

Under date August 1st, 1794, the Governor-General, Lord TEIGNMOUTH, replied that "he did not at present think himself authorised to establish formal and regular Courts," but passed, and transmitted to Captain LIGHT, certain Regulations for preserving the peace of the island. These long remained effective; and Mr. Justice DICKENS, on 22nd October, 1805, eleven years after, declared them to be the only laws even then in force. These Regulations must

have reached Captain LIGHT just before his death, and the establishment of Mr. MANNINGTON as Magistrate with the first approach to regular law in his infant Settlement appropriately closes the public career of such a man. His chronicler—Colonel Low—thus sums up his character and work:—

“Although the rather implicit credence which he gave at first to the Rajah of Kedah’s assertion of his independence of Siam, might have led to more serious consequences than it did, still it would appear that he was a man of sound sense, probity and judgment—active, practical, and moderate. That certainly reprehensible credence, however, secured to the British merchant and to the world the port of Pinang, the most eligible one at this extremity of the Straits.” (Vol. III of Logan’s Journal, 1848).

This seems to be a just and friendly reference as regards him personally. But in estimating the political criticism it must be remembered who it is that writes. Colonel Low was an avowed partisan in the curious political controversy of his time regarding the status of Kedah. This matter bears so closely on Captain LIGHT’s principal works, and on his judgment and sincerity in carrying it out, that it must not be passed over in any account of his action as the Founder of the Settlement.

The old controversy upon the point has long subsided. As a matter of practical politics, the general suzerainty of Siam is now, and since the Malay Restoration in 1842, expressly admitted; but that in 1786 it was admitted, or even claimed, in any European sense of the word, “suzerainty”, cannot be maintained. The view favouring Captain LIGHT’s direct negotiation with Kedah was supported by Mr. J. R. LOGAN, and was held by those best-informed in Straits affairs when the dispute arose. The opposite case, of which Colonel LOW, a Siamese scholar, made himself the chief exponent, is best disposed of by quoting his own admissions in his paper on the question in Vol. III of LOGAN’S Journal:—

P. 602. He admits that “no coercion or intimidation was employed to obtain the cession of Penang in 1786.”

P. 601. That the Rajah protested his independence, and was believed by the Government of India (after enquiries protracted during 1778–86); while “Siam would readily have consented” if consulted.

P. 613. That there was an “*ancient* dependence, and a rebellion against Siam *in 1720*” which shews the unpractical character of the claim, so many years after.

Pp. 603–13. In fact the triennial “bunga mas” remains the sole piece of evidence on which the whole figment has been constructed. The value of this evidence can be gauged by Colonel Low’s own reference (p. 613) to “the rival nations of Ava and Siam” *both* receiving this token (see also p. 610 where the Rajah of Kedah claimed our help against *both* Burmese and Siamese). The bunga mas was no more than a token of inferior pretensions, offered by a second-rate to a first-rate Eastern Power, in the same way as it was formerly offered by Siam to China.

It is clear from many of these passages (pp. 600 to 609 and elsewhere) that Colonel Low imported into his chronicle in LOGAN’S Journal questions which sixty-five years before had never been raised⁷ at all, but which afterwards excited much feeling in the controversy of his day. So also it must be confessed did Mr. Secretary ANDERSON and the partisans on the other side.

The unfairness of this as affecting Captain LIGHT’S action is obvious: especially because the strongest argument for his view of the independence of Kedah lay just in the fact that the question of dependence was never raised at all in the early days. In the later controversy, at a time when the Siamese invasion was pressing and the Dutch power had passed away from the Peninsula, it was forgotten that in the eighteenth century things were different. Far more important than Siam stood out the other factor in the question—the Dutch—who in 1783–5 were engaged in active hostilities⁸ with Selangor and Rio. It is stated in ANDERSON’S “Considerations,” (1824) on the authority of a letter from LIGHT to the Governor-General, that the Dutch in 1783 wrote to the Rajahs of Kedah and Tringganu for assistance, and fearing Dutch hostility when the Malacca siege was over, those Rajahs made in 1785

spontaneous offers of a British settlement in their respective States.

One thing is certain—that in writing his criticism in 1848, Colonel Low was ignorant of Captain LIGHT's despatch to Lord CORNWALLIS in 1787; and in consequence misrepresents the whole of the official negotiations respecting Salang and Penang as though these had turned upon "whether the islands formed a portion of the Siamese Empire." The printing of this despatch in a later volume of LOGAN's *Journal* at once made it clear that nothing of that kind came into the question; its entire absence is in fact most noticeable. Captain LIGHT explained fully the whole of the circumstances of his selecting these islands in the official letter mentioned above, dated 18th June, 1787 (published in LOGAN, Vol. IV, p. 634). This letter shows that in 1780 WARREN HASTINGS' Council sanctioned "in a public letter" Captain LIGHT's "plan for employing subscriptions," already actually raised for a Settlement on Salang (Junk Ceylon); which was in course of being carried out when "before the troops and ships were made ready, the war with France in 1781–2 led to its being neglected."

The letter adds how, at the conclusion of the war, HASTINGS took the matter up again. "But for the death of a friendly Governor of Salang in December, 1785," Captain LIGHT—who had however in the meanwhile been struck by the superior advantages of Penang "as a barrier to the Dutch encroachment"—would, he says, have taken both islands."

In the end, Sir J. MACPHERSON, HASTINGS' successor, "readily accepted Penang, but declined taking Salang" on the two grounds:—

- (1)—that "it required a greater force" to keep;
- (2)—that "as Government required a naval port with a port of commerce, Penang is more favourable than Salang."

There is no doubt that Captain LIGHT honestly believed it to be within the competence of the Rajah of Kedah to make over to the East India Company the island of Penang, and that nobody then questioned it. It is also certain that when his ships—the *Eliza*, the *Prince Henry* and the *Speedwell*—came to Penang, they went there with the Rajah's full consent and support, though after some opposition from the Laxamana and the Chiefs. Captain LIGHT's *Journal* shews that the 11th, 12th and 13th July, 1786, were spent at Kedah "in

embarking the people and provisions for this expedition". There was nothing secret about it. Once arrived in Penang, he very wisely acted with a sole view to the success and safety of his young Settlement. His Diary describes the numerous risks incurred in such an undertaking, and shows how piracy, scanty provisions, disease, the hostility of the Dutch in Malacca, the jealousy of Kedah, had to be encountered in turn.

One story that has obtained currency perhaps deserves contradiction, for strange to say it is repeated in a Work like BALFOUR'S "Encyclopaedia of India" (Vol. III), 1885, published by BERNHARD QUARITCH:—

"PENANG.—It was an uninhabited forest, *when given by the King of Quedah to Captain Light in 1785, as the marriage portion of the King's daughter whom Captain Light married; but it was sold to the British by the King in 1800.*"

The statement about "the marriage portion" is of course unfounded. It has been repeated from old gossip⁹ on this subject in a way that is as discreditable as the other obvious errors in the dates, &c. Captain LIGHT certainly allied himself in 1772 with MARTINA ROZELLS, but she was neither a Malay nor a Princess, but was apparently a Portuguese Christian of the Roman Catholic Mission at Kedah or Junk Ceylon. The old Junk Ceylon Mission removed about that time to Kedah, and in 1786 to Pulau Tikus village at Penang. She lived with him to his death, and inherited his house "Suffolk" and other property. She bore him five children, one of whom at least he took care to bring up in England¹⁰—Colonel WILLIAM LIGHT, born in 1784, died 1839. This son followed in his father's steps; for it was his pride to be the "Founder of Adelaide". As the companion and "Surveyor-General" of Sir J. HINDMARSH, first Governor of the new Colony of South Australia, he selected the site of the new Capital on December 28th, 1836.

The success of Captain LIGHT'S enterprise in establishing Penang was already clear at the time of his death. This is shown by Admiral CORNWALLIS' rival Settlement at the Andamans being abandoned two years later in favour of Penang. It is also testified to in the account of no less a personage than the great DUKE OF WELLINGTON (then Col. WELLESLEY) which is to be found,

under date 1797, in Vol. I of GLEIG'S "Supplementary Despatches." Finally it was made manifest to all the world in the despatch of the Court of Directors on establishing the Presidency Government at Penang, in September, 1805. (Published in LOGAN'S Journal, Vol. V.) This despatch gives no mean tribute to Captain LIGHT'S work; and it deserves to be quoted at some length, for it explains with curious minuteness the policy of the East India Company during the first nineteen years of Penang history. It testifies that "from the spirit of British rule, even when imperfectly administered, industry, enterprise and improvement have appeared to a considerable extent on the island, and its population, produce and commerce are already very respectable." As regards the future, it adds: "The position of this island, its climate, its fertility, its harbour, its produce of large timber, its contiguity to Pegu which contains the most abundant of teak forests in Asia, have long pointed it out as an acquisition of very great importance in a commercial and political view, being situated in a most favourable situation for an emporium of commerce in the Eastern seas."

This important document of 14 closely printed pages and 74 paragraphs, must have been framed in the latter part of 1804, just ten years after Captain LIGHT'S death. It is difficult to conceive a better testimony to his work and to the merits of his young Settlement. Among other things, it describes minutely how "no Import and Export duties were imposed up to the time of the 2 per cent. *ad valorem* duty it levied in 1801 on the importation of tin, pepper and betel-nut, which in that year produced \$13,076"; and also how "upon our first taking possession of the island ... ground was said to be of such little value that to ask was to have, or to appropriate was equivalent to legal right."

To check this some instructions had been invited and a Regulation had been passed on August 1st, 1794, "respecting grants of land for the period of 5 years"; and resolving that for the future "no grant of land be made to Europeans exceeding in quantity 300 orlongs, preferring to encourage the clearing and cultivation of the island by making small grants of land to the industrious Chinese."

Unfortunately for this policy, the Chinese would not look at such short leases. The emergency thus created at the close of his life brought out the resource and political courage which were the secret of Captain LIGHT'S success.

This Regulation stopping perpetuity grants in favour of five-year leases was to take effect from 1st January, 1795. When the Resolution arrived he allowed it to be known and stopped issuing grants; but at the same time he informed Mr. YOUNG and others that he would not promulgate it, but would get it rescinded: "well knowing (says Mr. YOUNG) the publication would instantly stop all further advance," and especially the pepper planting near Glugor which he had started in 1790 and had done so much to promote. Before the Resolution could come into force, he had died. But his immediate successor Mr. MANNINGTON took the same view; and on the 22nd August, 1796, "the Governor-General in Council rescinded his Resolution of the 1st August, 1794," *viz.*, that no allotments of land be made in perpetuity. (Papers relating to Land Revenue Administration, published 1884.)

It has since been contended that these Perpetuity Grants were a mistake; but the contemporary evidence points entirely the other way. In any case the blame would fall on his superiors. The responsibility for that policy lies with Sir J. MACPHERSON, who, when Captain LIGHT sounded him in April, 1786, before he started on his expedition, as to "granting settlers a portion of land," replied "That would be proper; and with his successor, Lord CORNWALLIS, whose first despatch to Captain LIGHT dated 22nd January, 1787, stated: "We leave it to your discretion to receive such colonists as you may think it safe and advisable to admit and to give each family such portion of land as circumstances will allow and you may judge expedient." To Lord CORNWALLIS' wise and liberal statesmanship on this and similar points the Settlement owes much of its rapid progress. His preference for "perpetuity settlement" may have carried him too far in an old country like Bengal. But in a new Colony it is the only policy that can succeed; as was soon made clear at Penang when he left, and then Lord TEIGNMOUTH endeavoured to reverse it and adopt restrictive measures.

In this matter as in so many others, Captain LIGHT did his duty well, as the local Chief, in saving the Government he served from making what would have been a very serious mistake. This was frankly admitted in paragraph 164 of Lord AUCKLAND'S well-known minute of 1837.

But this controversy belongs to a later chapter. The Founder's work was done, and it did not "follow him." He had been entirely successful in a kind of enterprise in which disastrous failure has been so common.

His “infant Port,” once made a Presidency Government, lay very snugly under the shelter, not only of Penang Hill but of the “Honourable Court” itself. What the Treaty of Holland effected for the security of Singapore, the recognition given in 1805 by this new Commission of Government effected for Penang. Henceforth experiments could be tried without risking the very life of the Settlement. Some of them succeeded—like that of receiving Indian convicts, and like the “forward policy,” which culminated in our occupying Java, and afterwards Singapore. Some of them failed—like the attempts to evacuate Malacca in 1808, and to federate with Acheen in 1811–18. Most of the experiments encountered, as usual, something both of failure and success. Among these may count the rage for nutmeg-planting, in 1802–20, and the Honourable Court’s attempt to make Penang pay its way by Customs duties and otherwise.

No period of its history can better illustrate “the spirit of British rule even when imperfectly administered” than that in which Captain LIGHT played his part alone. Those first eight years form a truly successful record of what British courage and perseverance, local experience amounting to adroitness, and a large-minded sense of public duty can achieve, even when almost unsupported. These qualities are shewn by the public records.

The inscription to his memory at St. George’s Church by a contemporary Penang resident—ROBERT SCOTT—adds to the favourable impression made by the public records a warm testimony to his worth:—

IN MEMORY
OF
FRANCIS LIGHT ESQ.
WHO FIRST ESTABLISHED THIS ISLAND
AS AN ENGLISH SETTLEMENT,
AND WAS MANY YEARS GOVERNOR.

BORN IN THE COUNTY OF SUFFOLK IN ENGLAND,
AND DIED OCTOBER 21ST, 1794.

IN HIS CAPACITY AS GOVERNOR,
THE SETTLERS AND NATIVES WERE GREATLY ATTACHED TO HIM
AND BY HIS DEATH, HAD TO DEPLORE THE LOSS OF ONE
WHO WATCHED OVER THEIR INTERESTS AND
CARES AS A FATHER.

The best part of his life—from 1771 to 1794—had been given to this place, and he rests in our old Cemetery. His grave and the brief Inscription on it (the first four lines as printed above) are well kept. Next to him lies PHILIP DUNDAS, the first Presidency Governor; and within a few yards are the tombs of Captain SCOTT and Captain GLASS, his earliest fellow settlers.

It is only right that his successors should gratefully recall those who came first and bore the hard work of Pioneers; and should give special honour to so worthy a “Founder”, upon the hundredth Anniversary of his Death.

A. M. S.

Penang, 21st October, 1894

Notes

1. In MS. in British Museum (translated S. A. S. Journal 27.)
2. See Logan's Journal, Vol. VI and p. II *infra*.
3. By a curious error this event came afterwards to be celebrated on the 12th August, and is so kept in Penang even now. It is easy to explain how the mistake occurred; the 12th August was the Prince Regent's birthday, after whom the Settlement was named. So far back as 1823, the 12th is given as the date of foundation in a minute on Land Administration by Mr. PHILLIPS, who came to Penang with Sir GEORGE LEITH in 1800.
4. The island had been cleared by Kedah of its piratical inhabitants about 1750.
5. Of this number the Chinese were then not much over 3,000; and Captain LENNON, R. E., who visited Penang, in November, 1795, expressly states that the CHULIAHS were more numerous. (S. A. S. Journal, vol. 7.)
6. He was partner with JAMES SCOTT in SCOTT & Co., afterwards BROWN & Co.
7. In 1802 the Advocate-General at Calcutta advised on the question whether the sovereignty of the Island had been ceded to Britain, and in the course of his formal "Opinion" the very existence of the Siamese is ignored.
8. See S. A. S. Journal, Vol. XXIV, "Raja Haji's War."
9. No doubt the story was honestly accepted and propagated by Colonel LIGHT, and his English friends, when having distinguished himself in the Peninsular War he became the Duke's confidential A.D.C.
10. It appears from his Will that £2,000 was provided for this purpose. The other domestic facts are also gathered from it and from some Memoranda industriously collected by Mr. F. LIGHT, a direct descendant.

EARLY DAYS IN PENANG

By the Revd. Keppel Garnier

Originally published in *JMBRAS*, Vol. 1 Pt 1 (No. 87), April 1923.

ON THE MORNING OF JULY 15TH 1786 PULO PINANG—Pulo Ka Satu—lay sleeping in the sun, as quiet and untrodden by human feet as any other of the many jungle-covered islands in these Eastern seas. At midday three ships dropped anchor off Pulo Tikus, boats were lowered and soundings taken. The same thing happened the following day, and no doubt the fifty odd original inhabitants came from their Kampong under the hill, by narrow jungle path down to the sea shore to find out what these strange ships were doing. On July 17th Lieutenant Gray and a party of marines were landed at “Point Penagger”; their duty was to prepare for the arrival of Captain Francis Light and a few other Europeans who, on the morning of July 18th set foot on the sandy scrub-covered beach where today stands Fort Cornwallis. The intended occupation of the Island by the British was well known by those who dwelt on the Kedah coast, and soon after Captain Light had landed, the Datu of “Qualla Moodoo” arrived and obtained permission to build himself a house. He was shortly followed by the Captain China and some Indian Christians who had come from Kedah in a prahu. Perhaps, in the same boat came the French Padre, who, Light tells us, landed among the first arrivals and planted his Cross on the soil of Penang. With him, or soon afterwards, came a hundred Christians, also from the coast of Kedah. This constant coming and going was too much for the Malays—they now approached Light and through their Headman, Nakodah Kechil, asked what it all meant. Light seems to have been in entire sympathy with Malays. He frequently dressed as one himself and they were always his devoted friends. On this occasion, these Penang Malays departed well satisfied with a present which Light had ready for them. For the rest of the month everyone was busy, in clearing the ground, building a Fort, erecting a small Bazar, and generally getting things shipshape.

On August 7th the “*Eliza*” returned from “*Queda*” with provisions. Several more Christian families took the opportunity to travel by her, and on August 10th two H. C. ships, the “*Vansittart*” and the “*Valentine*” arrived, and

so Light decided to invite their Commander to be present on the following day when he hoisted the Flag and took possession of the Island in the name of His Britannic Majesty and the Honourable East India Company. At noon, therefore, on August 11th, Captains Light, Glass, Wall and Lewin, besides "Local Servants of Government" carried out the simple ceremony at a spot where now is the Esplanade, and Prince of Wales Island came into being, and was admitted into the great family of the British Empire. Although presumably proud of its new name, it has never been able to persuade the world in general to adopt it and, except officially, Pulo Pinang it remains, modified into "Penang" by the clumsy British tongue.

From this time on, things began to move rapidly. We are not told much in detail, but we learn that ships called at the new Settlement in quick succession and that every Captain was desirous of obtaining possession of land and "employed people everyday to clear the woods". Among the first to arrive was Captain James Scott, a Navigating Merchant belonging to Calcutta and a friend of Captain Light. He was also a first cousin once removed of Sir Walter Scott. Very soon one hears that he has cleared the land at Glugor—Assam Glugor is a tree with orange acid fruits used in flavouring curries—and Glugor we may say is the oldest estate on the island, and is still today the most important. One Bacon went further inland and cleared Ayer Itam. Before long a Chinese gentlemen built his flour mills there. They were burnt to the ground early in the nineteenth century, but the foundations of Amee's mill can still be seen. A year after the inauguration of the Settlement there were 60 Chinese families who kept the shops in the Bazar, "already pretty extensive," and a few Malabars. There were also a certain number of Malays, who come and go between the island and the mainland. Captain Glass who had now been appointed to the command of the troops, was not fond of these Malays and complained that they taught his men to gamble. He tried to find more work for his soldiers so as to keep them from these naughty natives.

In 1792 Light wrote, with pardonable pride, that the Island which six years ago had been one entire wood, now had a population of 10,000; this total he divided up into 7,000 "inhabitants"; Company's servants with their followers 1,000; Malays 1,500; and strangers who come and go in ships and "prows" anything from 1,500 to 2,000. Two years later, on October 21st, Light died, but

he had lived long enough to feel the gratification of success and something of anxiety in regard to the future of his Settlement.

Light himself was a Suffolk man, but he seems to have depended on Scotsmen to carry on his work. With the exception of Captain Glass, who was an Irishman, he was surrounded by men from North of the Tweed. Lieutenant Norman Macalister, who in 1807 became the second Governor of Penang, and Lieutenant Robin Duff were Members of his Council, while Edward Hay was the Secretary to Government. Another Scotsman by the way, was the first baker in Penang, for we are told that the Honourable J. Cochrane owned the first bakehouse, valued, with his godown, at 4,000 Spanish dollars. But nothing more is known about him than that.

Light was most anxious that those who succeeded him should be in sympathy with the Malays and the Asiatic immigrants, but he evidently had fears on the subject. The sequel showed that his fears were unfounded, for the year following his death the population had again increased, and there were at that date 25,000 inhabitants, showing that the Asiatics of all races had entire confidence in the Government. Such trouble as arose was caused, not by the Government being out of sympathy with the Asiatics, but by the European merchants and planters being opposed to any Government at all—at any rate of the character provided by the E. I. Company. So unruly did they become that an attempt was made by the Superintendent, Major J. R. Macdonald, to come to some agreement with them, for which purpose he invited them to meet him, to discuss their grievances. He seems to have shown very little tact and the influential planters probably felt themselves strong enough to be able to oppose him, and were by no means conciliatory in their attitude. Major Macdonald retaliated by instituting inquiries in regard to the titles by which they held their property. We have the names of some of these merchants and the replies given in certain cases. Messrs. McIntyre, Scott, Lindsay, Hutton, Roebuck, Young, Brown, Sparran, Mackrell and Nason were the men who attended the conference. Mr. Scott,—the Captain James Scott mentioned earlier—seems to have been the outstanding personality of those early days. Major Macdonald reported of him that “of every spot which Mr. Scott’s sagacity pointed out as at a future hour likely to become valuable, he has, by assumption or purchase, made himself a part owner.” He added, “Mr.

Layton is likewise an industrious and prospering farmer, as was Mr. Brown, previous to his junction with Mr. Young." Mr. Young's influence does not seem to have done much harm in the long run!

The answers made by some of these gentlemen on the subject of the titles to their properties were as follows: Mr. Lindsay said he arrived in 1788 under the protection of Mr. Light and was a partner in Mr. Scott's house, with whom Mr. Light was also associated in commercial affairs. Mr. Scott wrote that he belonged to Calcutta, "to which place I return as soon as I can settle my affairs." However he died in Penang on September 20th 1808. Mr. Nason says he arrived in the Island on September 10th 1786 and declared that he was the man who cut the first tree and raised the first plant. There was the making of a very pretty quarrel between Government and the independent planters. We can understand it better when we remember that Government Officials were themselves merchants. They began as "Writers" and after their sixth year of residence they become "Factors". From the 9th to the 11th year they were called "Junior Merchants." From and after the 12th year of arrival they were designated "Senior Merchants." But Light had from the first encouraged independent merchants to settle and take up land, and these men had become very wealthy and were owners of practically all the land in the island worth cultivating. The Superintendent regarded them as a turbulent and unruly crowd of interlopers, and a constant warfare was kept up for many years. They seemed to have shown a close resemblance to their brothers and cousins who were living similar cheery lives on the plantations in the West Indies. Young bloods they were beyond doubt, and, also beyond doubt, rather a thorn in a side of Government.

Major Macdonald died in 1799 and in 1800 a new regime began. Sir George Leith was sent out as Governor and Mr. W. E. Phillips accompanied him as Private Secretary. Mr. G. Caunter was the first assistant under Mr. Phillips and Mr. Dickens, an uncle of Charles Dickens, was appointed Judge and Magistrate.

Mr. Caunter's name is frequently met with, and he occupied many important posts from time to time, including that of Superintendent. One of the most curious is that of Acting Chaplain. As Chaplain he baptized, married and buried members of the Anglican Community in Penang: and

this he did up to the time of the arrival of the first Padre, the Reverend Atwell Lake in 1805, and repeatedly, after that date, when the Chaplain was on leave. In 1801 we find him marrying Thomas Burston Peirce, Commander of H.C.S. "*Taunton Castle*," to Anna Maria Fearon, Spinster, of Prince of Wales Island; J. P. Fearon and the Governor, Sir George Leith, were the witnesses. In 1803 he married Charles Sealy and Elizabeth Palmer Mannington, daughter of Phillip Mannington, who succeeded Light as Superintendent in 1794 and who died in 1795. Elizabeth was thus the sister of Philip Mannington who was 2nd Assistant to Major Macdonald and Magistrate, who died in 1806. There was another brother, Robert, who stood as Godfather to Charles Sealy's son in 1804. In 1804 Mr. Caunter married Patrick Chiene, merchant, to Elizabeth Brymer; D. Brown was one of the witnesses.

James Scott, senior, died on September 20th, 1808, his son James having died on July 23rd. These were the founders of "James Town" which they hoped would prove a successful rival to George Town, the seat of Government, where Sir Edward Stanley, the newly appointed Recorder and Judge, was making things rather unpleasant for independent and high spirited planters. James Scott had another son William, who survived him and died at the ripe age of 83.

W. E. Phillips who came to Penang as Private Secretary to Sir George Leith was, from the day of his arrival to the day of his departure from the island, continually in the public eye. He acted as Lieut. Governor between 1800 and 1805. After 1805 he acted as Governor and in 1820 he was finally appointed Governor, which office he held until his departure in 1824. He lived for 30 years at home after his retirement. In his time St. George's Church was built and consecrated, and in his time too, and mainly owing to his endeavours, slavery was finally abolished in the Island. He also, like Mr. Caunter, was intimately associated with the social life of the Settlement. He married (and incidentally was married himself), he baptized and he buried. In 1809 he was called upon to baptize the youngest son of Quinton Dick Thompson and Marianne Raffles, his wife. The boy was christened William O'Bryen Drury, and his godparents were Rear Admiral William O'Bryen Drury, Thomas Raffles and Olivia Marianne Raffles. A month later Mr. Phillips was called upon to bury the father. Marianne the mother was married again two years later to Captain Flint in Malacca. Mr. Phillips baptized at the same

time as the little Dick Thompson was brought to the font, the daughter of Thomas and Catherine Church; and Marianne Thompson and her brother Stamford Raffles and his wife Olivia stood as Godparents. The following year his services were again required in connection with the Raffles family. This time he married Leonora, a younger sister of Stamford Raffles, to Billington Loftie, surgeon, and Thomas Raffles again signed the Register. This seems to have been a popular wedding, for Mr. Clubley, Mr. John Macalister, Mr. W. Ibbetson and Mr. J. L. Phipps also signed.

Mr. Clubley married in 1817 Margaret Carnegy, the sister of James and Patrick Carnegy. He was the first owner of the "Crag" which was then known as "Clubley's Hill." He died in 1826 aged 36 years, being at the time of his death Senior Member of the Council. Mr. John Macalister was also Senior Member of Council when he died in 1824, aged 39.

Mr. Phipps was one of the "Senior Merchants" and married in 1817 Marianne Bailey. Mr. Ibbetson was afterwards Governor; he married in 1817 Harriet Georgina Hutchings Bennett, the widow of W. Bennett whom she had married in 1811. She was a sister of Mr. G. and Mr. R. Caunter. The Ibbetsons had a son, Samuel Kerr, who was at Winchester College in 1837. In 1817, which was a great year for marriages, a sister of Mrs. Ibbetson, Sarah Sparke Caunter, was married to Captain Thomas Larkins of H. C. S. "*Marquis of Campden*." The following year another sister of James and Patrick Carnegy, Mary Alison, was married to John Anderson of H. C. Civil Service, and Messrs. Carnegy, Clubley, Phipps, Erskine, Ibbetson, etc., rolled up to make sure that almost the last bachelor of their small circle was safely tied up. But a month later, June 30th, a double wedding took place (no doubt in the newly built Church of St. George the Martyr) which must have been the social event of the year. Mr. Phillips married Janet Bannerman. At the same time and in the same place Mr. Henry Burney, a Lieutenant in the Bengal Army, also married Janet Bannerman, and the Reverend Joseph Rawlins Hutchings A. M., who performed the ceremony, did not think fit to give any explanation or specify more clearly who these ladies were. But from private sources it has been possible to clear up the difficulty. Mr. Phillips married Janet, daughter of Colonel Bannerman, the Governor, and Henry Burney married Janet, the daughter of the Rev. James Patrick Bannerman and the

niece of the Governor. The Governor and his wife, Mr. A. J. Kerr, the Registrar, and Mr. James Low signed both registers. Mr. Phillips' name was added for Mr. Burney's wedding and Mr. Burney's for Mr. Phillips'.

The Phillips in the course of time had a son, Charles Palmer, and Charles Palmer Phillips had three sons, all at Winchester College, the second one, by name Charles Bannerman Phillips, was for long a well-known and much respected housemaster there and is still alive today.

Mr. Burney was a brother of Fanny Burney (Madame d'Arblay) and was the author of the famous treaty with Bangkok in 1826. Later he was British Resident at Ava from 1829 to 1838. He also had two sons at Winchester, the second of whom bore the name of Alexander d'Arblay. After the wedding, no doubt they all repaired to Suffolk to cut the cakes and make appropriate speeches.

The social life must have been very pleasant at that time in Penang. It was one big family party. One finds that many of one's preconceived ideas of life in the East in those days have to be revised. Life was not the exile that one sometimes imagined it to have been. Brothers came out together and then sent for their sisters. Stamford Raffles not only had his wife with him, but three sisters as well. The Carnegys were a party of two brothers and two sisters. The Caunters were the same.

The Bannermans were a large party including a niece of the Governor. There were also the Cousens. George Alexander married Martha, one of the sisters, while Jemima stayed on with her brother and died unmarried. And there seem to have been children in every household. John Hall, Deputy Collector of Customs, and Rosemary Ann his wife had six children in ten years. James Cousens, by the way, married a sister of John Hall. The Scotts, Browns, Carnegys, Chienes and Dickens all had growing families and there must have been more European children in Penang in 1822 than there are today. There were many nice homes with boys and girls growing up together. Then again, there was much coming and going. People went away to Calcutta, Madras, Malacca, Bencoolen and further afield to the Cape and to China on business or for health—not perhaps for pleasure! Two out of the three Members of Council appointed in 1805 were drowned. Alexander Gray went down in the "*Blenheim*" off Mauritius and his wife was with him. Colonel Norman Macalister and his wife were drowned in a typhoon off the coast of China.

In 1811 the first real globe trotter visited the Island, Mr. James Wathen. On his voyage out he had read Johnson's *Oriental Voyages*, and he expected much of Penang, for Johnson declared that "the island, from the salubrity of its air was justly esteemed the Montpelier of India, and from the dawn of day until the sun has emerged above the high mountains of Queda, and even for some time after this period, Penang rivals anything that has been fabled of the Elysian Fields." Wathen at the end of his two months' visit agreed with all that Johnson had said in its praise. On his arrival at Penang his first duty was to report immediately at the office of the Town Major—Major J. M. Coombs 25th M.N.I. This gentleman who was also a Magistrate, was once challenged to fight a duel by John Macalister, a fellow Magistrate. There was a considerable disturbance over the matter and Macalister was severely reprimanded by the authorities at home. Having performed this necessary duty Wathen was free to come and go and enjoy the hospitality of all the friendly folk in Penang, many of whose names have been mentioned already. He dined at Suffolk with Mr. Phillips, who at the time of his visit was Acting Governor, and was delighted with the house. "A splendid mansion" he exclaimed. The entertainment provided thoroughly met with his approval. Mr. Phillips was still a bachelor but he knew how to do things well. Ten years later when Crawford visited him and his wife, he says that Suffolk was the most beautiful place in all India, with the one exception of Barrackpore. Wathen met at dinner Sir Edward Stanley and his lady, Dr. and Mrs. McKinnon—the Doctor was the Senior Surgeon at the Residency—Mr. John Hall and his wife Rosemary Ann—the mother of Charles, Rose, Emma, Ellen; Edward William Phillips and Morris James; Mr. Haliburton the Sheriff, and many others, all the best people in fact, which seems to have gratified our globe-trotter very much. Dr. McKinnon lived at Treelough, his country place near the Burman village, and thither Wathen repaired and from there made expeditions to the corn mills of Mr. Ameer at Ayer Itam, and also, with Mr. Phillips' permission, he ascended to "the top of Penang mountains" and visited "Convalescent." On his way he passed a handsome dwelling which he was informed was once the residence of Colonel Macalister, formerly Governor of Penang, who with his lady and children and near 200 persons were lost in a typhoon off the coast of China. "These anecdotes," the timid little man exclaims "leave an unpleasant impression on the mind, particularly at a time

when one is engaged in the prosecution of a long and dangerous voyage!" However, he recovered his spirits and spent a happy month walking about the lanes near Mount Olivia and the Burman village: or in being carried in the Doctor's palanquin to George Town, where he walked with much interest about the streets. It must have been very different then to now, for then we find many trades were in the hands of Europeans. There were Europeans working as Printers, Tavern Keepers, Fiddler, Hair Dresser, Coachmaker, Watchmaker, Cooper and Shipwright. The Governor's coachman and valet were also English. Among his little jaunts we can well imagine that he visited the Post Office and perhaps he was somewhat tickled by finding the following notice:

"No letter will be received at the Post Office without the Postage being sent with it, nor will any letter be delivered unless the postage is paid to the Peon, or the Person signs a receipt for it. For the accommodation of the Residents on the Island however a Register will be permitted to be kept for this Postage account on the understood condition that all postage claims are *regularly settled every month.*"

On October 17th Wathen attended a christening at Treelough of an infant daughter of Dr. and Mrs. McKinnon. The Register, now in St. George's Church, shows that there were two daughters of the Doctor baptized that day—Maria Sophia and Sophia Jane—but Wathen seemed to have been more struck by the appearance of the Ayah than by anything else, and may have overlooked Maria Sophia or Sophia Jane, or been confused by the repetition of the name. According to him "The most remarkable object at this ceremony was an ancient Hindoo nurse who had lived many years in the family. She was dressed in a style so youthful and gay, and so bedizened with mock jewels, in her ears, nose, hair, etc. and was so full of consequence upon this grand occasion that the Doctor, in making me observe her airs, thought it proper to say that though this vanity of finery was ridiculous in so old a duenna, yet it was a comical fault and pardonable, as she was an excellent servant, careful and faithful, affectionate to the children and devoted to her mistress."

She seems to have been rather a jewel of a servant and somewhat of an exception to the usual run of domestics for, as a contrast to her, it is interesting to read the following notice which was issued about the time of Wathen's visit to the Island:-

“Almost daily complaints having been made to the Magistrate respecting servants leaving the employ of their masters without giving intimation of their intention of so doing and thereby putting their employers or their families to great inconvenience. It is hereby ordered that all persons serving in the capacity of servants on this island, are to give their employers warning of their intention of quitting their service one month at least previous to their so doing. And any servant who shall be found guilty of acting contrary of this order, will be taken up and brought before the Sitting Magistrate where he will be fined a sum not exceeding 10 Spanish dollars and be liable to be committed to the House of Conviction for a period not exceeding one month.”

Registration of Servants was not necessary in those days. They managed quite well without it, or at least found other methods of dealing with the domestic problem. A few days after the McKinnon Baptisms, Wathen attended a funeral in the old cemetery and there was much impressed by “two ancient sons of Neptune” who remained, after the funeral, one at each grave (for there were two British seamen buried at the time) leaning on their sticks in deep contemplation. “Meagre was their look and pale”—“some baleful disease had seized their vitals”—whose vitals he referred to is not quite clear.

However, on the whole he thoroughly enjoyed himself and his last remarks on Penang were these: “It is with regret I quit this delightful spot, emulating in beauty and produce the seat of Paradise itself. I shall ever cherish the remembrance of the kindness I received from those families in it, with whom I had the honour of being acquainted, and I request that they will accept my thanks, esteem and gratitude.”

And here too we must take leave of Penang and those early days of its existence.

THE SETTLEMENT OF PENANG:

by James Scott

*Edited by K. J. FIELDING
(Received May 1954)*

Originally published in *JMBRAS*, Vol. 28 Pt 1 (No. 169), March 1955.

OF SCARCELY less importance than Francis Light in the settlement of Penang was his friend and partner, James Scott. The beginning of his career, and his precise relations with Light, the official government, and with his rivals in trade are uncertain. But there is no question that while Light was alive, Scott's influence was great; and that after his partner's death, his power grew steadily in spite of the constant opposition of successive Superintendents. A despatch written by Scott to Henry Dundas in 1794, which has recently been acquired by the British Museum,¹ now helps to give a better idea of Scott's aims and ambitions for Penang, and the state of the settlement immediately after Light's death on 21st October 1794.

Scott was the second cousin of Sir Walter Scott. He was a shipmate of Francis Light from 1761-3, and later he followed him to India, reaching Calcutta in October, 1774.² He came east as steward on a vessel hired by the East India Company, and presumably had little or no capital. Subsequently he apparently obtained command of a ship engaged in the country trade; for, according to Walter Lennon, who met him at Penang in 1795: "He had formerly been a Captain ... ,but being unfortunate he had been obliged to live chiefly among the Malays, on the Island Junkceylon."³ It was at Junk Ceylon that both Scott and Light made their trading headquarters, and after a few years they have even said to have been in partnership,⁴ Scott's trading brought him into conflict with the Dutch; and in 1785 he wrote an indignant despatch to Warren Hastings to complain of arrest, on suspicion of "gun running," by the Governor of Malacca. At the same time he earnestly advocated that the Company should take advantage of a further offer to cede Junk Ceylon, from the local Governor. He warmly commended Light, and went on, "You may perhaps ask who this James Scott is. I will here, in part, anticipate the answer. He is a Scotsman struggling to pay off some

incumbrances incurred during the war, formerly a trading master and owner, otherwise but little known, but will be happy should his misfortunes turn out eventually of use to his country.”⁵

Scott was delighted when, the following year, Light was finally authorised to occupy Penang, and he wrote to congratulate the Company on entrusting its “design ... to a man of local knowledge and large experience.”⁶ He was not among those who landed with Light on the 16th July 1786, but he certainly followed soon after, and in January, 1808, actually claimed that he had then been on the island for upwards of twenty-two years. According to his own account it was in 1787 that “Scott and Light joined stocks,”⁷ and for as long as his friend administered the settlement he undoubtedly had a large voice in its management. The exact terms of the partnership are not clear, but according to Scott it seems to have been agreed that he should be left solely in charge of the company, while Light was to guarantee “perfect liberty of trade to all frequenting the port.” Light, himself, wrote to his friend George Doughty: “My Expenses exceeding salary just as 2 to 1 ... I should long ago have been Obligated to leave Superintending, had I not engaged in partnership with James Scott, a most Expert Merchant.”⁸ The agreement, no doubt, greatly helped to secure Scott his predominant position as the chief trader of the settlement.

At the same time it is clear that his enormous success was also largely due to his own ability. After Light's death he was continually at odds with his official successors, but, far from declining, his power continued to increase. Major Forbes Ross Macdonald, who was appointed in 1796, kept up an active feud with Scott, whom he regarded as arrogant and insubordinate; but although he reported that he was in an “agony of despair at the daily retrogradation of his influence from a period somewhat antecedent to Mr. Light's death,”⁹ the firm of Scott & Co. increased its hold until it virtually controlled the entire trade of the island.¹⁰ Even although Macdonald disliked Scott, moreover, he was compelled to admit that so far as he knew Scott, among the merchants of Penang, conducted his trade honourably.¹¹ He conceded, too, that in spite of his shrewdness, “his views have always tended to the property of the island towards which his own improvements, on an extended scale contribute.”¹² Scott lacked official favour because he was

independent, and in case of dispute was always prepared to appeal to higher authority. Other reasons for dislike, moreover, were his freer manners, and his close contacts with the various races of the peninsula. Scott, himself, mentioned in a report that “the great Merchants of Bengall could nit bear, with any degree of patience, that Pinang, the other day a jungle, that Scott, a perfect Malay, should dictate to them”;¹³ while Major Macdonald complained that, for several years and “in every respect,” Scott had adopted Malay “dress, manners, and mode of living,” even more closely than Light; and he declared that he considered such a “versatility, dishonourable and degenerate”.¹³

In later years, until his death in 1808, Scott was often in a position to harrass the Government if not to dictate his terms. Macdonald had reported that “of every spot which Mr. Scott’s sagacity pointed out as at a future hour, likely to become valuable, he has ... made himself a part owner”;¹⁴ and Macdonald’s successor, Sir George Leith, found that Scott & Co., had not only acquired the Superintendent’s house, for which an exorbitant rent was demanded, but that it had bought up the last available building site. Eventually Government House had to be leased from the firm. Certainly the low-lying land opposite Pulau Jerejak, which is recommended in the following despatch as an alternative site for the capital of the island, had already been acquired by Scott: for it was there that he established the village of Jamestown – one of his less successful speculations.

At the time of writing the despatch to Dundas, however, the whole future of Penang was in doubt. As the report makes clear, the traders of the island were still uneasy at the possibility that the Company was about to give it up in favour of one of the Andamans. Admiral Cornwallis advocated the move; and a Major Kyd had been despatched from Calcutta to investigate their relative advantages. Although his conclusions, given in his report of the 20th August 1795, were more or less in favour of Penang, the settlers had good reason to be anxious. Some time in 1794, therefore, James Scott had been “prevailed upon to act as their spokesman,”¹⁵ and, apparently as a result, Light had asked him “to prepare a report from our books of the nature and value of the import trade ... and other advantages.”¹⁶ It was as a consequence of this anxiety, therefore, that Scott began his despatch in August 1794, and completed it in December.

The two letters with which it was enclosed followed one another on the same folded sheet; and its composition was presumably delayed by the administrative work which must have fallen on Scott during Light's last illness. He had been nominated as one of Light's executors in company with Thomas Pigou, whom he mentions in the second letter, whom Light had also recommended as his successor "in the Civil Department":¹⁷

To the Right Hon'ble Henry Dundas Esqr.

Pinang, August 25th, 1794.

Honble Sir,

I have perused a treaties on India said to be compiled under your direction, which has given me much information of easy Application from the Clear arrangement of Previous Circumstances, Resulting Consequences, and Comprehensive Suggestions. – Corrective or Amending to which little can be added.

But, as the same publication Acknowledges, where a paucity of Information Renders the Correcting or Amending suggestions less conclusive and at [the] same time invites the Communication of such information as Local Scite may have generated in Any Individual.

And as I have spent some part of my life among a people and Scenery which seems little known, I have taken the liberty of transmitting such part of my local Service thereof as I apprehend may prove useful.

Knowing the multiplicity of matters which hourly require your attention I have evaded the Detail and touched only on such prominent features as tended to give a Clear and Comprehensive conception.

I trust youll overlook inaccuracies or Omissions in Consideration of the Active and hurried Scene in which I live.

I have the Honor to be with all Esteem and Respect.

Honble Sir.

Your most Obedt Svt.

J. A. Scott.¹⁸

December 25th, 1794.

Honble Sir,

Since writing this, and Before a Convenient Occasion offered for sending to Bengall, our late worthy superintendant Departed this life, the 22nd October '94; and, in Casting my eye Around I cannot find a Successor enabled to Carry into their full and Pervading Effect the few Regulations Recommended, none being Acquainted with Existing Circumstances and Actors therein. Mr. Pegou, his Assistant. offers Fairest to give Effect to the variety of Operations and negociations which he had in hand, and which will otherwise be forgot or neglected,

I have the Honour to Remain,
Honble Sir, Your most Obedt. Servt.

J. A. Scott.

A Narrative of the Circumstances which led to the Settling of the Island Pinang in 1786.

Previous to the peace of 1763 we had little or no Country trade to China or its Archipelago, which was totally in the hands of the Chinese, Arabs and Dutch.

Soon after the peace of 1763, and the quiet management of the produce of Bengall, we began to send one or two vessels to the Straits of Malacca, annually, [and] in 1768 we began to resort to a port on the Island Bintang, called Rhiow, where the Kings of Johore had liberty to trade in the *Independant produce of the Chinese Archipelago tho Items of the Dutch monopoly.*

But having to struggle against a previous arrangement under an oppressive monopoly, the Adventures were attended with much loss to the Adventures Individual, and Eventually to much Benefit to the Community. Because the Adventurers were in general Company's servants who at the Solicitation of Individuals entered into this trade and as one Sett Sold out and another Commenced in Succession until they Banished all Competitors; who, as merchants, could not afford to Lose in their Company. We were, about '73, beginning to Reap Some Benefitt from our having

thus done away Competition when we were disturbed by the Accession of France to the American War.

Previous to this our trade to Rhiow had given much umbrage to the Dutch, who could ill brook a port of Competition so near their Capital, and they determined without passable pretext to Ruin the King of Johore and his trading Port of Rhiow.

This the short sighted avarice of the King soon furnished. As it is Explanatory of the subject I shall Briefly relate the Circumstances attending and Consequences resulting:—

Inability or Inattention in Admiral Hughes, and the Activity of the French Frigates and Island Privateers had so far repressed Individual Adventure as to occasion the Company's sending their own Opium to Market on their own Accord and Risque, The *Betsy*, Capt. Geddes, with a Cargo of this Opium, Arrived at Rhiow, and was there Blocked up by a Dutch and French Ship, who Offered the King 1/3 of the plunder if he would permit them to take her from under his Guns, He assented to this, and *Betsy* and Cargo was Captured.

But a tardiness in the Dutch who were his agents (for he wished to conceal his share of the transaction from the English) in Bringing his Share to Account, induced him to approach Malacca with a considerable force, in order to give more weight to his demand. This, in the End, produced a Warr which Continued Active two years, with Various Success, and Ended in the Death of the King and Capture of Rhiow.

The inhabitants Retired with their principal Effects to the Port of Succadana, but being followed there after the peace by some English Vessels, for the purpose of trade, they were Plundered and dispersed by the Dutch. As Salengore had joined in the war, it was Occupied, Trangano and Quedah, the only ports with which we traded, threatened, and measures the most severe — Among which was private Assassination adopted by the Government of Batavia — entirely to Exclude us from this trade.

While these matters were passing, the empires of Ava and Siam were at war; and a fleet of Vessels sent by the Emperor of Ava, to Capture Tunsaling having been friendly Received by the King of Quedah, his Lord Paramount, the king of Siam threatened to Smash him the first Occasion.

It so happened that the Spain and Dutch threats came to hand at [the] same time, which had such an Effect on the King as to induce him in hopes of Protection to give Pinang to the English thro Mr. Light.

Rhiow was attacked and Blockade in '82:3, and Occupyd by the Dutch in 1784: 5; and Pinang was occupied by the Government of Bengall in August 1786.

A. three years Experience of the want at a Port where we Could Exchange the produce of India with that of the Chinese Archipelago, and a two warrs Experience of inconvenience attending the long recess of our Fleets to Bombay, had generated an Opinion in both Government and Individuals that a Port to the Eastward of the Bay of Bengall was necessary, and they hoped Pinang would answer both these purposes.

Under such Impressions, had Government ordered proper surveys, or given Credence to those which were ordered, we may Suppose they would have adopted measures adequate to Rendering the place Beneficiall at the least possible Expense.

But either from Indecision, a want of Power, or a Change of Sentiment indicated by Occupying the Andamans, nothing was done.

Pinang was occupied in 1786, the Andamans in 1787. Both were uninhabited jungles, and as it appeared that no Preference was given until December 1792, they were — during the Period of 5 and 6 years — left to try their Natural Advantages; and this Result ought to have weighed in giving a preference to either.

In Regard to Natural Situation, the one is a Rugged Rocky Shore, with no ground at a Distance of 1 or 2 Leagues and in many Places Close to the Rocks — Situated in the Strength of Both monsoons and subject to frequent Gales. The other has 50 fathom Twenty Leagues off, which Shoals Regularly as you approach a fine Muddy Bottom — is Covered from the one Monsoon by the high Land of Sumatra and from the other by the high Land of the Malay Peninsula, making all its Environs a Good Roadstead and it never knew a Gale.

In Regard to Communication, of which much has been said and Little Experienced in the one, and much Experienced and Little said about [in] the other, I shall only mention one preference which Pinang has, viz:— In

October, when our fleets Leave the Coast, they are at Pinang in 10 days to 15 days, and in July from Pinang to Madras in 15 to 20; whereas the Passage to the Andamans in October is very uncertain and Tedious, and in July almost Impracticable without first coming near Pinang.

As to the Harbours of each, we are safe in saying:—

That during the Period Instanced 2000 vessels have entered and rode in Penang without one Accident going or Coming: the Indiamen at 24ft. come in at one end and work out at the other with ease and safety, and the harbour within P^o. Jerajah has anchorage for 50 to 100 sail. Seven fathom up and Down within the Rocks, Convenient for Docks or Heaving Down to, is a perfect Bason incapable of being forced if defended with a few Batteries.

During same period one of 3 vessels appointed to carry stores to the Andamans has been Lost, and the other two Drove ashore in the harbour. Such other vessels as has gone or Come have Complained heavily of the Gales and other Inconveniences; and his majesty's frigate the Perserverance, in a Passage to Madras in June-July, was Almost made a wreck of.

In December '92 their acquired Improvements consequent to possession stood thus:—

The Andamans Remained as Occupied in '87, without Acquired population, trade or Revenue, and with Little or no Cultivation. Pinang had Invited About 300 vessels Annually to frequent its port for trade, Provisions or Repairs, and 2 to 3000 Country vessels; had acquired a Population of 20 to 30,000 Independent of its Establishment; produced a Revenue on the Luxurys of its Inhabitants of £7500 per annum; and they have about 7000 to 10,000 Acres in Cultivation.

The Expense to Government has been 250 Chests Opium. About £2000 marine stores per annum, or nearly, including Military Stores, £20,000 a year. This it promises soon to defray from its own Resources provided it be declared now and for ever a *free Port*.

Nothing herein Advanced can be controverted as the for and Against each is the Result of 8 years Experience.

Forts, Bridges, Wharfs, Hospitals etc. occupy its Revenue now, but which will Revert when these are finished.

And as all the officers and troops with the Bombay Cruizer etc. would be paid whether Pinang was settled or not, the additional Civil list seems no object when compared with the Extension of the trade which is produced thereby.

You may observe that I have Drawn a line under these words: *The independant produce of the Chinese Archipelago tho Items of the Dutch Monopoly.*

And I intend on an Explanation with the more confidence as the elucidation of the Policy of the Dutch in Governing the Great East (as they call it) is in some degree involved in the Explanation and may repay the time spent in Perusal.

When the Dutch, by the Exclusion of other European Nations, became the Commercial Sovereigns of these Numerous and Extensive Islands latterly called the Chinese Archipelago, and which is bounded by the Philippines, New Holland, Java, Sumatra and Continent of Asia, they either Continued the mercantile contracts previously made by others or made new ones similar with all the Petty rajahs, the produce of whose Countrys promised a Profit adequate to Keeping a Fortyfyd Factory.

In these contracts are to be traced the origin of the Malay princes being the only Merchants in their Countries, Because the Prince became the only seller to the Dutch of the Produce of his Country, and the only seller to his people of what he Received in Return.

The prices agreed on at the time these contracts were formed, as they were voluntary, were probably equal Between the Parties; but now from a change of Situation and Circumstance, they are barely 1/3 of the price on the fair Markett. As this difference became gradually Considerable and no Competition Offered, no change in the Relative Situation of the Parties took Place, and the Dutch Companys gains were great and Expencc Small. But when a Competition opened the eyes of the Natives, Smuggling Commenced.

Had the Dutch Company at this period increased their Prices in Degree so as nearly to Quadrate with the Change in Circumstance, as the Natives are not Adventurous unless the gain be great, they would have prevented smuggling and Reserved a Great tho lessened Profit at a Small Expencc. But in choosing the Alternative they unfortunately rnultiplyd

their cruizers and increased their Establishments to render the Exclusive Receipts pervading, [and] Punished Deveations with unparalleled severity. Yet some few escaped, and they returned with such tidings as inflamed Cupidity. All became smuglers. The Dutch Expences Encreased and their Receipts decreased in a Similar Ratio. The Dutch in this State severely felt the increasing Expence and Decreasing Receipts, which, in place of teaching them wisdom only increased their Severity which got to so Barbarous a height as to Occasion frequent Migrations from the Countrys under the Dutch Monopoly to the jungles with which they are surrounded. These migrations in fortunate Circumstances gave rise to new states; new states to new produce, both independant of the Dutch. This is what I call the *Independant* Produce. Tho items which the Dutch Monopolize.

But, while migrations in fortunate circumstances formed New States and new produce, others became Pyrates. This the Dutch winked [at], as it tended to make the Monopoly more compleat, every Pyrate Being equal [to] a Cruiser; and they Remedyd any Stoppages in their Licensed trade by Annual Ships of their own of Force, so as not to dread the pyrates: thus Sacrifying the Property of their Subjects to preserve an Oppressive monopoly to themselves – and fostering a hive with that plunder which promises Eventually to smother them.

These are the Sources of the Decline of the Dutch Company.

To all their other Errors they added the fresh one of Seizing the *independant* produce as if under Exclusive Contracts, which Involved them in Warrs with all the independant Sovereigns. These warrs, tho of Little Consequence which side lost, involved a great Expence to the Company from peculation in their Servants; and the Consequence of their last one with the King of Johore has been the giving a sitem and unity to the dispersed Pyrates who under the wandering King of Johore now commit Depredations in Batavia Roads along the Coast of Java and almost interrupt all Communication; and they have Perfect Security among those Congeries of Islands which lay Between Borneo, Sumatra, and Malay Peninsula, so that unless the Dutch are aided or amend their present Sitem, the consequences may be fatal. especially if aided by any European power.

On the Nature, Extent and Aim of the trade of Pinang.

The produce of the Chinese Archipelago ever has, and probably ever will, draw money from China in proportion to the Relative wants of each.

On this taken for Granted we wish, to pay for the Surplus which China wants, in the produce of India and Receive for the inhabitants of the Archipelago the Specie they now Receive, which we may either Supply India with or Square our Europe Deficit.

The squaring differences in China by this mode is Better than finding Specie either from Bengall or Europe, and better than sending Cotton from the West of India while it is our aim to increase an export of woollens, and as the probable Resulting Surplus will do more in a little time than square differences. Return of treasure to India and more Export from Europe are two Beneficial Consequences.—Besides an Encrease of our Indian tonnage to which is owing in a great measure that Stability which neither the French nor Portuguese could acquire Before.

To aid our wishes in this and remove Sundry Impediments some Regulations will be necessary. The propriety of these Regulations may in some measure be Drawn from the preceding Elucidations. But as it is difficult to dictate orders while strangers to Local Scite and Circumstances, as Severally Related, I have put them in the form in which your Superintendant will understand them:—

1st. That Pinang, at least for the present, be declared a free Port.

This will appear wise when it is Considered that the trade is not an *import of Consumpt.*.. nor an *Export of Produce*, but a gain in Exchanges of others; and it seems wiser to trust to a Sure Revenue from an Encrease of Capital and Population consequent to a *free* trade, than trust to one on a Passing commodity which Impediments may move elsewhere: as every duty will hurt more in repressing an Import of People and Capital than it will Benefitt in immediate Receipts.—Besides, the harm done is Permanent, the Benefit only Occasional and uncertain.

2d. In order to wave all disputes with the Dutch India Co. in Effecting our orders for the Extension of the trade of Pinang with the Chinese Archipelago, we have — by a Separate Convention — Ascertained the Countrys under Exclusive Contracts, a Schedule of which we now inclose; and with those powers or Countrys we Request you will not Interfere.¹⁹ But you will endeavour to Effect such Arrangements with the independant Princes as will tend to the mutual Benefitt and safety of our Subjects and theirs in trading with each Other. But, as the produce of the Independant Countrys are in many Instances the same as that of the Countrys under Exclusive Contracts to the Dutch, and thence may be Impeded in Export on Native Bottoms by the Dutch Guarda Costas, it will be necessary for the Superintendent at Pinang to Countersign a Sufficient Number of Passports for each prince with whom he may form arrangements which will procure a quiet Passage from the Dutch — or such other mode as may Secure a safe Communication between the parties.

3d. We are given to understand that the present Alarming power of the Pyrates in the Eastern Seas Originated in the dutch Refusing to grant all or any Part of the Countrys formerly Possessed by the Sulthauns of Johore, which has reduced Sulthaun Mahommed to the necessity of Associating with and Directing the Pyrates equally as a present means of Subsistence, and as annoying his Enemies the Dutch.

And being Anxious to Remove every impediment to the Extension of our Commerce to the Chinese Archipelago, and further inclined to aid Sulthaun Mahommed as far as our subsisting treatys with the Dutch will admit, from a belief that he has and now Suffers from his Connection with us —

We desire that the Superintendent at Pinang be directed to inform himself of the Nature of the Claims he has:

Those which as an Ultimatum he is willing to accept. Those which the Dutch now offers. Accompanied with the Superintendent's sentiments on the Best mode of Accommodation in order that we may be enabled to interfere in his favour with Propriety and Effect.

4th. That the Superintendent at Pinang be directed to report how far

the Dutch now do or have heretofore impeded at Malacca the passing or repassing of China junks or other Native Vessells, and to instance such as may have Come to his Knowledge, Accompanyd with such certifications as may be possible.

5th. That the Superintendant be directed to inform himself wether any Impediments are laid on our Ships in the Dutch Ports to the Eastward, and wether they trade under a General Standing Order or by particular License Successively Procured.

6th. That the Superintendant of Pinang be directed to Negotiate with the King if Quedah for a Space on the Coast Opposite Pinang.

Say from Tanging Taga on North to the River Carrion on the South, and inland to the fountains which divide Quedah and Trangano.

This we are Anxious to attain in order to Acquire the Entire Sovereignty of the Port of Pinang, and to have Pasturage equal to Rearing any Given quantity of Cattle Independant of Foreign Supply should Experience give a preference at a future period to Pinang as a Marine port.

That the Superintendant be directed to report on the Best Possible sistem of Marine Defence in Order at same time to protect the Native trade and annoy the Pyrates — and the Expençe attending the Same.

These few Regulations involves an Extent of Effect, which will be found Generally favourable to the Extension of the most Lucrative trade we have, and thence to the Encrease of the Country Tonnage to which you must Look up for the Binding the Several parts of your Extended Empire in one. This truth will Every day become more and more known and it Freely deserves the fostering Care of Government.

When we consider the Country Tonnage in this Light, the impolicy of allowing Foreign Nations to Import into our ports the Produce of India, especially the Americans, will appear.

As if permitted, they will gradually become the Carriers of India, Annihilate your Tonnage (as they can Carry Cheaper than our Country tonnage), and on a future Day Join your Enemys and Leave you without Resource.

The extending the Navigation Act to India, modifyd in the number of English Navigators to the Circumstances Existing would Ruin the Americans and all others which adventured in that line.

It seems to be a mistaken Policy, the impeding Mariners to Remain in India if the Tonnage is 1000, the Mariners necessary to a Lawful Clearance from your ports should be 2 to Every 100 Tons — and so on. This would at all Times preserve a fund of Reservists, ready on Demand as Exigence Required, Accustomed to the Country and involving no Public Expense.

Remarks on the Foregoing Regulations.

On 1st. That Every Port Carrying on a Commerce of Oeconomy should have a freedom from Imposts sums admitted, and that relying on the influx of people and Capital Sums [as] a preferable and more certain Source of Revenue than that on a Passing Commodity. — Besides, while none is Levied at Pinang and 6 per cent at Malacca, it is clear the trade, the people, and Capital, will Remove from one to the other — unless where it is Founded on an Import of Consumpt. or Export of Produce.

On 2d. The Absurd and unheard of Pretensions of the Dutch to the Exclusive produce and Navigation of the Chinese Archipelago, and the Stretches of power they have Exhibited to Carry these Pretensions into Effect, Especially to the Country Native Vessels, Requires the Strictest enquiry and the most pointed Restrictions.

On 3d. Somewhat is necessary to [be] done on this: either Effective means adopted by the Dutch, or Effective aid given by their allies to Crush their increasing power, or then some Accomodation with Sultraun Mahommed. But if matters are allowed to proceed in the progressive Ratio they have done these 6 years Past, all trade, and probably Pinang and most of the out dutch settlements, will fall a Sacrifice.

In every view the present state is Dangerous, Especially should a turn in European Politics enable any one to join with them.

4th. Forms only a more nearly Connected Branch of the 2d.

5th. Is proper to be Known because I believe they do not adhere to Provisions agreed on between the Governments.

On 6th. This is an Object of the Utmost Import and ought not to be delayed an hour. The protection of the King Quedah in the quiet possession of his other domains as an accessory to Pinang is a necessary measure, and would be a Dower adequate to procuring the Space Described.

I have Reserved last Some Remarks on the Latter Part of the 2d. as requiring a fuller Explanation.

We have no Accounts when or how the Malays Established themselves on the Sea Coasts of the Islands in the Chinese Archipelago, But we find them the Sovereigns of most of them, so Situate on the mouths of such Rivers as have extensive Inland Communications as to Command the Import and Export trade of the neighbouring districts. The Government is entirely Feudall, and their power Capable of great Effective defence, tho Capable of no foreign Annoyance. They are the Sole merchants when Forreigners or Europeans come to trade, tho their Subjects Import and Export on their own vessells duty Free.

So Situated, they are individually difficult to Annoy by their preserving about 2 or 3 Leagues of Jungle along the Sea and fortifying the mouths of the Rivers. Another Source of their Safety is the Prize being of small value and its attainment attended with some Risque and great Expence.

Hence even the preserving their Country in Quiet involves no great Responsibility, as Giving them arms would Enable them to Baffle a Larger force than the Object would warrant any Power to Send Against them: without further interference on our Part.

And hence Mercantile Arrangements cannot Involve government in any unforeseen trouble or Expence, provided always Definite Arrangements are previously made with the Dutch who are the only Power Large or Small inimical to your Success in this quarter.

Some Thoughts on the Scite of the Capital of Pinang and fortifications necessary both as a Mercantile and Marine Port.

Our present Station is in a sand Bank nearly Insulated by a Creek. The Bank itself is intersected with salt Nullahs, and is in most places 12 inches below Equinoctial Spring tides, and where highest about 18 Inches above them. Hence it presents in the Rainy season, at high water, a curious Scene of Houses and Streets and hillocks interested by or surrounded with water.

And it may be Expected, as Accumulated filth Consequent to increased population and Decreased circulation, that it will be unhealthy. It has a further Inconvenience, as no fortifications Could give greater Security than the Road of Madras affords.

Our Remaining on such a Spott is one Consequence of the Indecision of Government. But a Removal, if carried into Effect Immediately, would not be attended with much trouble to the Community.

We understand that the Government has it in Contemplation to fortify the whole Land Base, which will require a great Expence and a Large force.

If Pinang is Retained Simply as a *mercantile station* such fortifications are unnecessary. If as a Marine Port they are useless as giving No Security to a fleet under Repairs.

About 7 miles to the Southward, at a Place called Battu Lanchon, is an Elevated dry plain of Sufficient Extent for a Fort and a City, and being Contiguous to the Inner harbour and all ships coming up the Channel being obliged to steer direct for it; and its Defences forming a Cross fire with the Batteries on P^o. Jeraja, seems the most healthy and Convenient Station.

The Idea, at present held out, that the defences on the Sand Bank would cover the Entrance to the Inner harbour and thence Secure our fleets and Stores at Jarajah is quite new, as proposing to Defend Docks, Stores and Ships at a Distance of 3 to 4 Leagues from these defences in place of doing it within One or 2 Miles.

This ought to be well weighed. An Experienced Error will Cost dear if an After Removal should be found necessary.

GLIMPSES OF PENANG'S PAST

Notes

1. Egerton Mss., 3299.
2. C. A. Gibson-Hill, *in litt.*
3. Capt. Walter C. Lennon, "Journal of a Voyage Through the Straits of Malacca." *JSBRAS*, 7, 1881: 53.
4. H. P. Clodd; *Malaya's First British Pioneer, The Life of Francis Light*. London, 1948: 30.
5. *Ibid.*: 35-6.
6. *Ibid.*: 41.
7. E. A. Blundell, "Notices of Penang." *Journal of the Indian Archipelago and Eastern Asia*, 5, 1851: 100, quoting from an appendix on the Trade of the Island, drawn up by Scott, to a Report on raising the: revenue which he and other traders had been invited to submit by Major MacDonald.
8. H. P. Clodd: 135.
9. E. A. Blundell, 5; 104.
10. See F. G. Stevens. "A Contribution to the Early History of Prince of Wales Island." *JMBRAS*, 7, 1929, for a full account of the extent of Scott's transactions.
11. E. A. Blundell, 5: 114. MacDonald was not, presumably, aware of Scott's terms for rendering aid to needy settlers: in 1805, when Penang was created a Presidency, it transpired that some at least of his loans had not been made in cash, but "in ship goods at a considerable rate beyond the cost price in the bazaar, and that they actually cost the parties to whom they had been made 34% per annum."
12. *Ibid.*: 163.
13. *Ibid.*: 100.
14. *Ibid.*: 163.
15. H. P. Clodd: 85.
16. E. A. Blundell; 5: 101.
17. E. G. Cullin and W. F. Zehnder. "The Early History of Penang". Penang, 1905: 8, quoting a despatch of 24th August 1792
18. In transcribing, throughout, contractions have usually been expanded and punctuation modified: otherwise the text is unchanged.
19. This schedule no longer accompanies the report, though the letters with which they were enclosed were endorsed on receipt, as "with two enclosures."

FRANCIS LIGHT AND PENANG

by R. Bonney

Originally published in *JMBRAS*, Vol. 38 Pt 1 (No. 207), July 1965.

ONE OF THE MOST INTERESTING EPISODES in the field of Malay-British relations is the manner by which the English East India Company came to hold legal tenure over the island of Penang in 1791. The aim of this paper is to take a closer look at the efforts and activities of the man so closely connected with it, Francis Light.¹ When Francis Light took possession of Penang in the name of King George the Third of England on the 11th of August, 1786, it marked what was then thought to be the fruitful end to the East India Company's long-drawn out search for a naval and commercial station in South East Asia.² To many writers, it also marked the successful culmination of the tireless efforts of Light to obtain such a settlement on the eastern sea-board of the Bay of Bengal. Unknown to many, however, it also marked the almost single-handed victory that Light had personally scored. As the Union Jack caught the breeze, Light had fulfilled what seems to have been his burning passion ever since 1772 – to secure a port or territory, to coax, induce, or force the Company to take it, to obtain certain concessions in reward and to carry out his mercantile activities under the protection of the Company. Contrary to accepted history, Light had, for many years preceding, been making these persistent efforts not for the glory of England or empire, but for what appears to have been reasons of purely personal interest.

Early in 1771, Light together with Harrop were at Acheh examining trading prospects for their employers, the Madras firm of Jourdain, Sullivan and De Souza. It was then that they received an appeal for military assistance from Sultan Muhammed Jewa of Kedah to help quell some internal troubles, who promised, in return, a licence for them to trade in Kedah.³ Although the Sultan had originally wanted this aid to put down a rebellion in which Bugis mercenaries from Selangor had participated, by the middle of August 1771,⁴ he wanted Light's firm to assist in recovering the property and ships of the Chulia merchants⁵ and 300 fine brass cannons that had been plundered by the Bugis.⁶ He now offered the port of Kuala Kedah and the fort there to

Light's firm in return for a promise on their part to defend the fort and help him against the Bugis. The cost of maintaining the defence of the fort and the assistance to be given to Kedah to go against Selangor, he proposed be equally shared by the firm and him, while all the rights of the trade of Kuala Kedah would be in the firm's hands.⁷ By November, 1771, he offered, in addition, the entire coast from Kuala Kedah to Penang.⁸

The Madras firm, obviously uninterested in involving itself in the troubles of the Malay States, showed no response and it is then that we find Light trying even harder to persuade his firm to accept the offer. In his letters to his firm, he built up an impressive picture of the trading prospects of Kedah which was highly exaggerated, and, I am inclined to believe, done to attract the firm into accepting the offer. He wrote that "Every kind of Piece Goods from the Coast, Bengall and Surat is vendible here, but the Article of greatest Advantage is Opium which I now sell wholesale and retail at 800 Spanish Dollars the chest and shall be able to dispose of any quantity you may think proper to send on the same terms."⁹ Only a year later, Monckton was to write to the Madras Council "never in former years [has opium been] sold for more than 300 ..."¹⁰ Where the Sultan was not the only merchant and "never traded in his life for upwards of Ten Thousand Dollars except in Elephants which made up the Chief part of his Revenue",¹¹ Light wrote that all trade was in the Sultan's hands and had glowing valued it at 150,000 Spanish Dollars.¹² And whereas every sea-captain had always mentioned the shallowness of the entrance of the Kedah river, Light reported that there was "a River capable of receiving the largest Ships at half Flood..."¹³ and without any bar.¹⁴ He grimly warned that if the firm rejected the proposals, the Sultan would turn to the Dutch or Danes and "should the Dutch have it they would possess the entire command of the whole Streights".¹⁵

Light even went to the extent of suggesting that it would also be possible to obtain Penang island on which De Souza had once thought of opening an agency.

I remember it was once your opinion that a House upon Poole Pinang would be very useful, it would be extremely so, because the Europe Ships can easily stop there, there is plenty of Wood,

Water and Provisions and they may be supplied with Tin, Pepper, Beetlenut, Rattan, Birds Nests and the Macao ships will be glad to stop there, and all other vessels passing through the Streights may be as easily supplied as at Malacca.¹⁶

Light described the Penang straits as “a fine clear channel of 7 and 14 fathoms”¹⁷ but Monckton was to write to the Madras Council that “It may also be necessary to undeceive you with respect to the Channel. ... there not being above One Fathom Water in some parts and not 14 as Mr. Light remarks.”¹⁸ Unfortunately for Light, all these efforts and even the hint that he would otherwise turn to the East India Company, failed to excite his employers. Disappointed in these attempts, he did, in fact, turn to the Company.

In a letter to Warren Hastings¹⁹ in January 1772, Light exaggerated Kedah's trade even more, quoting some remarkably high figures and placing its value, ‘exclusive of small prows and the Europeans,’ at four million Spanish Dollars a year!²⁰ Besides giving a huge list of commodities produced or traded in Kedah and showing Kedah's trading connections with Patani, Trengganu, the Coramandel Coast, Bata Bara, the Moluccan islands and China, he visualised Kuala Kedah as “a public exchange where prows and vessels from all parts of India meet to exchange their commodities.”²¹ After alluding to the great profits that the Company could reap from this trade, Light went on to raise the bogey of the Dutch, who if given the opportunity in Kedah “would allow the English as little indulgence here as they do in Malacca, where they are scarcely allowed to land.”²² Significantly enough, Light never made any reference to the fact that Sultan Muhammed Jewa was interested in obtaining an offensive alliance with the Company in return for the proposed concessions he was willing to make. There is no doubt that by November 1771, at the very latest, the Sultan of Kedah wanted an offensive alliance to recover the plunder carried away by the Bugis, and Light had informed his firm of this.²³ Light however, concealed this from Hastings, obviously fearing that the Company would turn away from the thought of involvement in the wars of the Malay States. Instead, he gave a different reason as to why the Sultan was willing to make these concessions, writing:

The King is sensible of his age and infirmities and is afraid of his son. For this reason he is desirous of the English settling here, knowing they are capable of protecting him and that when once they engage they will not desert him. It is for this reason that he has wrote a letter to you He begs you if you have any love for him as an old man beset with enemies to send him a ship with sepoy and a few Europeans...²⁴

It is not known what Hastings' reaction to this letter was, but there was definitely no response from Bengal where he had assumed the government. Fortunately enough for Light, by some strange coincidence, the Madras Council had in the early part of 1772 received instructions from the Court of Directors to take steps to set up a factory at Aceh. The Council obtained all possible information from Light's firm and despatched it to London, pointing out that Kedah would be a better choice than Aceh. It would not be wrong to say that Madras had given preference to Kedah on the basis of the fabulous prospects depicted by Light in his letters to his firm. Without waiting for further instructions, the Madras Council, on its own initiative, despatched missions to Aceh and Kedah, headed respectively by Charles des Voeux and Edward Monckton.

From the very start, Monckton's mission was doomed to failure for the Madras Council had sent him to negotiate for a purely *defensive* alliance, failing to see in Light's letters the fact that Sultan Muhammed Jewa wanted an *offensive* alliance. On 14th April, 1772, with the Sultan firmly insisting on an *offensive* commitment by the Company and Monckton, on the other hand, willing to offer only a defensive treaty, the negotiations broke down.²⁵ Francis Light was, however, around and in the short impasse that followed, ingeniously worked out a settlement. He skilfully managed to get Monckton to enter into an agreement whereby in return for some territorial and commercial concessions from the Sultan, Monckton promised that "When the King sends his Prows to Salangore to send a Vessel with him and to suffer no other Prows in the River of Salangore while they are there, and if any English ship is there to order them not to assist the People of Salangore."²⁶ Much to Light's credit, Monckton had, in effect, signed an *offensive* agreement, thereby exceeding

his instructions. Unfortunately for Light, the Madras Council vetoed the agreement out of a genuine fear that it would lead to complications with the Dutch,²⁷ which in turn resulted in the Sultan withdrawing his Grant.²⁸

Undoubtedly, the blame for the failure of the Monckton mission rests with the Madras Council, for it failed to see in Light's letters to his firm that the Sultan sought an offensive alliance, and sent Monckton to negotiate for a defensive arrangement. The vast majority of writers have wrongly put the blame on Monckton and the Sultan of Kedah and have been highly critical of the Madras Council's indictment of Light after Monckton's failure. Although the Madras Council was in reality passing the buck, ironically, it was never nearer the truth than when it wrote:

We are concerned to find that the King has desired to withdraw his Grant in consequence of our refusal to enter into an offensive alliance with him against the Salangorians. It appears that the place [Kedah] has been much misrepresented to us, though under the King's protection we might have reaped advantages from our factory there, for Quedah is certainly a port of considerable trade. The facts show how little dependence is to be placed on the representations of persons whose characters are not well known and tried. The persons employed by the [Madras] firm in that trade have, as it now appears, misled them by specious misrepresentations in order to continue themselves in an employ lucrative in all probability to themselves, though ruinous to their employers.²⁹

Disappointed but nevertheless richer by experience, Light shifted his activities to Junk Ceylon.³⁰ Light appears to have had a flair for getting involved in troubled situations and exploiting them, for soon after his arrival at the island, he sent a message to Monckton (still in Kedah) to the effect that "the King of Siam had lately sent a man to depose the old Governor and that they [he and the islanders] were shut up in a small compound by one or two thousand Siamese and would very shortly fall sacrifice to them unless he got assistance" from Monckton.³¹ Only too well aware of Monckton's failure at Kedah, Light added that the principal men of the island were "willing to give

the Company any terms they may ask" in return for protection.³² Without any authority from the Madras Council Monckton deemed it prudent not to intervene. Light had once more failed.

After a few years respite, during which he made trading voyages to Indian ports, Siam, Malacca and the Isthmian region, Light came up with another proposal in 1777. In the course of his private trading visits to Bangkok, he had got himself into the confidence of King P'ya Tak and it appears that the latter gave a vague hint that he might offer Mergui to the British once he had succeeded in driving off the Burmese who were then in possession of it. In a letter to the Bengal Government, dated 22nd September, 1777, he made this known, writing "the King in his conversation expressed a strong desire of cultivating a strong friendship with the Hon'ble Company and showed great uneasiness at no English vessels having come to his port."³³ And in his usual manner, he stressed the great advantages of Mergui, its close proximity to Bangkok, its rich tin-producing hinterland, the existence of trans-Isthmian routes which would save the time and expense involved in the long-route round the Malay Peninsula to China and the bogey of the Dutch, who "would gladly engross the whole sale to themselves and look upon any adventurer that came to the eastward of the Nicobars as encroaching on their property."³⁴ Unfortunately for Light, again, the Siamese attack on Mergui never materialised.

Undaunted by the failure of all his hopes and expectations, Light came forward with yet another proposal around 1779, to bring Junk Ceylon under Company rule. Displaying great determination, he outlined to the Governor of Madras and the Governor-General of Bengal, in his usual way, the various details of his plan,³⁵ but what is most revealing of Light's intentions was his statement that:

I look upon a part of this Island to be my property, it was granted by their own free will, the ground cleared at my own expense, and tho' unjustly drove off I think myself at liberty to resume it whenever I have power. If this plan is approved of for the Honourable Company, I hope for your Excellency's interest to be appointed Chief, and should not the Company take it, I hope for

assistance from the Supreme Council of men and ammunition, security being given for defraying the charges ...³⁶

Fate had it that although Hastings approved of the plan in principle, the impending war with France necessitated its abandonment.

We first hear of Light's renewed interest in Penang in the letter he wrote to Andrew Ross in April, 1784. To obtain it from Kedah and to interest the Company in his plans were, however, major problems. The opportunity was to come a year later.

The year 1785 saw a piquant situation. On the one hand, there was Sultan Abdullah Marhum Shah of Kedah,³⁷ fully conscious of an imminent Burmese invasion of Siam which would involve his state and all its other attendant consequences, and politic enough to realise the value of the introduction of the East India Company into Kedah as a protecting power. On the other, was the East India Company itself, frustrated in its long drawn-out search for a naval and commercial station in South-East Asia for yet another time by the failure of the Kinloch and Forrest missions in 1784 to Acheh and Riau respectively, and daily succumbing to the fear of exclusion from the Malay world by recent Dutch political and military successes there. And standing between Kuala Kedah and Calcutta was Francis Light, keenly anxious to exploit the fears of the one and the worries of the other.

From all the evidence we have, it is clear that Light knew that only the promise of protection to Kedah would induce the Sultan to think of leasing the island to the Company. From a later account, we learn that when Light approached Sultan Abdullah in August, 1785, he

requested in the name of the King of England and the Governor-General, the island of Penang, for the purpose of repairing their ships-of-war, highly extolling the greatness, splendour, power, wisdom, beneficence, of His Majesty, the prosperity of the Honourable Company and all those connected in the ties of friendship with them, promising that the King and the Governor-General would assist. ... in whatever might be required, and would prevent the enemies of Kedah engaging in proceedings detrimental to the country ...³⁸

Sultan Abdullah, on his part, considered British military protection and assistance invaluable in warding off Burmese and Siamese claims to tributary service and forced involvement in the expected Burmese invasion of Siam and consequently came out in favour of Light's proposals. He decided to make an offer to the Company of the island of Penang but only on the fulfilment of a number of conditions which he specified in a letter he addressed the Governor-General. Besides wanting to make use of Light's contacts and influence in Calcutta, Sultan Abdullah was so convinced of Light's honesty and interest in the welfare of Kedah (an impression that Light must have worked hard to give him), that he entrusted Light as his *wakil* or personal representative to Calcutta and honoured him with one of the Sultanah's maids.³⁹

To enable a better understanding of the discussion, the more important of the conditions that Sultan Abdullah required of the Company for the lease of Penang are outlined below, together with part of the preamble:

"Whereas Capt. Light, Dewa Raja came here and informed us that our Friend requested Pooloo Pinang we have instantly given to our Vakeel and Friend Captain Deva Raja to plant the Hon'ble Company's English Flag upon Pooloo Pinang a place for Trade and to repair Your Ships of War, and for refreshments, wood and Water. Moreover we have made known to the said Captain all our desires *which being come to the knowledge of our Friend and accepted*, with all possible speed send people to take possession and remain on Pooloo Pinang....

Article 1st: That the Hon'ble Company shall be Guardian of the Seas, and whatever Enemy may come to attack the King shall be an Enemy to the Hon'ble Company and the expence shall be borne by the Hon'ble Company...

[Article] 3rd: The articles Opium, Tin and Rattans being part of our Revenue are prohibited and Qualla Mooda, Pray and Krean places where these articles are produced being so near to Pinang that when the Hon'ble Company's resident shall remain there, this Prohibition will he constantly broke thro' therefore it should end, and the Governor-General allow us our Profits on these Articles viz., 30,000 Spanish Dollars every year ...

[Article] 5th: Any Man in this Country without exception be it our Son or Brother, who shall become an Enemy to Us, shall then become an Enemy to the Hon'ble Company nor shall the Hon'ble Company's Agent protect them without breach of this Treaty which is to remain while Sun and Moon endures.

[Article] 6th: If any Enemy come to attack us by Land and we require assistance from the Hon'ble Company of Men, arms or ammunition, the Hon'ble Company will supply us at our expence."⁴⁰

A careful study of the letter shows that there is no ambiguity, whatsoever, about these conditions and there is absolutely no doubt that Sultan Abdullah regarded them as final and conditional to the lease of the land. The phrase "*which being come to the knowledge of our Friend and accepted*" should have been as meaningful in 1786 as it is now.⁴¹ Light must have been aware of this; in fact, the subsequent events show that he was only too well aware of it.

Armed with Sultan Abdullah's letter and probably still recovering from what must have been to him the pleasant irony of having been appointed the Sultan's agent, Light hastened to Calcutta to present his new plan which he effected through three letters to the then Acting Governor-General, John Macpherson. A close examination of these letters and his "Remarks" on the Sultan's terms reveals some very illuminating facts on Light's plans and character, but what is singularly striking is the brilliant strategy and bluff employed by Light to sway the Bengal Government into accepting Sultan Abdullah's offer. Light was aware of the Company's sensitivity to the growing Dutch influence in the Straits of Malacca region and to French moves in Burma and Indo-China. He was equally aware of the Company's unwillingness to be drawn into situations which would involve it in wars with the Dutch or South East Asian powers. Therefore, he was shrewd enough to play his cards well. Whereas he had told Sultan Abdullah that he had come as the Governor-General's representative, he took great pains at Calcutta to emphasise that he was held in high regard by the Sultan of Kedah and had, in fact, come as the Sultan's agent and that it was his "influence and interest" with the Sultan that had secured the island, he having succeeded where others had failed.⁴² He

wrote of the numerous geographical and strategic advantages of Penang, the valuable trade and resources of the Kedah hinterland and built up a glowing picture of the great commercial mart that Penang promised to be.⁴³

There can be no doubt that Light knew that the provision of protection and assistance in the face of Burmese and Siamese threats were major considerations behind Sultan Abdullah's decision to lease Penang. Yet, to what were basic requirements to Kedah and to what would have been major commitments to the East India Company, Light told the Governor-General that "the King has sent me a grant of this island to the Honourable Company, *under some small restrictions ...*"⁴⁴ Even more significant is the complete lack of any reference to the impending Burmese invasion of Siam, of Kedah's fears with regard to this or for that matter of Siamese claims to suzerainty over Kedah, however vague. This is surprising because Light was well-versed in the history and affairs of the Kra Isthmus region.⁴⁵ On the other hand, it is not too surprising at all, for Light knew only too well that the mention of these facts would make the Bengal Government shy away from his plans. It was only after he had occupied Penang and committed the Company that he wrote of Kedah's tributary relationships with Siam and Burma.

There can be no denial of the fact that Light took advantage of his being the Sultan's representative to strengthen his case with the Bengal Government and yet, at the same time, very blatantly played a double-game at the expense of the Sultan. It is interesting to note that Sultan Abdullah had himself avoided any reference in his letter to Calcutta of the fact that he sought the Company's protection from the demands of his Burman and Siamese neighbours.⁴⁶ I am convinced that the Sultan did it on Light's advice and he was so greatly impressed by this element of sincerity and interest in Light, that it helped to frame his decision to appoint Light his agent. Light, on his part, must have advised the Sultan on this matter not because he was personally concerned with Kedah's welfare but plainly because he knew that such a reference could scare the Bengal Government off. Unfortunately for the Sultan (and the E.I.C.), Light was not all that trustworthy as his promoter for when in Calcutta he was to show his true colours and to work against the Sultan's interests.

On 6th February, 1786, Light passed Sultan Abdullah's letter to

Macpherson⁴⁷ and attached a list of "Remarks" on the Sultan's conditions which are highly indicative of Light's duplicity. As the representative of the Sultan, he should have acted as such and have presented Kedah's terms as final and conditional to the lease of the island. Instead, not only did he work against the Sultan's interests, but in furtherance of his own ends, he treated Abdullah's terms as a basis for negotiation for a future treaty and even went to the extent of advising Macpherson to obtain further stipulations to the advantage of the Company and suggested various interpretations of the different conditions. This was obviously done to induce the Company to view the offer favourably.

With regard to the Sultan's first condition that "the Hon'ble Company shall be Guardian of the Seas and whatever Enemy may come to attack the King shall be an enemy to the Hon'ble Company and the expence shall be borne by the Hon'ble Company", Light played its importance down by writing:

It may appear at first an article of great expence but upon consideration will be found advantageous for it gives to the Hon'ble Company the rights of Admiralty and the privilege of Fisheries and will prevent any other Europeans from interfering. The same Guard necessary to protect the Hon'ble Company's property will be sufficient to Guard all the coast. The Hon'ble Company from this Article may demand the free and unlimited privilege of visiting, buying, selling, wooding, watering and fishing on and upon the Island, Bays, Rivers, Seas within the King's dominions also to search for and work any mines upon the Islands.⁴⁸

One wonders if Sultan Abdullah and his officials would ever have agreed to such an interpretation. A brilliant promotion job, it may be argued, but clearly for Light's interests.

Light's duplicity is more apparent in his "Remarks" on the Sultan's claim for compensation. Obviously fearing that lest the Company think that \$30,000 Spanish per annum be too exorbitant and turn down the offer, Light, the Sultan's agent, told the Bengal Government that "the King will willingly accept of Ten Thousand Spanish Dollars."⁴⁹

Of even greater interest are Light's Remarks on Sultan Abdullah's last two conditions. Writing of the fifth, he penned:

This article comprehends the principal and almost only reason why the King wishes an Alliance with the Hon'ble Company and in the Treaty must be worded with caution so as to distinguish between an Enemy endeavouring or aiming at his destruction or the Kingdom, and one who may simply fall into the displeasure with either the King or his Minister.⁵⁰

It is worthy to note that Light made it out to be that the Sultan sought to bind the Company by this particular clause to protect him and his Minister as being the principal reason why Sultan Abdullah wanted to allow the British to occupy Penang. In his first letter, Light had not given any reasons, but in his second and third, he stated that fear of the Dutch "will account for the King of Queda's earnest desire to have the Hon'ble Company for his Protector",⁵¹ a fact which was palpably untrue. More important, he had completely left out from all his letters the real reason why Sultan Abdullah sought the Company's protection.

With regard to the sixth condition, Light stated "It will be necessary to grant the King assistance if attacked by his neighbours" which he listed as Perak, Ligore, Trang and Patani, but conveniently made no mention of Siam proper or Burma. Could Light not have known of their claims of suzerainty over Kedah? Could Light have been unaware of the impending Burma-Siamese war? This I would very strongly doubt.⁵² In his Remarks, Light went on to advise the Bengal Government that:

For the payment of Troops and Stores lent to him by the Hon'ble Company He shall make over to the Hon'ble Company a portion of land opposite Penang and a propotionable number of Rayatts valuing each Ryatt at 60 Spanish Dollars or at the yearly rate of 3 Spanish Dollars for each per annum. The land shall be granted for ever at the usual rate the Inhabitants are accustomed to give.⁵³

Light, the Sultan's man to Calcutta was suggesting greater plans for the Bengal Government.

On 15th February, Light addressed his third letter to Macpherson, in which, after describing French moves in Cochin-China and Ava, he warned:

The Empire of Ava ought not to be despised or disregarded, they have lately conquered Araccan and are now near neighbours to us, should the French be able to negotiate an Alliance with the Court of Ava, and attain so much influence as to direct the Counsels and Armys of that haughty imperious Nation. They will become a more formidable Enemy than when Hyder or his successor Tippoo, as it is well known the Country of Pegue can furnish Provisions, Timber and in short everything requisite for the supply of their Fleets. Add to the Acquirement of Cochin-China a rich Country, the People Brave intelligent and faithful, capable of being made excellent soldiers and sailors, with such allies the enterprising Spirit of the French is certainly more to be feared than when connected with their old friends on the Coast of Coromandel.⁵⁴

In addition, Light described the Dutch attacks on Riau and Selangor, built up a picture of their growing influence in the Straits of Malacca and gave his many reasons why he preferred Penang to Junk Ceylon and Acheh. Then followed a portrayal of the geographical and commercial advantages of Penang and its hinterland, Kedah.⁵⁵

Conceding that Light was himself genuinely afraid of French and Dutch moves which would endanger British interests, it is more than peculiar that he gave great emphasis to these moves and never breathed a word on the real reasons that motivated Sultan Abdullah's decision to lease Penang. Surely, Light, with the sixteen years experience that he himself claimed to have in the region, must have been in the know about this, or at the very least of Kedah's tributary relationships with Burma and Siam. It is only too obvious that Light avoided any reference to this for fear that it would alarm the Bengal Government.

The Acting Governor-General, Mr. Macpherson, submitted the Sultan's terms, Light's letters and other papers to Mr. Joseph Price, "a respectable

merchant of Bengal,” who after careful consideration gave his preference to Penang over Acheh, Junk Ceylon and Negrais.⁵⁶ On receipt of Mr. Price's comments, the Bengal Government met on the 2nd March, 1786 and after considering all the above-mentioned papers as well as a letter from James Scott⁵⁷ the Board “resolved to accept the King of Cudda's [Kedah's] offer to the Company of the Harbour and Island of Pinang.”⁵⁸ That the Bengal Government had succumbed to the fear of French and Dutch moves and that both naval and commercial factors underlay its decision to accept Penang, may be seen from the following Minute:

The Harbour of Pinang would be particularly convenient to the Company's ships which proceed from Madrass, Bombay and the Ganges to China and it will afford a station from which His Majesty's Squadron may at any season proceed to the support of the Company's Settlements upon either Coast and as the Dutch have taken possession of Rhio and in fact all the Malacca Ports Pinang will afford a Mart for the Proos [perahu] of the Eastern Seas and the sale of our opium.⁵⁹

Out of regard for the untiring efforts of Light, “his knowledge of the Malay Language and the High Esteem in which he stands with the King of Cudda [Kedah] and other Malay Chiefs,” the Board decided to appoint him Superintendent of the Island.⁶⁰ Ironically enough, this decision must have come as a blessing to Light, for not only did it enhance all the hopes of private trade that he had been building,⁶¹ but officially disqualified him from being the Sultan's representative. Without doubting Light's words, the Bengal Government decided that Penang was already its territory and consequently appointed Light Superintendent of a settlement which was, in fact, yet to be leased or ceded.

Heavily armed with a set of instructions, the Bengal Government's “replies” to Sultan Abdullah's conditions and a personal letter from Macpherson to the Sultan, Light returned to Kuala Kedah on 29th June, 1786. From the discussions that ensued, it is clearly evident that Francis Light found himself in a very difficult situation. We do not know what the Sultan's reactions were

on discovering that Kedah's entrusted agent to Calcutta had returned as the Bengal Government's agent to Kedah, but what we do know is that he was unwilling to allow the British to take possession of Penang until such time as the Company guaranteed protection and assistance and promised a fixed sum as compensation, he being sceptical and duly unimpressed by the exceptional vagueness that clouded the "replies" and Macpherson's letter.⁶²

When Sultan Abdullah remarked "that the Governor-General had deferred entering into a Treaty with him, until an answer should arrive from Europe and as that was the case it was needless going to Penang and incurring an Expense which perhaps might prove useless," Light very shrewdly replied that "the greater expense was already incurred by our coming there and it would make little difference whether I remained at Queda or went to Penang." When asked if he would quit Penang if the Court of Directors should find the Sultan's terms unacceptable, Light, significantly enough, did not reply.⁶³ In reality, Light's replies were evasive and designed to ensure prior occupation of the island. Looking at the problem in perspective, when Light sensed that the Sultan and other officials were not prepared to lease the island unless the Sultan's terms were fulfilled, he felt it expedient to make sure of the island (and commit the Company) while the issues were still at stake, rather than await a reply from London which might prove to be unfavourable as was actually the case later on. Although it is possible that Light sincerely hoped, possibly believed, that the Company would ultimately sanction protection and aid to Kedah, what stands out is his great urgency to commit the Company. Although he knew of the Sultan's unwillingness to let him take Penang without definite guarantees, he took formal possession of the island. He gave the Sultan the impression that his occupation of Penang would only be temporary and subject to the Court of Directors' reply which would either confirm or nullify his temporary occupation, depending on whether it accepted or rejected the Sultan's terms. By declaring Penang a British possession, Light not only cheated the Sultan of Kedah, but exceeded his instructions which required him to ascertain that Penang was a free grant from the Sultan and that no other powers had a claim to the island. Even if Light had considered Siam's over-lordship of Kedah too vague to permit Kedah to lease the island, he should have asked for further instructions, or

the Sultan had neither given him the right nor the permission to take over the island. Why was Light in such a hurry? Was he afraid that the Court of Directors would reject Sultan Abdullah's terms and that he would then be obliged to withdraw by the Sultan? Was it not therefore better to commit the Company first and to bargain later? The answer probably lies in the fact that Light knew only too well that once the Company had Penang as its declared and therefore, legal possession, it would back him to the hilt. And this was precisely what the Company, out of ignorance, did.

A brief survey of Light's policy after he had taken formal possession of the island reveals a few more illuminating facts about the man. In February 1787 and again in February 1788, Light received strict instructions from the Governor-General that the Company was unprepared to defend or assist Kedah.⁶⁴ Not surprisingly enough, there is not a shred of evidence to show that Light conveyed this to the Sultan, for obvious reasons; instead, he continued to play his game very well. To Sultan Abdullah, he kept on giving evasive answers between the two occasions he had acted in violation of his orders and literally lied that the English would assist him "if really distressed,"⁶⁵ whereas to the Bengal Government, he pressed home the expediency and advantages of aiding Kedah. Light's recommendations to the Bengal Government on the provision of protection to Kedah, however, do not seem to have been inspired by any pious wish to live up to his promises; on the other hand, they appear to have stemmed from his desire to preserve and to secure the safety and trade of the settlement that he had worked so long to establish. It was only in June, 1788, that Light, under heavy pressure from the Sultan, was forced to reveal the Company's unwillingness to fulfil his terms. Finding the Sultan unhappy over this, Light thought he could settle the issue once and for all by offering to buy the island, but to which he received a positive 'No'.⁶⁶

Caught by his own duplicity, Light resorted, in his letters to the Bengal Government, to the classic line of degrading various members of the Kedah court including the Sultan, and providing evidence of what he stigmatised as the Sultan's "duplicity" and "perfidy". Even if some of his accusations were true, it is unfair and unjustified to have branded them as perfidious for Sultan Abdullah had moral and legal right on his side.

I am fully convinced, on examination of all the evidence, that Light painted the Sultan and his officials evil and black, firstly, to strengthen his military position and secondly, to harden the Bengal Government's attitude towards the Sultan and receive its full support should a showdown render it necessary.

After repeated attempts to draw a full promise of protection from the Company had failed, Sultan Abdullah commenced preparations in 1791 to drive away the Company from its illegal occupation of Penang. What was most typical of Kedah's attitude in the preceding years and even during the course of making preparations, was the repeated attempts to reach a peaceful settlement, without having recourse to hostilities. In fact, prior to their projected attack on Penang, the Kedah leaders sent a final letter to Light to the effect that the Company should either fulfil the Sultan's terms or quit the island. The receipt of this letter was, ironically, Light's finest hour. He shrewdly interpreted the letter as "a declaration of war" and instead of sending a reply which the Kedah leaders were waiting for before deciding on their next move, he launched a sneak night attack on the Kedah forces at Prai, took them by complete surprise and achieved a rout.

Light's actions are even more suspect in view of the fact that he had once contemplated warning Kedah that her refusal to lift her economic blockade of Penang would be considered as a declaration of war⁶⁷ and had, in fact, prior to his attack on Prai, written to the Bengal Government for "full powers to come to a final settlement with the King of Queda or to make war on him." He also suggested the basis of a treaty in which, among other things, he wanted a fort at Prai and a bond from the Sultan for 100,000 Spanish dollars bearing 8% interest p.a. which the Company would pay him "upon his good behaviour."⁶⁸ In case the Sultan refused this, Light vehemently and revengefully urged the Bengal Government to "give him nothing, but as he has stopped the provisions from coming here, stop the trade of his Coast, destroy all his Prows, prevent the Chooliars from going there or exporting Elephants and plunder the Laddas [the Langkawi Islands], there are various ways of distressing and bringing him to Obedience ..."⁶⁹ There is no doubt that Light, fully realising all the problems that underlay his position, decided to settle all the issues by force. In the treaty that followed Light's attack on Prai, Sultan Abdullah,

having lost the diplomatic initiative, gave recognition to the British right to hold legal tenure over Penang. Light, by making use of the Company, had at last won.

An interesting point about the negotiations that led to the treaty was the brilliant strategy used by Light to counter the stand taken by the Sultan's representatives that the Company should grant naval protection and lend assistance to Kedah if attacked. Light lied to them that if the Company was to enter into any defensive agreement, it would want the districts of Kuala Muda, Prai and Krian at the very least, in return.⁷⁰ The Sultan's representatives, having no power to negotiate a cession of territory, dropped the question, thereby falling victim to Light's bluff. Light knew very well that the Company was neither interested in these districts nor in favour of revoking its firm decision not to grant protection to Kedah whatever the inducements, and yet he bluffed them that protection would be given in return for the cession of the above districts, knowing full well at the same time that the representatives had no power to negotiate for its cession.

It is odd that a practical man like Light never suggested to the Bengal Government in the years 1786-91, the alternative of withdrawing from Penang in view of (a) the Company's unwillingness to fulfil the Sultan's terms, (b) the Sultan's dissatisfaction over this and (c) the fact that the Company had no legal claim to the island. It would seem less odd, however, if we were to pause and ponder on the motives behind all of Light's activities.

It is more than a coincidence that all of Light's projected settlements were in the Isthmian region and the northern area of the Straits of Malacca, an area in which he had many interests and much influence and had significant trading connections established over the years. He had as much to fear of exclusion from the Straits by the Dutch as the East India Company and personally stood to profit tremendously by having an English trading settlement in the region. What Light sought, therefore, was the establishment of such a settlement under Company rule, from which not only could he secure certain concessions or favours in reward, but essentially, from which he could carry out his trading activities under the protection of the Company. It was in this direction that all Light's efforts were geared and it was towards the achievement of this end, that he put forward his

different plans and penned his glowing reports. The bogey of Dutch and French expansion, however true, the numerous exaggerations (not to use the word expectations) and the facts that he withheld, were the major lines he used to draw the Company in Kuala Kedah, Junk Ceylon, Mergui, Junk Ceylon again and Penang were the settlements he offered to the Company, settlements which would give him all the security and protection needed for an extension of his commercial interests. Light was thus the fore-runner of that group of merchants who were later on responsible for committing the British Government in the Malay States; Read, Davidson and Duff, to name a few, were only treading in Light's footsteps.

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>G.G.</i>	Governor-General.
<i>SFR.</i>	Sumatra Factory Records.
<i>SSR.</i>	Straits Settlements Factory Records.
<i>BM. Add. MSS.</i>	British Museum, Additional Manuscripts.
<i>JIA.</i>	Journal of the Indian Archipelago and Eastern Asia.
<i>JMBRAS.</i>	Journal, Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society
<i>JSS.</i>	Journal of the Siam Society.
<i>JHSUM.</i>	Journal, Historical Society, University of Malaya.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A, 1

Sultan of Kedah to Governor-General of India

“This letter wrote with the purest friendship that may last while the Sun and Moon endures from Padukar Seree Sultan Abdullah Makrum Shah who presides and rules over the Country of Quedah, according to the commands of the God of all Nations unto our Friend the Governor-General King of Bengal first among the Believers in Jesus Christ renowned for wisdom and superior knowledge in

the arts of War by Land and Sea and in every science known on Earth.

Whereas Captain Light Deva Raja came here and informed us that our Friend requested Pooloo Pinang we have instantly given to our Vakeel and Friend Captain Deva Raja to plant the Hon'ble Company's English Flag upon Pooloo Pinang a place for Trade and to repair Your ships of War, and for refreshments, wood and Water. Moreover we have made known to the said Captain all our desires which being come to the knowledge of our Friend and accepted with all possible speed send people to take possession and remain on Pooloo Pinang. Whatever necessities this Island does not afford shall be supplied by us from our Country of Queda.

Signed on the 24th Day of the Moon Shaval in the year 1199 Year Ha'.

CONDITIONS REQUIRED FROM THIS GOVERNMENT
BY THE KING OF QUEDA

Article 1st

That the Hon'ble Company shall be Guardian of the Seas and whatever Enemy may come to attack the King shall be an enemy of the Hon'ble Company and the expense shall be borne by the Hon'ble Company.

[Article] 2nd

All vessels Junks Prows small and large coming from either East or West and bound to the Port of Queda shall not be stopped or hindered by the Hon'ble Company's Agent but left to their own Wills either to buy and sell with us or with the Company at *Pooloo* Pinang as they shall think proper.

[Article] 3rd

The Articles Opium Tin and Rattans being part of our Revenue are prohibited and Qualla Mooda, Pray and *Krean* places where these articles are produced, being so near to Pinang, that when the Hon'ble Company's Resident shall remain there this Prohibition will be constantly broke thro' therefore it should end and the Governor General allow us our Profits on these Articles, viz. 30,000 Spanish Dollars every year.

[Article] 4th

In case the Hon'ble Company's Agent gives credit to any of the King's Relations, Ministers, officers or Ryatts the Agent shall make no claim upon the King.

[Article] 5th

Any man in this country without exception, be it our Son or Brother, who shall become an enemy to Us, shall become an Enemy to the Hon'ble Company, nor shall the Hon'ble Company's Agent protect them without Breach of this Treaty which is to remain while Sun and Moon endures.

[Article] 6th

If any enemy come to attack us by land and we require assistance from the Hon'ble Company of Men, Arms or ammunition the Hon'ble Company will supply us at our expence." [Extracted from SSR. Vol. 2, f. 33-36 (Fort William, 2 March, 1786) J.

APPENDIX A, 2

Sultan of Kedah to the Governor-General of India

"Whereas Captain Light, Dewa Raja, came here and informed me that the Rajah of Bengal ordered him, to request Pulp Pinang from me, to make an English Settlement, where the Agents of the Company might reside, for the purpose of trading and building ships of war to protect the Island and to cruize at Sea, so that if any enemies of ours from the East or the West should come to attack us, the Company would regard them as enemies also and fight them, and all the expenses of such Wars shall be borne by the Company. All Ships, Junks or Prows, large and small, which come from the East or the West and wish to enter the Quedah river to trade, shall not be molested or obstructed, in any way, by the Company, but all persons desirous of coming to Trade with us shall be allowed to do as they please; and at Pulo Pinang the same.

The Articles of Opium, Tin and Rattans are monopolies of our own, and the Rivers Mooda, Prye, and Krian are the places from whence Tin, Rattans,

Canes, besides other Articles are obtained. When the Company's people, therefore, shall reside at Pulo Pinang, I shall lose the benefit of this monopoly, and I request the Captain will explain this to the Governor General and beg, as a compensation for my losses, 30,000 dollars a year to be paid annually to me as long as the Company reside at Pulo Pinang. I shall permit the free export of all sorts of Provisions and Timber for Shipbuilding.

Moreover, if any of the Agents of the Company make loans or advances to any of the Nobles, Chiefs or Rajahs of the Kedda Country, the Company shall not hold me responsible for any such advances. Should any one in this country become my enemy, even my own Children, all such shall be considered as enemies also of the Company: the Company shall not alter their engagements of alliance, so long as the heavenly bodies continue to perform their revolutions; and when any enemies attack us from the interior, they also shall be considered as enemies of the Company. I request from the Company, Men and Powder, Shot, Arms large and small, also Money for the purposes of carrying on the war, and when the business is settled, I will repay the advances; should these propositions be considered proper and acceptable to the Governor General, he may send a confidential agent to Pulo Pinang to reside; but if the Governor General does not approve of the terms and conditions of this engagement, let him not be offended with me. Such are my wishes to be made known to the Company, and this Treaty must be faithfully adhered to, till the most remote times.

Written on Tuesday, 24th Shawal, 1199."

[Extracted from J. Anderson's *Political and Commercial Considerations Relative to the Malayan Peninsula, and the British Settlements. in the Straits of Malacca* (Prince of Wales Island, 1824), pp. 56-7]

APPENDIX B.

Calcutta's Replies to the Sultan of Kedah's Conditions

"To the 1st Article. This Government will always keep an armed vessel stationed to guard the island of Pinang and the coast adjacent belonging to the King of Queda.

To the 2nd Article. All Vessels under every denomination bound to the port of Queda shall not be interrupted by the Hon'ble Company's Agent or any person acting for the Company or under their authority but left entirely to their own free will either to trade with the King of Queda or with the Agents or subjects of the Hon'ble Company.

3rd Article. The Governor-General and Council on the part of the English East India Company will take care that the King of Queda shall not be a sufferer by an English settlement being formed on the Island of Pinang.

4th Article. The Agent of the Hon'ble Company or any person residing on the island of Pinang under the Company's protection shall not make claims upon the King of Queda for debts incurred by the King's relations, Ministers, officers or Rayats. But the persons having demands upon any of the King's subjects shall have power to seize the Persons and property of those indebted to them according to the custom and usage of that country.

5th Article. All Persons residing in the country belonging to the King of Queda who shall become his enemies or commit capital offences against the state shall not be protected by the English.

6th Article. This Article will be referred for the orders of the English East India Company together with such parts of the King of Queda's requests as cannot be complied with previous to their consent being obtained."

[Extracted from SSR. Vol. 2, f. 67-69 (Fort William, 2 March 1786)].

APPENDIX C

Governor-General of India to Sultan of Kedah

"Your friendly letter containing a grant of Pooloo Pinang to the Hon'ble English Company was delivered to me by Captain Francis Light, the 6th February, 1786.

Captain Light also made known to me the requests of my Friend and Brother which I having the friendship and interests of my noble Friend at Heart have already transmitted to England for the approbation of the King of England and the Hon'ble English Company.

In the meantime I have deputed Captain Light to be agent for the Company and have directed him to plant the Hon'ble Company's colours upon Pooloo Pinang and to defend that island against all invaders. I have likewise ordered a ship for the defence of this island and the protection of the coast of Queda.

It is not my intention to subject to any duties or impediments the vessels or merchandise that may come to Pooloo Pinang, but to suffer every one to go and come at their pleasure and should it happen that my friend may become a sufferer by the English Company settling at Pinang I will take the same into consideration and recompense my Noble Friend and Brother.

To Captain Francis Light I have given full instructions and hope that you my Noble Friend will have every reason to be satisfied with the friendship of the English Company and the good conduct of their servants."

[Extracted from SSR. Vol. 2, f. 89-90 (Fort William, 2 March 1786).]

Notes

1. Light was an illegitimate son of William Negus, a Suffolk landowner. His date of birth is not known, but he was baptised on 15th December, 1740. Educated at Seckford's Grammar School, Woodbridge, Suffolk, he passed through life as a mid-shipman, country-trader, gun-runner and private trader, eventually becoming "Superintendent of Prince of Wales Island" in 1786. He died in office in 21st December, 1794. A voluminous literature has grown over the years on Light's role in the establishment of Penang and the subsequent history of the East India Company's relations with Kedah. The Siamese invasion of Kedah in 1821 started a controversy among the Company officials on the Company's refusal to give assistance to Kedah, the arguments of which mainly hinged on Light's negotiations with the Sultan of Kedah and Siamese claims to vassalage over Kedah. The Company and the Sultan found their respective critics and champions among officials as well as later writers and historians. Curiously enough (with the possible exception of Anderson's pamphlet), Light emerged out of this 'paper war' literally unscathed and was, in fact, seen as a practical man hemmed in by the 'cowardly' policy of the Company and the 'duplicity' of the Sultan of Kedah. A careful study of Light's activities, however, shows a completely different picture.

For some highly partisan literature on Light, see H. P. Clodd, *Malaya's First British Pioneer* (London, 1948); A. F. Steuart, *The Founders of Penang and Adelaide* (London, 1901) and K. G. Tregonning, *The Founding and Development of Penang, 1786-1826* (University of Malaya, Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, 1959). For a partisan attack on the Company's policy and a criticism of Light's attitude towards Kedah, see J. Anderson, *Political and Commercial Considerations Relative to the Malayan Peninsula and the British Settlements in the Straits of Malacca* (Penang, 1824); see also F. Swettenham, *British Malaya* (London, 1907); J. H. Moor,

GLIMPSES OF PENANG'S PAST

Notices of the Indian Archipelago and Adjacent Countries (Singapore, 1837) and P. J. Begbie, *The Malayan Peninsula* (Madras, 1834). For an equally partisan defence of the Company's policy, see Burney's, Crawford's and Low's despatches and memoranda in *The Burney Papers*, Vol. 1-5, (Bangkok, 1910-1914); *The Crawford Papers* (Bangkok, 1915) and J. Low, "An Account of the Origin and Progress of the British Colonies in the Straits of Malacca", *JIA*, Vol. 3 (1849), pp. 559-617 and Vol. 4 (1850), pp. 11-26, 106-118, and 360-379. For the opinion of more recent writers and historians, see A. Wright and T. H. Reid, *The Malay Peninsula* (London, 1912), pp. 67-87; L. A. Mills, "British Malaya, 1824-67" in *JMBRAS*, Vol. XXXIII, Pt. 3 (1960), ed. for reprinting by M. Turnbull, pp. 36-52; R. Winstedt, *A History of Malaya* (S'pore, 1962), pp. 163-170 and D. G. E. Hall, *A History of Southeast Asia* (London, 1955), pp. 434-436.

2. The East India Company's search for such a settlement has been dealt with extensively by a number of writers. See N. Macalister, *Historical Memoir Relative to Prince of Wales Island in the Straits of Malacca, and the Importance, Political and Commercial* (London, 1803); G. Leith, *A Short Account of the Settlement, Produce and Commerce of Prince of Wales Island in the Straits of Malacca* (London, 1804); Home Popham, *A Description of Prince of Wales Island in the Streights of Malacca, with its real and probable advantages and sources to recommend it as a Marine Establishment* (London, 1805); Hall, *op. cit.* pp. 421-31; Clodd, *op. cit.* pp. 34-42; Wright and Reid, *op. cit.* pp. 28-33; D. K. Bassett, "European Influence in the Malay Peninsula, 1511-1786", *JMBRAS*, Vol. XXXIII, Pt. 3 (1960), pp. 9-31; V. T. Harlow, *The Founding of the Second British Empire, 1763-1793* (London, 1952); D. G. E. Hall, "From Mergui to Singapore, 1686-1819", *JSS*, Vol. 8 (1959), pp. 253-270; D. K. Bassett, "British Commercial and Strategic Interest in the Malay Peninsula During the Late Eighteenth Century", *Malayan and Indonesian Studies*, ed. J. S. Bastin and R. Roolvink (London, 1964), pp. 122-140 and Tregonning, *op. cit.*

3. Light to Warren Hastings, dated 17 January 1772, *BM. Add. MSS.* 29, 133, f. 10.

4. Light to Jourdain, Sullivan and De Souza, dated 18 August 1771, *SFR*, Vol. 15 (Fort St. George, 9 February, 1772).

5. Monckton to Du Pre, dated 22 April, 1772, *SFR*, Vol. 15, f. 79 (Fort St. George, 25 June, 1772).

6. Monckton to Du Pre, dated 2 May, 1772, *SFR*, Vol. 15, f. 96 (Fort St. George, 25 June, 1772).

7. Light to Jourdain, Sullivan and De Souza, dated 18 August, 1771, *SFR*, Vol. 15 (Fort St. George, 9 February 1772).

8. Light to Jourdain, Sullivan and De Souza, dated 25 November 1771, *SFR*, Vol. 15 (Fort St. George, 9 February 1772). It would not be surprising if it was Light who suggested increasing the size of the concessions at each successive stage to the Sultan in order to make his proposals more attractive to the firm.

9. *Ibid.*

10. Monckton to Du Pre, dated 22 April, 1772, *SFR*, Vol. 15, f. 84 (Fort St. George, 25 June, 1772).

11. *Ibid.* f. 79-80.

12. Light to Jourdain, Sullivan and De Souza, dated 25 November 1771, *SFR*, Vol. 15 (Fort St. George, 9 February 1772).

13. Light to De Souza, dated 25 November, 1771, *SFR*, Vol. 15 (Fort St. George, 9 February 1772).

14. Light to Jourdain, Sullivan, and De Souza, dated 18 August 1771, *SFR*, Vol. 15 (Fort St. George, 9 February, 1772).

15. Light to De Souza, dated 25 November, 1771, *SFR*, Vol. 15 (Fort St. George, 9 February 1772).

16. *Ibid.*

17. *Ibid.*

18. Monckton to Du Pre, dated 22 April, 1772, *SFR*, Vol. 15 (Fort St. George, 25 June, 1772).

19. Hastings had been Governor of Madras until he left in January, 1772 to become the Governor of Bengal.

20. *BM. Add. MSS.* 29,133, f.9.

21. *BM. Add. MSS.* 29,133, f.9.

22. *Ibid.* f.11c. D.K. Bassett in *Malayan and Indonesian Studies*, *op. cit.* p. 126, has proved Light's point about Dutch hostility towards the English in Malacca as completely false.

23. See Light to Jourdain, Sullivan and De Souza, dated 25 November, 1771, *SFR*, Vol. 15 (Fort St. George, 9 February, 1772) and Light to De Souza, dated 25 November 1771, *SFR*, Vol. 15 (Fort St. George, 9 February, 1772).

24. *BM. Add. MSS.* 29, 133, f. 11.

25. Monckton to Du Pre, dated 22 April, 1772, *SFR*, Vol. 15, f. 81 (Fort St. George, 25 June, 1772).

26. Enclosure in Monckton to Du Pre, dated 2 May, 1772, *SFR*, Vol. 15, f. 104 (Fort St. George, 25 June, 1772).

27. Du Pre to Monckton, dated 2 July, 1772, *SFR*, Vol. 15, f. 116 (Fort St. George, 10 July, 1772).

GLIMPSES OF PENANG'S PAST

28. Monckton to Du Pre, dated 13 August, 1772, *SFR*. Vol. 15 f. 147 (Fort St. George, October, 1772).
29. Quoted in H.P. Clodd, *Malaya's First British Pioneer*, pg. 22–3.
30. Light had resigned from the service of his firm and moved to Junk Ceylon as a private trader in May, 1772. See D.K. Bassett in *Malayan and Indonesian Studies*, *op. cit.* pg. 130.
31. Clodd, *op. cit.* pg. 25.
32. *Ibid.*
33. Clodd, *op. cit.* pg. 29; also K. Sukhabanij, "Siamese Documents concerning Captain Francis Light", in *Papers on Malayan History* (Singapore, 1962), pp. 1–9.
34. *Ibid.* pp. 29–30.
35. D.K. Bassett in *Malayan and Indonesian Studies*, *op. cit.* pp. 130–132, has a good discussion of these proposals.
36. Clodd, *op. cit.* pp. 31–32.
37. Sultan Abdullah was an illegitimate son, and the successor of Sultan Muhammad Jawa Zainal-Abidin Mu'azzam Shah, the Sultan who had rejected Monckton's application in 1772.
38. Sultan of Kedah to Lord Minto dated 24 December 1810: quoted in F. Swettenham's *British Malaya* (London, 1907), pp. 47–52.
39. I would not be surprised if it was actually Light, who later spread the story that this maid, in reality, a Siamese slave, was a princess of royal Blood given to him in marriage, with Penang as her dower. See an article of mine entitled "Francis Light, the Nonya and Penang" in *JHSUM*. Vol. 3 (1964/65), pp. 31–35.
40. Sultan of Kedah to Governor-General, dated 24 Shawal, 1199 A.H., *SSR*. Vol. 2, f. 33–36 (Fort William, 2 March, 1786). Italics are mine. See Appendix A, 1 for full text. Significantly enough, there is a slightly different version of this letter in J. Anderson's *Political and Commercial Considerations Relative to the Malayan Peninsula and the British Settlements in the Straits of Malacca* (Penang, 1824). It appears that Anderson used the original Jawi copy either in the Penang or Kedah records and gave his translation of it, as different from Light's, which he probably never saw. There are a number of differences between the two versions which are of the greatest importance. See Appendix A, 2 for full text. The phraseology and structure of Anderson's copy of the letter seem a better transliteration from the Malay than Light's, which also bears strong traces of being doctored. Anderson and Swettenham used this version in their attack on the East India Company's policy, which in a sense was wrong because the Bengal Government made its decision on the basis of Light's version.
41. This particular point appears more emphatically in Anderson's version of the letter. It reads "should these propositions be considered proper and acceptable to the Governor-General, he may send a confidential agent to Pulo Pinang to reside; but if the Governor-General does not approve of the terms and conditions of this engagement, let him not be offended with me. Such are my wishes to be made known to the Company, and this treaty must be faithfully adhered to, till the most remote times." It is possible that Light may have considered this part effusive or unimportant and left it out: on the other hand, he may have considered it too relevant to include!
42. This was a reference to the Forrest mission of 1784. Forrest's failure in Kedah was not due to any lack of influence but simply because the Sultan was not interested. Light succeeded, not as a result of his 'influence and interest' as he himself and historians have claimed, but because Sultan Abdullah had his reasons for coming out in favour of Light's proposals.
43. See Light to G.G., dated 23 January, 1786, *SSR*. Vol. 1 (Calcutta, 25 January, 1786) and Light to G.G., dated 15 February, 1786, *SSR*. Vol. 2, f. 42–55 (Fort William, 2 March, 1786).
44. Light to G.G., dated 23 January, 1786, *SSR*. Vol. 1 (Calcutta, 25 January, 1786).
45. See "Francis Light, the Nonya and Penang" in *JHSUM*, Vol. 3, pp. 31–35.
46. This contrasts very sharply with Kedah's appeals to the E.I.C. in 1771 and 1772 in which it was specified that the help sought for was to drive out the Bugis mercenaries in the state and to recover the plunder respectively (see *SFR*. Vol. 15) and all the later letters to Penang and the Governor-General in which it was openly stated that Kedah sought the Company's protection from Siam (see *SSR*. Vol. 2-80) J. Low in his "An Account of the Origin and Progress of the British Colonies in the Straits of Malacca", *JIA*, Vol. III, (1849), p. 601, wrongly states that "the Rajah then addressed a letter to the Governor-General ... and signified that he expected that if he formed an alliance with the Honourable East India Company it would prove a shield to him against the attacks or demands of his enemy, as he styled him, the Emperor of Siam." Low had elsewhere, in a paper criticising the Kedah Sultans written, "the Rajah, by concealing the truth, subjected himself to all the

GLIMPSES OF PENANG'S PAST

penalties following his duplicity." J. Low, "Retrospect of British Policy in the Straits of Malacca", in *The Burney Papers*, Vol. 5, pg. 6.

47. See G.G. to Sultan of Kedah, dated 6 April, 1786, SSR. Vol. 2, f. 89-90 (Fort William, 6 April, 1786).

48. See Light's Remarks in G.G. to Board, SSR. Vol. 2, f. 37-42 (Fort William, 2 March, 1786).

49. *Ibid.*

50. Light's Remarks in G.G. to Board, SSR. Vol. 2, f. 39-40 (Fort William, 2 March, 1786).

51. Light to G.G., dated 15 February, 1786, SSR. Vol. 2, f. 43 (Fort William, 2 March, 1786).

52. See "Francis Light, the Nonya and Penang", *JHSUM*. Vol. 3, pp. 32-3.

53. Light's Remarks in G.G. to Board, SSR. Vol. 2, f. 42 (Fort William, 2 March, 1786).

54. Light to G.G., dated 15 February, 1786, SSR. Vol. 2, f. 45 (Fort William, 2 March, 1786).

55. *Ibid.* f. 46-55.

56. "A Memoir of Prince of Wales Island, Considered Politically and Commercially," SSR. Vol. 2, f. 30.

57. Scott to Macpherson, dated 27 October, 1785, SSR. Vol. 2, f. 1-28 (Fort William, 2 March, 1786). Scott, after giving a description of French and Dutch intrigues as well as of other events taking place in South East Asia, recommended that the Company accept the proposals of Light and the Siamese Governor of Junk Ceylon to bring the island under British protection. Later, when he had heard of Light's success in obtaining Penang, he came out in support of it. The evidence seems to suggest that both Light and Scott worked hand in glove to bring Junk Ceylon and/or Penang under the Company for their own interests.

58. Proceedings of 2 March, 1786, SSR. Vol. 2, f. 65 (Fort William, 2 March, 1786).

59. Proceedings of 2 March, 1786, SSR. Vol. 2, f. 65-6 (Fort William, 2 March, 1786).

60. *Ibid.* f. 67.

61. In 1787, Light formed a trading partnership with James Scott and a large proportion of Penang's trade passed through their hands. Light was the senior partner and although in theory a 'sleeping' partner, he took advantage of his position as Superintendent to further his and Scott's interests. By 1795, Kyd was writing that the Light-Scott partnership had been "so great a bar to all free enterprise that no commercial house or merchant of any credit ever attempted to form an establishment." See Kyd to Councillor-General, SSR. Vol. 7 (Fort William, 2 August, 1795).

62. See Appendix B and C for full text of the "Replies" and Macpherson's letter to the Sultan.

63. An account of the discussions is to be found in Light's Journal, Appendix to Consultation of 13 December, 1786, SSR, Vol. 2, f. 263-271 (Fort William, 13 December, 1786).

64. G.G. to Light, dated 22 January, 1787, SSR. Vol. 2, f. 431-441 (Fort William, 22 January, 1787) and G.G. to Light, dated 25 January, 1788, SSR. Vol. 3 (Fort William, 25 January, 1788).

65. Light to G.G., dated 5 October, 1786, SSR. Vol. 2, f. 183 (Fort William, 13 December, 1786) and Light to G.G., dated 20 June, 1788, SSR. Vol. 3 (Fort William, 25 August, 1788).

66. Light to G.G., dated 17 July, 1789, SSR. Vol. 3 (Fort William, 2 August, 1789).

67. Light to G.G., dated 6 January, 1791, SSR. Vol. 4 (Fort William, 9 February, 1791).

68. Light to G.G., dated 19 March, 1791, SSR. Vol. 4 (Fort William, 20 April, 1791).

69. *Ibid.*

70. Light to G.G., dated 31 May, 1791, SSR. Vol. 4.

**PLAN FOR A VOLUNTEER
POLICE IN THE MUDA DISTRICTS,
PROVINCE WELLESLEY,
SUBMITTED TO GOVERNMENT
BY THE LATE J. R. LOGAN IN 1867**

Originally published in *JSBRAS*, No. 16, December 1885.

THE districts of North Province Wellesley lying along the Muda and the Kreh, comprising the lands held by me and the tracts surrounded by or adjacent to those held by Malays, are without Police stations, and, for the most part, without roads. Over a large portion of this area the population is scattered in small hamlets far apart from each other. The unreclaimed state of the greater part of it affords facilities for gangs of robbers lurking, and they can enter it by stealth either from the Muda or from the sparsely inhabited country beyond our eastern frontier. Crimes are frequently committed within it, and the perpetrators are hardly ever brought to punishment. A few years ago one of the noted *panglima panyamun*, or robber captains, of Kedah crossed it repeatedly in open day at the head of a gang well armed, and the Penghulus took care, while affecting pursuit, to keep at a safe distance from him.

Unless Chinese can be induced to settle in these districts, the work of reclamation will be exceedingly slow. I give them all the encouragement I can, but, in the absence of regular Police, or a good system of volunteer police, they have no protection for their lives and property, and are constantly exposed to thefts and often to robbery and murder. A goldsmith opened a shop on the Ikan Mati Road, but was robbed, and the lives of himself and his workmen endangered. He drew back and established himself close to my house at Permatang Bertam. A shopkeeper settled at Paya Kladi, fortified his house by rows of posts all round it, and thick bars to his door. Within two months he was attacked at night by a party of Malays. He and his men defended themselves by throwing billets of fire-wood and crockery from an upper window at the assailants, and the latter, unable to force an entry, set fire to the house and burned it down, the Chinese escaping behind by

making a rush, headed by their buffaloes. Lately, within about one month, three serious crimes were committed on my land towards the boundary pillar. Some Chinese, who had opened a shop on the bank of the river at one of the landing places, were robbed and two of them murdered in a cruel manner by a gang of Malays soon after nightfall. A Chinese hawker, belonging to another shop, was murdered during the day, for some dried fish and other articles of trifling value which he was carrying. When I last visited this district on the 11th instant, I found that one of my Malay tenants had had his house burned down in the previous night. Whilst he was asleep some one had first planted bamboo spikes along the path leading to the house to lame the inmate in escaping, or his neighbours should they come to his assistance, and had then set fire to it.

The Chinese shopkeepers have lately been disarmed by the Police, although they remained quiet, attending to their own business, during the recent disturbances in Penang, and they are now entirely at the mercy of the bad class of the Malays.

The Malays, although in most places sufficiently numerous to defend themselves from gang robbers, are unable to do so from want of concert and guidance. When a house is attacked, the neighbours usually remain aloof, partly in the fear that from want of sufficient support they may be wounded or killed by the robbers, and partly in the fear that if seen with them they may be suspected of being confederates. The robbers have, in almost all cases, fire-arms, which very few of the Malays possess; their attacks are sudden, they discharge muskets and use savage threats, and they are led, or believed to be led, by *Panglimas*, of whom the villagers stand in great dread, as many of them are noted for their boldness, strength, dexterity and ferocity, and boast of, and are credited with, being invulnerable. Hence it happens that at present a gang of ten or twenty robbers may march through the most populous villages, plunder houses and retire with complete impunity.

The Malays of Kedah, including those of the boats and rafts on the river, all carry arms. If our Malays are entirely disarmed they will be more exposed than ever to visits of marauders from beyond the frontiers.

Most of the so-called *Penghulus* have been appointed by the *Penghu-*

lu Besar, or Police Inspectors, without authority from Government. Some are men qualified by position and character for the post, others are of bad reputation or unable to write or otherwise disqualified. They have no systematic arrangements among themselves and with the villagers for united action in emergencies.

The effect of this was seen during the recent disturbances in town, when a requisition by the Lieutenant-Governor to the Deputy Commissioner of Police to send 300 Malays to town under the command of one of the Penghulu Besar and to hold other 300 in readiness at the coast villages under the other Penghulu Besar was answered by only about 120 being sent over without the Penghulu Besar, but with so many Penghulu Mukims that among the men from my neighbourhood there was a Penghulu for every seven, while some Penghulus had only one or two followers. The Penghulu Mukims should have been left, as was intended, in their villages to watch them and send in more men to the Penghulu Besar. The Malays were everywhere, so far as I went among them, willing and ready to obey the order of Government, but they were kept back, as they alleged, by orders from the local heads of the paid Police, the Penghulu Besar, who seem to have considered it necessary to keep some 10,000 male adults at their homes, or marching in bands up and down the country, to look after a few hundred Macao coolies.

The Malays on my lands are bound by an article in their leases "to conform to such regulations as the landlord may, from time to time, make, in aid of the observance and enforcement of the law and for sanitary purposes within the limits of the estate." These men and the Malays of the villages and *kampongs* adjoining have asked me to arrange with them a plan for their protection against gang robbers and for their more systematic action on the occurrence of disturbances among the Chinese, but I do not think that any such plan could be efficiently carried out without the sanction of Government. If it should be thought that my knowledge of the inhabitants and constant visits to different parts of the districts along the Muda and the Kreh, would be useful in introducing and bringing into working order such a plan, my services are entirely at the disposal of the Lieutenant-Governor.

I would suggest the following:-

Plan for the Police Protection of the Muda Districts.

The experiment of a Volunteer Police to be tried in the Districts along the Muda and the Kreh, which are at present without Police and are with difficulty accessible by the Police from their distance from Police Stations and want of roads.

The experiment to be made gradually and cautiously, beginning with the inland districts, where the societies have no branches or influence, selecting the best men to work it, engaging the villagers heartily in it, and imparting to them, and especially to the headmen, some knowledge of their legal obligations in cases of gang robberies and other crimes attended with violence.

The plan, if successful, could be afterwards extended to other districts, so as to keep down the cost of the paid Police, which already presses heavily on the rate-payers and affords them little protection from ordinary crimes and none from extraordinary ones, such as gang robberies, persecutions by Malay societies and disturbances of the peace caused by the dissensions of Chinese and Malay Societies.

The Malay Penghulus to be directly responsible to the Lieutenant-Governor and his assistant in the Province and not to the Deputy Commissioner of Police, although they will act in aid of the Police. They will maintain a direct communication, as it were, between Government and the population, and be highly useful in influencing and informing the villagers in accordance with the policy of Government. For example, the Lieutenant-Governor might explain to them the mischief done by the societies and engage them to discountenance them.

The system should be totally disconnected with the *mukims* (parishes), mosques and *jumahas*, and the Penghulus of *mukims* or mosques should not be employed as Penghulus. There would otherwise be danger of the *jumahas* and their heads acquiring too much influence and too powerful an organization. The *jumahas* bring a strong social pressure to bear on the villagers in the interest of a stricter and more fanatical observance of Mahomedanism and a greater submission to their religious leaders.

The two paid Police Inspectors who now have the title of Penghulu

Besar should be called Inspectors if retained, so as to confine the title of Penghulu to the village headmen.

1. The larger villages to be divided into *kamponqs* of 20 to 30 houses each.
2. Each of these *kamponqs*, and every hamlet or group of houses apart from the villages to have a *Katua Besar*, *Katua Kechil* and *Kweang* (messenger).
3. Such a proportion of the adult males as Government thinks fit (or the whole in particular *kamponqs*) to be enrolled as a volunteer police.
4. A certain number of these to be detailed, every three months, in each *kampong* to turn out with the *Katua Besar* when required, the others to guard the *kampong* on such occasions under the *Katua Kechil*.
5. Groups of adjacent *kamponqs* to form *Dairahs* under a *Penghulu Besar* and *Penghulu Muda* with their *Kweangs*.
6. The Penghulus and Katuas to be furnished with muskets, swords and other arms by Government, and the Penghulus to be licensed to carry swords when they are abroad.
7. The enrolled villagers to be licensed to keep such arms as may be sanctioned, and to carry them when on service.
8. The Penghulus to be appointed Constables.
9. Every Penghulu to be furnished with a gong and every Katua and Kweang with a wooden *tong-tong* such as is used by the Police in Java, and a system of alarm signals with these to be prescribed.
10. The Penghulus to receive written appointments under the seal of the Lieutenant-Governor. The Katuas to be annually elected by the enrolled villagers, subject to the confirmation of the Lieutenant-Governor.
11. When gangs of robbers or other disturbers of the peace are abroad, the nearest Penghulus or Katuas to beat a *rapid* alarm signal, which will be repeated by the adjacent Penghulus and Katuas and stop as soon as it is so repeated. The presence of the robbers, rioters, &c. in or near any *kampong* to be indicated by *slow* beats continued till they have left and their vicinity to another *kampong* is signalled in the same way. When the signal is heard every Penghulu and every Katua Besar with his men to run to the place where the robbers are. The Katua who is first on the spot to take the general direction of the volunteers until the arrival of the Penghulu of the *Dairah*, who is to take the command of the "Hue and Cry" and retain it, unless it is assumed by a

Magistrate, Justice of the Peace, Deputy Commissioner, or Inspector of Police.

12. The ordinary duties of the Penghulus will be to receive from, and furnish to, adjacent Penghulus and Police Stations notices of movements of robbers and noted or suspected criminals, to prevent crimes, arrest criminals, &c. They might also have other useful duties assigned to them, such as keeping a registry of the inhabitants, births, deaths, marriages, divorces, &c.

13. The Penghulus, Katuas and Kweaungs to be exempted from rates. If the system be found to work well, the Penghulus might receive a small salary.

14. Cattle stealing, now so common, to be checked by a system of passes.

15. Persons not to be allowed to cross or descend the Muda at night without passes from a Penghulu.

For the more effectual police of the Muda and protection of our districts adjoining it, it is desirable that arrangements should be come to with the Raja of Kedah with respect to passes for men and cattle; the arrest and detention by his Penghulus of persons charged by any of our Penghulus or Police Officers with a crime committed in our territories when the charge is verified on oath, or a warrant by a Magistrate or Justice of the Peace to arrest such persons is produced; the taking up the Hue and Cry when gangs of robbers escape from the Province across the frontier. Information as to apprehended crimes, movements of robbers, &c. should be communicated by the Penghulus on the one side of the river to the Penghulus on the other side. And the Penghulu Besar at Kota, who is the Superintendent of the districts on the Kedah side of the river and a Magistrate or a Justice of the Peace on our side should form a standing international Commission for the better preservation of the peace on the river and its borders, the regulation of ferries, the prevention of the passage of criminals and stolen property, the arrest of fugitive criminals, the prevention of smuggling, cattle trespasses, &c.

The Raja, it is also suggested, should be asked to empower the Penghulu Besar or a Hakim at Kota to hold a Court for the recovery of debts by creditors on our side from persons who have fled to, or reside on, the Raja's side.

J. R. LOGAN.

20th August, 1867.

I see no objection to the carrying out of Mr. LOGAN'S project in part, leaving the rest for future and more mature consideration. Penghulus, willing to act without salary, might be appointed along the line of the Muda, who might be permitted to carry arms. The Government have none to supply, not having sufficient for the Police. They might be permitted to recommend and appoint, under section 21 of the Police Act, a certain number of men to act as Special Constables, also to be permitted to carry arms, and the Penghulus themselves might be appointed under the same Act, the Commissioner of Police having only such authority over them as he should receive from the Lieut.-Governor. Then, people might be appointed on the application of Mr. LOGAN as required by the Act, and a system of communicating by means of gongs, or otherwise, might very well be adopted for mutual information and protection. I quite agree with Mr. LOGAN, and had already adopted his opinion, that the paid Penghulus should be in the position of the Parish Constable in England. If Mr. LOGAN approves of this, perhaps he will name the Penghulus to be appointed.

A. E. H. ANSON,
Lieut.-Governor.

Lieut.-Governor's Office,
30th August, 1867.

To
PERCY WINDSOR EARL Esq.,
Commissioner of Police,
Prince of Wales' Island.

Sir,

I have the honour, on behalf of the inhabitants of Muda District liable to be called out as part of the Posse Comitatus and who have signed agreements to act in keeping the peace and in aid of the Police, to request that you will be good enough to appoint the persons whom they have elected for that purpose, and whose names are entered in the Rolls now sent for your inspection, Constables under Section 21 of the Police Act of 1856, to keep the

peace within their respective Dairahs and Kampongs, from this date till the end of next year; to which I beg leave to add my own request.

In the event of the peace being disturbed by gang-robbers or others, the villagers will be called out by these Constables and act under their directions until an officer of Police, or other person having lawful authority in that behalf, arrives at the place of the disturbance and takes the direction.

The Constables have also undertaken to give immediate information to the nearest Police authority of all crimes or intended crimes that come to their knowledge and to attend, with as many of the villagers as may be required, whenever their aid is called for by any officer of Police. The Constables will serve without pay, but it is hoped that, in consideration of the saving of expense which such a system of supplementary Volunteer Police may enable Government to effect in the regular Police force, the Municipal Commissioners will think it proper to remit some portion of their rates. At present, as you are aware, a large portion of the District is without Police Stations and roads. Without an organization of this kind, the villagers are defenceless against gang robbers, and this is true even of those portions that are in the vicinity of Police Stations, for it cannot be expected that half a dozen Policemen can beat off or arrest armed bands of 20 to 70 men unless they are aided by the Hue and Cry, which has been proved by the recent gang robberies in the south of the Province as well as by many in former years in the north, to be wholly ineffective when the *Posse Comitatus* is not thus organized. The mere knowledge that the villagers are everywhere prepared to resist gang robberies will, it may be anticipated, have the effect of making them less frequent. I intended to arrange with the Muda villagers a system of signals by beat of wooden drums such as are used by the Police of Java, but I think it would be better if you were to introduce such a system for general adoption both by the regular and the volunteer Police.

I have the honour to be

Sir,

Your most obedt. servant,

J. R. LOGAN.

Province Wellesley,
15th October, 1867.

To
The Hon'ble Colonel ANSON,
Lieut.-Governor,
P. W. Island.

Sir,

1. Referring to the Memo. which I submitted to you on 20th August last on the subject of the organization of the Malay villagers of the Muda and Kreh districts, under headmen, for their mutual protection against gang robbers and other purposes, and to your Memo. thereon, dated 30th August, approving of the experiment and requesting that I would name the Penghulus to be appointed, I have now the honour to forward lists of Pengulus and rolls of the volunteers. Acting on your suggestion, the Penghulus and Katuas have been appointed "additional constables" under Section 21 of the Police Act of 1856 on a formal application made by the villagers and myself to the Commissioner of Police.

2. Instead of selecting the headmen myself, I thought the better course, for reasons which I shall presently give, would be to visit the different villages, talk over the matter with the Malays, arrange with them the most efficient division of the groups of population into *Kampongs* or villages and of these into *Dairahs* or districts, and then leave it to the villagers to name their Katuas,¹ or elders, and the latter to name the Penghulus,² or heads, for submission to you.³ With your approval, I also adopted a form of agreement which is printed in English and Malay at the head of the Rolls, by which the signers agree to aid in keeping the peace, and not to join unlawful societies. Opposite the name of each is a list of the arms kept by him, and for which licenses are requested.

3. It has necessarily taken some time to get the plan carried out thus far amongst so scattered a population. Almost universally it has been received with the greatest favour. In some of the villages towards the west, where there is a Jawi-pakan admixture and where the influence of two of the town *jumahas* and one of the Province ones was recently great, hesitation was shewn by individuals, who asked if Government, after doubling and trebling the assessed rates on the lands and rating their houses, might not intend

to put on new taxes, or make the volunteers keep up the roads and drains, or serve as soldiers? I explained to them that the Municipal Commissioners had simply directed re-assessment at the true or improved valuation, that the proposed system was a purely voluntary one originating with myself and heartily taken up by the Malays in my quarter as the surest means for our mutual protection, but that the Lieutenant-Governor had approved of it, would grant written appointments to the Penghulus and Katuas, and would, I hoped, give it every encouragement if it worked well. In some instances difficulties have arisen from a difference of opinion in the choice of heads, or from bold and crafty men, of whom their more ignorant and timid neighbours stand in some fear, manoeuvring to be named as Penghulus, but by a little patience and management these difficulties have been overcome.

4. I consider it essential to the success of the plan, and as constituting its distinctive feature, that the village heads as well as those of divisions should owe their position and their retention of it, to the opinion in which they are held by their fellow-villagers. In most cases, the appointment would practically be permanent, but to keep the heads on their good behaviour the villagers should have the option of changing them at intervals, and three years appears to be a suitable term.⁴ Among such a population the risk of an office being abused increases with area over which its influence extends. It is necessary, for the convenience of the officers of Government and the marshalling of the Volunteer Police when required to act in large numbers, that there should be Penghulus of divisions over the Katuas of villages, but although I have, in most cases, limited the numbers under them to from 100 to 150 and trust much to the Katuas to protect their fellow-villagers from malpractices on the part of the Penghulus, the latter, if retained, will require to be carefully guided and watched. In the course of the selection of the heads I have been more and more impressed with the expediency of regarding the village organization as the basis and safeguard of the system, and confirmed in the distrust I have long entertained of the plan of placing large districts under Malays of leading families. They acquire a degree of influence which is neither safe for the Government nor for the people. They ally themselves with the professing doctors of theology. They strengthen themselves by getting their relatives made heads of Jumahas.⁵ They cultivate

an intimacy with members of the Malay royal families on the one side and with the native subordinates in the Government offices on the other. This is but natural, and the influence they usually succeed in establishing is, on occasions, useful to Government, but I have hardly known one who has not yielded to the immense temptations so powerful a position holds out to ordinary Malays, among whose most prominent failing is a greediness for money, or money's worth, got without toil. Dangerous as it has been found to employ Europeans of the lower ranks as Police Inspectors among a Malay population, I believe that there is a more insidious danger in giving to Malays the position of salaried Inspectors of the regular Police, having, or credited with having, the ear of the European Authorities, and allowing them, at the same time, to assume the position of chiefs of large districts. In a small village the inhabitants are intimately known to each other and often more or less connected by marriage. They are usually on nearly the same social level, and almost every head of a family is a substantial yeoman who ploughs his own acres. A village Penghulu will seldom try, or be allowed, to dominate over a score or two of fellow-villagers as a district Penghulu can over some thousands of the more ignorant Malays, whose faith in his pretensions is in inverse proportion to their personal familiarity with him. Of course there is a counterbalancing risk of the village Penghulu being sometimes found not sufficiently independent of the influence of his relatives and associates, if any of them should happen to be guilty of a crime, but this is a minor risk to that of the wide reaching oppressions and denials of justice which attend the rule of a pleasant mannered District Penghulu who happens to be greedy of money. I regard the Divisional Penghulus in my own plan with some distrust, and would prefer to be able to dispense with them for the present. It will be seen that I have made some changes since the Rolls were signed by breaking up a few of the original Divisions containing two to three hundred adults into smaller ones of about a hundred.⁶

5. In lately returning to me the printed form of appointment which I had prepared by your desire, you substituted six months from its date for the end of 1868 which I had named as the shortest term within which the system and the first nominees could be fairly tried, and you added a note to the effect that expected changes in the law and in the Police Force would prob-

ably render the aid of the volunteers unnecessary after that time. Believing that you acquiesced in the reasons which I then offered against so limited a term, the forms both for the certificates as constables and the appointments as Penghulus and Katuus have been printed with the original term, but the Commissioner of Police, on returning the former signed by him, informed me, at the same time, that you still thought a period of six months would be sufficient. No intimation of this kind was contained in your memo. of the 30th August, and I inferred from it that although you wished to proceed cautiously you would be prepared, should the experiment be successful, to sanction the wider development of the plan. If I had supposed that it was not to have some degree of permanency, but might be abruptly put an end to in six months, I could not have taken it upon me to ask the Malays to adopt it, nor is it likely that they would have done so at all as a mere temporary expedient, or, if they had, that they would have received it in such a spirit as to ensure its good working. It would, I fear, entirely defeat our object if, at this stage, the intimation were made to them (not of course by me) that the system now introduced is only likely to be maintained for a few months. I would submit, with deference, that the fairest as well as most expedient course would be to defer any discouraging step of the kind until the contemplated changes take place, when Government, if it thought fit, could abolish the system, in such a manner and with such explanation of its reasons as would be calculated to lessen any dissatisfaction on the part of the Malays.

6. I hope you will allow me, however, to add some reasons in support of those that may be gathered from my Memo. of 20th August, for not looking on the measure as a mere make-shift pending the adoption of those improvements in the Police for which the Settlement is to be indebted to you, and I would preface these reasons by saying that, although I brought the plan forward as one that was peculiarly and urgently necessary in the somewhat exceptional condition of that portion of Province Wellesley in which I have resided for the last five years, I, long ago, when living in the south of Penang, earnestly advocated the association and organization, with the sanction and support of Government and for the purpose of maintaining the peace and counteracting the various class and religious influences opposed to it, of the Malays and the well-disposed inhabitants of all other classes, including the

many Chinese who disapproved of the secret societies and wanted nothing so much as adequate social protection against being absorbed into or persecuted by them. A plan on a narrower basis for giving the assessment committee and, as an after-thought, the Police, the aid of divisional Penghulus⁷ was tried by Mr. BLUNDELL when Resident Councillor of Penang, and so long as he remained here and took a strong personal interest in the Penghulus, much benefit was derived from it. It was afterwards extended to the Province, but too hastily to admit of a good selection of headmen, and it soon fell into neglect. More recently Colonel MAN was impressed with the advantages likely to accrue from its revival on a wider basis. It was a subject of frequent conversation between us, and he intended, I believe, to avail himself of my assistance in introducing it in North Province Wellesley, if the Settlement had not passed from under the administration of the Indian Government.

7. No community is exempt from occasional disturbances of the peace on a scale too large to be immediately dealt with by the regular Police or the Military, even if it were desirable to employ the latter, except as a last resource. This Settlement is exposed to these from three sources—the quarrels, originating here or propagated from abroad, of the Chinese societies; those of the Mahomedan *jumahas*; and the existence of professional banditti in the adjacent Malay states—one of these countries, Perak, being at all times and in all places wretchedly misgoverned by a number of Rajas and district chiefs striving with each other who shall excel in habitual rapacity and occasional rapine, and the other, Kedah, having large and thinly populated wilds all along our eastern boundary. The character and habits of large numbers of our own population, especially of the immigrant and shifting classes, make it very susceptible to such disturbances, and a strong and active element of mischief is supplied, in the case of the allied Mahomedan and Chinese societies, by the ambition, craft and rapacity of a colonial class in which the subtlety of the Chinese, the effrontery of the Kling, and the dissimulation and vanity of both are mingled with the boldness and suavity of the Malay.⁸ From these and from other causes now probably only in their seeds, we cannot expect that the time will soon come when occasions will cease to arise, on which Government must avail itself of the temporary assistance of the well-disposed portion of the local population in resisting

violence, because the disciplined force in its regular employment is either not on the scene of disturbance or only present in insufficient numbers. The right of availing itself of the legal obligation of every male above 15 years old to aid in keeping the peace must always be kept in reserve, as this alone can enable Government to oppose, in every part of the Settlement, by a superior force always ready to act, bands of rioters or robbers who may suddenly appear. But our population is very imperfectly acquainted with this legal obligation, and is at present incapable of acting in concert against such bands. On each recurring outbreak of the quarrels of societies or systematic attacks on our villages by gang robbers, we have seen the rural population paralysed and helpless. It is a principal and the more immediate object of the plan now being introduced, to bring home to the villagers a practical sense of their duty as loyal subjects to aid in keeping the peace of their villages and of the Settlement, and to give them an organization that will, for the first time, make it possible for them to supply such aid, and effectively place them, for that purpose, in the hands of the authorities. The simultaneous disturbances of the peace in many parts of the Settlement by the secret action of societies whose members are found almost everywhere, will be met by an equally ubiquitous and permanent resisting force on the side of order. The existence of such a force can hardly fail to exercise a strong deterring influence on rioters and marauders, and it cannot but strengthen the Government and enable it to use the Police and Military with much greater effect than it can now do, when it must either dissipate their strength and harass the men in the vain attempt to oppose every outbreak, or only succeed in protecting a few places by concentrating its force there and leaving the rest of the country to its fate.

8. The plan will subserve other objects of hardly less importance. The wide difference in manners, religion and education between the higher European Officers of Government and the Native population tends to estrange them almost as much as if the latter were a foreign and conquered nation, and not, as a large proportion are, British subjects born in the Colony. The Malays are very gregarious, and the mass are prone to accept the guidance of those who have any pretention to claim it and will take the trouble to exercise it. At present their personal devotion is chiefly bestowed on their religious

leaders and on connections of the royal family of Kedah. It is very desirable that the distance between them and the Officers of Government should be lessened, and that the latter should have the means, when opportunities arise, of establishing such a degree of familiar intercourse with them as is practicable.⁹ At present large numbers in the inaccessible or less frequented villages have no personal knowledge of the higher officers of Government. Government means to most of them a Native Inspector of Police, a Sub-collector of rates, a native Land-surveyor, an Overseer of Public Works with his convicts, and the Kali, all of whom they look upon as impersonations of power, and all of whom, if so disposed, may find exhaustless profit in this persuasion. They have sometimes seen the Raja Sabrang,¹⁰ the Raja Polis,¹¹ and the Raja Bandwan,¹² usually accompanied by some members of the official stratum interposed between them and the higher one to which the powers of the latter are assumed to be delegated. The superior ranks are merged in the vague and mythical idea of "Kampani" (East India Company). The great personages with whom they are more immediately concerned are not the European *Rajas*, but the Native *Datus* or chiefs, the power of two of whom, each in his department, the Police and the Land Survey,¹³ they believe to be unlimited, and to descend, in various measures, on those who are supposed to stand well with them. The recognition of heads of villages named by the villagers themselves will afford a means of mutual access to the higher Officers of Government and to them. It will give all of them a sense of being directly recognised by the *Raja Besar* of the Settlement himself as good subjects of the Queen, and of not being merely subjected to the law but of being associated in its maintenance, while the appointments will be objects of a healthy ambition. It will enable Government to inform and influence the population, supplying it, as it were, with an agent and mouth-piece in every *kampong*. If the system be properly fostered, it will go far to keep the influence of the *jumahas* and of religious and other leaders within legitimate bounds, and establish a feeling of attachment to and confidence in the superior officers of Government and of loyalty to the Crown.

9. The system will subserve another and most important end—that of gradually educating the Malays. A large proportion of the villagers are excessively ignorant, and they suffer seriously from their ignorance.

Their want of sanitary knowledge and habits is so great that they may be said to cultivate the diseases that originate in or are fomented by dirt and insufficient ventilation.¹⁴ The overcrowding of both sexes in small huts incites to immoralities from which their religious scruples are not always strong enough to deter them. Their ignorance of the real character of the Government exposes them to misrepresentations and malpractices, and disables them from using the means of redress which the law provides. While seeing little of educated Europeans, they are sought out by Chinese, Klings and Malays who are finished in the knowledge and craft acquired in that great school of cheating under the guise of honest mercantile thrift, piety or good nature—an Asiatic seaport where traders of all nations congregate. From an experience extending over thirty years in which I have been almost constantly in close and unreserved intercourse with the Natives, much of it professional and confidential, I do not hesitate to say that the more stupid and ignorant are defrauded on all hands by the more knowing and crafty. The more ignorant Malay cannot sell his paddy to a Chinese without being cheated, in the confusion to which the illegal but universal use of measures of different sizes and his narrow powers of calculation expose him. Government in its Acts and Regulations lays careful and elaborate plans to protect him from exactions on the part of its subordinates, but these very plans defeat their end, and become means to fresh exactions. So low in the scale reaches the belief of the Malay rustic in the power of every servant of Government to do him good or harm according as he is treated, that he never thinks of questioning the right of even a convict in the Survey Department to a fee for drawing the measuring chain over his land or serving him with a notice, or that of a convict in the Engineer's Department to take his bamboos and plantains without payment. There are usually so many steps between the issue of an order by the head of a Department and its actual execution, that nothing he can do will secure the more ignorant Natives affected by it from being defrauded either by some of his subordinates, or by other persons acting, or professing to act, for them. I make no doubt, to take one Department, that the Malay holders of small lots have, first and last and in one way and another, paid for the lands bought by them from Government much more than the amount that has actually been received by Government.

As an illustration of the difficulty Government has in at once protecting its own rights and those of the more ignorant Natives, I may mention the case of a sale by auction at the Land Office some time ago of a number of lots for non-payment of quit rent. The rule was for the notice of sale to be signed by the Resident Councillor himself, and to be entrusted to the Police to be published, thus attempting to provide against collusion by native subordinates in the Land or Surveyor's Offices with purchasers. A few days after the sale I was told that some lots held on permit, which I had some time previously bought from Malays, had been sold to a Malay, and on making enquiries it turned out that he was almost the only bidder at the auction and had bought up most of the lots at prices absurdly low. For the fruit trees on one of mine I had paid \$25, and was still liable to Government for the price of the land. This lot was knocked down to the man at about \$4—land and trees. The notice had been published by placarding it in a few places and by a Police peon beating a gong and proclaiming that certain lots were to be sold, but no special notices were given to the holders of these lots. So far there was ground for presuming collusion between the purchaser and some of the subordinates of Government. But on pushing my enquiries I found that the lot-holders had received notices to take out grants several years previously and had not come forward to do so, not considering the lands to be then worth the Government price, and I was led to infer that some of the more astute were themselves parties to the collusion, which had a double object, the more recondite one being to enable them to get grants at a lower rate than if they had to pay the fixed price as well as rent for these years. A case came before the court a few years ago in which it was proved that a Malay had obtained large sums from the ryots of some districts on the pretext that he was empowered to take a fee from each to get a survey made, and from what Malays have told me from time to time, I believe that such exactions have been common, and that it is seldom that a survey is made, or grant issued, for one of the more ignorant Malays, without some one or other persuading him into making irregular payments of the kind. The general Municipal Act provides an elaborate system of checks to protect the more ignorant rate-payers from wrong. They must have at least 15 days' special notice of all first assessments and every subsequent increase of valuation, to enable them to get a review of over-valuations; a bill must be

presented to them and 5 days given them to pay it; a warrant of distress is then to issue, but no sale is to take place for other 5 days. The fees payable are all fixed by the Act, and there are none until the property has been actually seized as a distress. Nothing would seem better devised to protect the ryots. But, in reality, each fresh shield turns into a weapon of exaction in the hands of an unscrupulous bill collector. Fees have been demanded and taken for the notice, and on the warrants of distress when no distress has been made. It may thus readily come about that a stupid Malay pays many times the actual amount of his bill.

10. The Malays in the Province are exposed to suffer not only from the exactions of unscrupulous persons in or hanging about the Police, Land, Survey, Assessment, Engineer's and Magistrates' Departments, and the offices of the Registrar and Agents of the Court, but, to a very large extent, from those of the Kalis, who claim extensive and undefined powers and exercise a jurisdiction to which they have no title. The large and pernicious power of the Kalis, which poisons domestic life among the Malays, is based on a gross misconception. Originally in all Mahomedan countries, and to this day in several, including the native states in India, the Kali is the supreme judge—civil, criminal and ecclesiastical. He is required to administer justice in a public place. In a non-Mahomedan country, the Kalis of Mahomedan communities must derive their authority from the Government of the country. By the law of this Settlement, civil, criminal and ecclesiastical jurisdiction is vested exclusively in the Supreme Court, the Courts of Requests, the Magistrates of Police and the Justices of the Peace. No law gives authority to the local Government to appoint Kalis, recognizes the office, or defines its powers. From an early period in the history of the Settlement, the local Government appears to have appointed persons under the title of Kalis, but without affecting to confer judicial authority on them or to point out their functions. Governor Blundell declined to do more than recognize them as persons deriving certain undefined powers from the voluntary election and submission of associations of Mahomedans, declaring that he had no legal authority to appoint them. It may be doubted whether other Governors intended to do more. It is clear that none of them can have assumed to confer on the so-called Kalis any portion of the supreme judicial powers which attach to the

office in Mahomedan countries. In practice the Kalis have usurped compulsory jurisdiction over all the Mahomedans inhabiting the district in which they exercise it. Knowing it to be essential to the recognition of their authority, they have affected to hold their appointments from the Government. They have assumed as much of the powers attaching to the office in Mahomedan countries as they have been able to do in the presence of the regularly constituted Courts and Judges of the Settlement, and considerably more, probably, than they would be able to justify, were the question of their legal position and powers formally brought under judicial consideration. Appointed in so irregular a manner, and, as judges, laxly tolerated rather than recognised, the office has been deprived of those safeguards by which the regular administration of justice is surrounded. The Government from which they profess to derive their appointments does not select them or subject them to any test of fitness in respect of character or learning, and it leaves them without control. No public courts are provided for them, and they exercise their judicial functions in their own houses or in small sheds attached to them, which they dignify with the name of *Balai shara*. Their jurisdiction having no legal foundation and being only limited by the ignorance or acquiescence of suitors, shifts with the requirements of plaintiffs, but is generally understood to be confined to cases between husband and wife, embracing suits by the husband for restitution of conjugal rights, and by the wife for maintenance, dower, co-habitation and divorce. The Kali issues summonses to defendants and witnesses under his seal. For all such process and its service and for his judgments, he charges fees to a considerable amount. Particular Kalis have, from time to time, been notorious among the natives for their corruption and extortion. They have hired themselves to men colluding with wives to obtain divorces and marry them, or with the parents of young married women seeking to free their daughters from the marriage bond in order to marry them to more wealthy suitors. In such cases, the first step is for the woman to go, or be taken, to the Kali, where a complaint of want of sufficient maintenance or other cause of divorce is entered, or a pretended divorce set up, and the husband summoned. Adjournments are made from time to time, and further evidence adduced and in the meantime the Kali receives bribes from both parties and keeps the woman in his own house where she has no pro-

tection against his criminal advances. Cases are even said to have occurred in which Kalis have pandered to their own sons and to friends. It must be said that such practices do not excite the universal disgust and indignation which might be expected and which indeed would prevent their being long indulged in. An old lady, the wife of the founder of one of the mosques at Permatang Bertam, who enjoys a high reputation for piety and strictness, on being asked, with reference to a statement made in her presence by a witness in a case to which a relative of theirs was a party, whether such things could be, and how it came that they were tolerated, replied that it was only for a few days and with the Kali. But Malay fathers and husbands, less indulgent to the frailties of her sex and race than this old lady, have frequently spoken to me bitterly of the extent to which the peace of families is disturbed and immorality promoted by Kalis. Some go so far as to say that most of the Malay women who become prostitutes in town have acquired their vicious habits when residing in the houses of Kalis and induced by them to take this infamous means of raising a fee of \$20 or \$30 to pay him for the divorce. Even the more respectable Kalis, who are not accused of debauching their suitors or leading them into debauchery, are, with rare exceptions, said to be accessible to bribes, and none of them has the slightest pretension to the qualifications necessary for the judge of a divorce or any other Court. "I regret to observe," writes Colonel Low, "that, so far as my experience extends, there is not a native at this Settlement of Pinang who could be safely entrusted with the power of a Justice of the Peace or even with a lesser judicial independent authority."¹⁷ The more cultivated Malays themselves say that the very word Kali is an offence to them, and that the temptations to which the office exposes its holders are so great that a good man who takes it soon becomes a bad one. None of the learned Malays of any reputation will accept it. The more ignorant Malays of the interior are exposed to be fleeced by any one who pretends to be a Kali. Lately when at Kamlun I found a Malay going about among his friends in great anxiety of mind to borrow the large sum, for him and them, of ten dollars. On enquiring into the cause, I learned that his wife had left him a few days before on pretext of visiting a sister at Bagan Jermal. Next day he received a summons under the *chap* of a Haji at Bagan Ajam professing to be a Kali, but of whom and his jurisdiction the Kamlun

villagers had previously been happily in ignorance. He hastened to the sister, who told him that his wife was with the Kali. He went to the Kali, who would not produce her, but told him that if he wanted to get her back he must pay \$10, "which is as much," said the man plaintively, "as I paid for her twenty years ago when she was a virgin" (meaning her dower).

11. The Malays of the interior are also infested by a class of parasitical Malays, or half Malays, who make it their business to spy out flaws in titles and latent causes of family disputes, incite to litigation, get the partition and sale of lands into their hands, and usually exact a share of the property much beyond what any fair commission or actual costs of suit would amount to. Their own ignorance and carelessness are themselves a fruitful source of trouble and litigation. Wills are seldom brought into Court to be proved, or letters of administration applied for, until many years, sometimes 20 or 30, after the death of a land-holder and when, owing to intermediate deaths, it is difficult or impossible to prove the will or come to a satisfactory decision on contested facts of marriage, divorce or paternity. A will was brought to me a few days ago which had been acted on, without probate, for about 20 years. The testator had added some extraordinary imprecations at the end of it to prevent any of his family attempting to disregard it, but he had not signed it, neither he nor the writer appearing to have known that this was essential and would have accomplished what his legacy of curses has failed to do. There was a case in Court a few years ago which turned entirely on the question whether the person named as grantee in a Government grant of a piece of land was the father or the grand-father of certain of the claimants, and after hearing much evidence, and giving the parties every opportunity to call additional witnesses, the Recorder was unable to make up his mind on the subject.

12. It appears to me that all these evils in mind, body and estate, arise from one source, *ignorance*, and can only be effectually cured by removing it. The system of village organization supplies the means of making a beginning in this work. The attempts hitherto made by Government to educate the Malays of the Province have failed, because the object aimed at was indefinite and too remote from their daily life and business. The Malays have already a large amount of valuable practical knowledge, well fitted to

carry them successfully through life in a purely Malay country. The first step should be to add to it that business knowledge which will adapt them to their present position as British subjects. Their first want is that of some plain elementary information about their duties in keeping the peace and suppressing crime, the powers and mode of arresting criminals, the positions and powers of the different officers and servants of Government, the rules relating to sales of Government land and assessment, the fees payable under the land, assessment and other regulations that affect them most closely, the effect of marriage and divorce on rights to property, the mode of making wills, the division of the estates of intestates, the maintenance of wives, the maintenance, custody and guardianship of children, as to what cases must be taken to a Magistrate and what to the civil courts, what are the real powers of a Kali, &c. They would also learn, what few of them know, that the courts are not shut in the face of those who are too poor to pay the usual fees. Short tracts in Malay, containing information of this kind, placed in the hands of the Katuas, and supplemented by occasional discussions with them and the villagers by the Magistrate when visiting the districts, would, I am certain, be valued by the Malays, and in time, give them a sufficient stock of useful knowledge to protect them from the more gross oppressions and exactions to which their ignorance now exposes them. In most of the villages one or more persons who can read are to be found.

The first step having been taken and time given to make good their footing so far, tracts might follow containing some common sanitary facts, shewing the advantages of good ventilation, of cleanliness in the *kampong*, house, dress and cooking, of vaccination, of drainage, that the proper place for dirt is not under the house but under the ground at the roots of their trees; and while enlightening them on these homely matters the opportunity might be taken to get the Katuas to set about the adoption of the sanitary provisions of the Conservancy Act and keeping the common village paths and drains in better order.

The use of the Roman characters instead of the Arabo-Persian for Malay might, in due time, be introduced, as the Dutch have done so successfully and with such signal practical advantages in Netherlands India. When some progress had been made in establishing village schools

on this basis, a new zest and larger scope might be given to their awakening literary appetite by supplying them with copies of some of the best works extant in their own language but of which few of them have ever heard, with translations of some of the Arabian Nights, and the like. Tracts on geography and ethnography, the elementary facts of meteorology, astronomy, botany, &c., might follow in due time. No attempt would, of course, be made to meddle with their religion. All attempts of the kind have hitherto failed and only tended to excite suspicion and arouse bigotry. We may freely allow to them, with some qualifications at which they will not take umbrage, that the better Mahomedan the better man.¹⁶

13. In my memorandum of 20th August I suggested that, in addition to their duties of a Police nature, the Penghulus might have others assigned to them, such as keeping a registry of the inhabitants, of births, deaths, marriages, divorces, &c. Each might be supplied with a blank book in which to write, or get written, a diary of all such events, and others of public importance or interest, such as crimes and offences, accidents to life, floods, droughts, the state of the crops, &c. This would itself serve as some stimulus to education, and it would furnish a contemporary record valuable in courts of justice and materials for general official registries to be kept by the Magistrates.

The Penghulus and Katuas might also do much good service with little trouble to themselves by assisting in protecting the public rivers, canals, drains, embankments, roads, and landing places from injury and giving immediate notice of injuries which they have been unable to prevent to the nearest resident officer of Public Works. At present water-courses of all kinds are almost constantly being injured or obstructed by buffaloes, fishing stakes and traps, dams, &c. Roads, paths and canals in course of formation are seriously damaged by cattle. Works like the Muda Bund are liable to be injured during their progress, and after completion require constant watching to prevent careless or malicious damage. The heads of the villages along the course of such works might give good aid in protecting them. Few of the landing places are kept in good order. When the harvest is over herds of hundreds of buffaloes are let loose over the plains and public roads, and although a vigorous attempt was made by the Police last year on complaints

made by the Assistant Engineer and myself to prevent cattle trespass, it failed, owing to the number of the cattle, the difficulty of catching them or ascertaining the names of the owners and the little time policemen have to spare for the purpose.

I would further venture to recommend that, instead of the elaborate system of protection against over-valuations and exactions, provided by the Assessment Act, an account in Malay of the rates payable by the inhabitants of each village be given to the Penghulus and by them to the Katuas, about two or three months before the day on which payment is to be made, and explained to the villagers. They would much prefer this to the present system, and the Katuas and Penghulus are prepared to have the money ready on the day fixed, when the Collector would only have to attend at the nearest Police Station, receive it, and sign the receipt on the account. This would supersede the necessity of making out bills and notices and employing so many bill collectors and their subordinates, and if the commission now allowed for collection were given to the Katuas it would make the office more prized. The Penghulus might be allowed a small proportion of it and be exempted, as the old Penghulus were, from rates on their lands and houses. The collection was at one time entrusted to Penghulu Mukims on a commission, but cases of default occurred, owing partly to a bad selection of Penghulus, but chiefly to the sums which each had to collect being too large. The sum for which each Katua will be responsible will be too small to offer a temptation to embezzlement. The plan might be tried without any alteration of the Act. The Katuas and Penghulus will also be very useful in settling petty disputes and maintaining good feeling among the villagers. When quarrels arise between inhabitants of different *kampongs* or *dairahs*, the Katuas and Penghulus might form councils of conciliation.

The Penghulus might also be entrusted, under the control of the Magistrate, Engineer, or other European Officer, with the regulation of the supply of water from the drains for irrigation in the dry season. At present the Malays dam the drains to flood their fields, without reference to the needs of their neighbours above or below.

14. Along with the Rolls I enclose a table with the names of the *dairahs* and *kampongs*, their Penghulus and Katuas and the number of male adults

in each who have signed the Rolls. The total number of the latter is 3,663, representing a general population, women and children included, which may be estimated at about 20,000. As both married and unmarried women hold lands and other property, marriage not affecting the right of the wife in her estate, real or personal, the influence of the Katuas and Penghulus embraces a much larger number of persons than appears from the Rolls.

15. In conclusion, I venture to remark that while the village organization may with advantage be permanently maintained for some of its purposes, I would contemplate a gradual curtailment of the duties of the heads, as the progress of cultivation and, with it, of the revenue enables Government to make adequate provision for Police, Conservancy, District Courts, and Schools in North Province Wellesley. If we had a sufficient number of intelligent and trained policemen, the regular employment of village constables would be unnecessary and objectionable. At present many of the policemen are not better educated or more intelligent, and are probably less trustworthy, than the least promising of the Malays selected by the villagers as their headmen.

I have, &c.,
J.R. LOGAN.

Permatang Bertam
22nd November, 1867

Note to para: 7.

*The late Colonel Low, for so many years Superintendent of Province Wellesley, described this class graphically, and his remarks apply not only to the Jawi-pakans properly so called, but to all descendants of Indians born and brought up in the Settlement. "A Jawi-pakan is the offspring of a man of Hindustan [India] and a Malayan woman [or a descendant of such an union]. He inherits the boldness of the Malay and the subtlety, acuteness and dissimulation of the Hindoo [Indian]. He is indefatigable in the pursuit of wealth and most usurious in the employment of it when gained. Few employments come amiss to him. He cloaks ignorance where it exists, or makes up for it by pretence and

zeal. His fingers seem to have a chemical affinity for the precious metals; he avoids downright theft, yet the transit of money or money's worth through the former is at a discount varying in amount according to his calculations of detection. He is cringing to superiors, overbearing, and, where there is no check on his conduct, tyrannical to inferiors; like one of the feline tribe when it has changed its quarters, he carefully obtains a perfect acquaintance with all the trapdoors, outlets and hiding crevices of the portion in which he is placed. Thus secured he makes the most of that position. If he holds a public situation, he tries to balance his peculations or malpractices with the above chances of escape, and generally succeeds, and should this fail he compounds for safety with his defrauded creditors and dupes, and quashes information. It is not here intended to include a whole class in the above description, yet it is to be feared that exceptions to the picture are fewer than could be wished. When under strict management, the Jawi-pakans are undoubtedly a very useful class in the Straits, and might not conveniently be dispensed with.”—*Dissertation, &c.*

The class of these men in the public offices are mostly related by blood or marriage. The progenitors were Jawi-pakans of Kedah, but while some of the present 1st and 2nd cousins are not distinguishable from Malays, others are hardly distinguishable in person from Klings. The paid Police Penghulus, the collectors of Government rents and Municipal rates, the land measurers, the shroffs, Malay Writers and Interpreters have always largely belonged to this family alliance, which also includes several of the leading men of the *jumahas*, many of the principal Malay and Kling (Pinang born) merchants, and maintains a hereditary connection with the Kedah Court. Members of it are often employed by the Raja of Kedah as *kranis* and land-measurers. Captain LIGHT, in a despatch to the Supreme Government of India, dated 12th September, 1786, gives, in the course of a report on the state of affairs in Kedah, a strong instance of the extent to which the cunning of natives of India and their descendants sometimes enables them to rule Malays. “Datu Sri Raja (formerly named ISMAL, and a common coolie) is now the King's merchant; he is a deep, cunning, villainous Chuliah. By working on the King's pusillanimity and raising jealousies, he reduced the power of the great men and exgrossed the whole of the administration, by preferring only

such as he thought attached to himself. To save the King from pretended assassinations, he built a small brick fort and built him up as in a cage; no one dares presume to go to audience without his knowledge. If he found any of the great men likely to get into favour, he bribed them to his interest. By monopolising every species of commerce, and oppressing the Malays, he found means to supply the King's necessities without his having the trouble to enquire how it [the money] came." "He [the king] receives likewise a deal in presents and fines. Every person who has any demand to make, or suit to prefer, first presents a sum of money which he thinks adequate to the demand; if the King approves of the sum he signs the paper, and his suit is obtained, *unless another person comes with greater sums.*" This would serve as an account of the administration of justice in the Malay States at the present day.

The Colonial Chinese (Babas) by intermarrying among themselves, and the women with pure Chinese, have largely eliminated the original Malay half-blood. They are distinguished by their conceit and forwardness; but have more softness and amenity of manner than the Jawi-pakans; retaining, in this respect, the impress of their Malay descent and association. They are intelligent, bold and pushing, and some of the leading men of the Secret Societies, notably the head of the Twa-peh-kong, are drawn from this class. It is through their intimacy with the town Jawi-pakans and the Malay heads of the *jamahas* that the latter societies have been so easily brought into alliance with the former, notwithstanding the ban placed by Mahomedanism on all friendly association with "infidels." It should be added that there is a considerable class composed of Jawi-pakans, Babas and Malays who are noted for their "fast" lives, and many of whom are led on from gambling and licentiousness to theft and other crimes. Their recklessness and love of mischief and excitement render them a dangerous element in the societies, to which large numbers of them belong.

The Chinese are gradually pushing their way among the Malays of North Province Wellesley, and as they increase in numbers and wealth, the Malays borrow money from them whenever they can, become more dependent on them and more liable to be seduced into joining their societies. At present these settlers are chiefly Hokkien shop-keepers or hawkers, and Kwang-

Tung paddy planters and rice dealers, who have little social connection with the Malays, but this does not prevent their getting wives among the needier Malays and Samsams. The time is not far distant when the *babas* will have more influence in many parts of the Province than the Jawi-pakans now have.

As the Malays themselves form the great mass of the population of North Province Wellesley and considerable errors are to be found in the published accounts of the character and habits of the race, including even that by Mr. VAUGHAN in the Journal of the Indian Archipelago, which is, in many aspects, just to them and a great advance on previous delineations of them, I subjoin an extract from some notes on the races of the Settlement and the Malay Peninsula which, at the request of the Local Government, I furnished, about two years ago, for transmission to the Government of India.¹⁷ They apply more to the fully cultivated and peopled than to the wider districts of the Province:—

“The Malay is good-natured, courteous, sociable, gregarious and gossiping, finding unflinching amusement in very small and often very indelicate talk, jokes, and pleasantries. To domestic and social superiors he is extremely deferential, but with no taint of that abject or fawning servility which characterises many Asiatics of higher civilisation. His intellect has little power of abstraction, and delights in a minute acquaintance with the common things around him, a character that reflects itself in his language, which is as rich in distinctions and details in the nomenclature of material objects and actions as it is poor in all that relates to the operations of the mind. He is slow and sluggish, and impatient of continuous labour of mind or body. He is greedy and niggardly, and when his interests are involved his promises and professions are not to be trusted.

The Malay treats his children with great affection and with indolent indulgence. Women are not secluded, and the freedom which they enjoy in their paternal home is little abridged in after-life. Every marriage is customary and necessary, for if it were long postponed after puberty, it is to be feared that their religion would not always restrain them from the licence which the habits of the non-Mahomedan nations of the same race permit to unmarried girls. In the Malay States the law sanctions slavery and subjects

the person of the female slave to the power of her master. In this Settlement the Malay finds compensation for the deprivation of this right in that of divorce, and the extent to which it is availed of in practice renders marriage little more than legalisation of temporary concubinage. The independence allowed to women and the manner in which their parents and other relatives usually take their part in domestic quarrels, enable them to purchase their divorce, or worry their husbands into granting it, whenever they wish to take new ones.

The habitual courtesy and reticence of the Malay and the influence of his religion too often mask the sway of interest and passion to which he may be secretly yielding, and under which he becomes rapacious, deceitful, treacherous and revengeful. It has become customary to protest against the dark colours in which the earlier European voyagers painted him, but their error was less in what they wrote than in what they left unwritten. Under bad native governments, leading a wandering life at sea or on thinly peopled borders of rivers—the only highways in lands covered with forest and swamp—trusting to the kris and spear for self-defence and holding in traditional respect the prowess of the pirate and robber, the Malays became proverbial for feline treachery and bloodthirstiness. Under the Government to which they have been subjected in Province Wellesley, and which has certainly not erred on the side of paternal interference, for it has given them as much liberty as the English yeoman possesses, they now form a community, on the whole, as settled, contented, peaceable and free from serious crime as any to be found in British India—a result due to the disappearance of forests, the formation of roads, the establishment of a regular Police and the administration of justice by English lawyers.”

To complete this brief Note on the various classes entering into the population of North Province Wellesley, a reference must be made to the Samsams, the descendants of rude inland Siamese of Kedah who, some generations back, were converted to Mahomedanism, a religion which still sits loosely on them. They form the majority of the inhabitants of many of the North-eastern villages, in which Siamese is still the current language, although, with few exceptions, they speak Malay also. Many of them are more stupid and ignorant even than the Malays in the same condition of life, and

many are knavish, thievish, and addicted to gambling and opium-smoking. Of both races, indeed, it may be said that while the mass are ruder and simpler than any other class of our composite population, there are among them many men habitually predatory, and dangerous from their treachery or ferocity. Their cunning, however, is without the intelligent fore-thought and subtlety of the more advanced races, and they set about crimes not of blood only but of fraud, such as forgery and false personation, in a careless, bold and straight-forward manner, in apparent unconsciousness of the risk of detection to which they lay themselves open, and often, in the latter class of crimes, on the instigation of others and without any clear knowledge of the real character and consequences of their acts.

Note to Para: 12.

As a religion Mahomedanism is infinitely superior to the native religions of the Archipelago. Its most objectionable feature, in a political point of view, is not the universality and closeness of the brotherhood which it establishes among its professors, but its arrogant exclusiveness. It tolerates other creeds but places their holders under a social ban. Friendly association with unbelievers is a deadly sin and makes the sinner liable to excommunication. Since the riots of August one of the *ulimah* has put in force this doctrine to detach the Malays from the Chinese Societies, but it is equally applicable to friendly association with Europeans, and might, in certain contingencies, be used to excite hatred to this class and opposition to Government. Hence the impolicy of allowing any of these *ulimah*, or any so called Kali, to assume jurisdiction, or social or spiritual government, over the Mahomedans generally, or large sections of them. Their recognised associations should be confined to the *jumahas* or congregations attached to each mosque; and the persecutions every now and then made by the leaders, to which those are exposed who will not submit to the attempts at establishing by coercion a fanatically rigorous inference with private liberty, should be discountenanced, and, when they overstep the limits of discipline allowed to other religious societies, punished. The more the influence of the gurus or religious teachers in the Province extends, the

more arrogant they become. They entirely lose the courteous and deferential manner of the ordinary Malay, and mark their sense of their superiority to the European infidel by either ignoring his presence altogether, or, if saluted by him in the usual mode, returning the courtesy by the least respectful of the several modes of salutations practiced by Mahomedans.

*Minute on Mr. J. R. Loqan's Scheme for forming a Volunteer
Village Police in Province Wellesley.*

The subject of a Volunteer Village Police has frequently engaged my attention, and I have often discussed the question with Mr. LOGAN, who has long advocated its adoption in the public prints. The plan seems peculiarly well suited to our position in Province Wellesley, which possesses an irregular jungle frontier, where marauders can always find shelter and concealment and can threaten our villages at all points with perfect impunity so far as the Municipal Force is concerned. The whole of the N. E. and E. frontier may be said to be entirely without Police protection, and any scheme that promises to enlist the assistance of the villagers in aid of order and to supply the place of a Police Establishment should, in my opinion, be cordially welcomed and supported by Government.

A village Police will not only be useful against external marauders, but also in the case of internal commotions caused by the Secret Societies, when, sometimes, large gangs roam over the country uncontrolled, until a hasty collection has been made of the rural population, which, if properly organised on the system proposed by Mr. LOGAN, would certainly prevent any serious collection of rioters, or at any rate be well prepared to cope with them if they should venture to take the field. There is another incidental advantage attending the establishment of a Village Police, which would be of vast benefit in giving a support to numbers of Malay and other inhabitants who are now intimidated into joining the Secret Societies by their isolation. If they could count on the support of the village chiefs and their brethren associated with them in the service, they might bid defiance to all threats of the heads of *Jumahas* or *Hoeys* who would be afraid to play an open game

where they might be speedily brought to account.

If I remember rightly, Mr. LOGAN had gained the adhesion in the North Division of the Province of about 3,500 Malays and others in favour of his proposed plan. I am surprised and greatly regret that a trial was not made of it. The expense attending it was trivial, while it supplied a palpable want which has little chance of being otherwise met.

It was my intention to have availed myself of Mr. LOGAN'S assistance in inaugurating such a project when the transfer of the Government took all power out of my hands.

I have perused with much interest the valuable memoir on the population of the Province drawn up by Mr. LOGAN for the information of the new Government. It shews what a useful auxiliary to the peace and safety of the community the scheme he advocates would prove, how easily the force could be raised and turned to account, and how consonant its guiding principles are to the habits and ideas of the people. I trust it is not improbable that when the new Officials have become more familiarised with Malay customs and feelings they will consent to give a trial to this force, of which it can, at any rate, be said, that if not found so advantageous as its promoters assert, it can in no way effect the slightest possible harm.

H. MAN, Col. M. S. C.,
late R. C. Penang.

February 12th, 1868.

[The foregoing paper was printed, but not published, in Penang in 1868. It contains a vivid and accurate description of the composition of Native Society in Penang and Province Wellesley, written by one of whom Colonel YULE truly said that he "carried to his too early tomb a vaster knowledge of the races and regions of the Indian Archipelago than anyone else is likely to accumulate in our day."—Ed.]

Notes

1. *Katua* from *tua*, old.
2. *Penghulu* from *ulu*, the native Malay name for head, now replaced by the Sanskrit *kapala*.
3. The *Kweangs* are accredited messengers of the *Katuas* and *Penghulus* named by them with the approval of the villagers.
4. One year, formerly proposed by me, is, I find, too short a term to render the office acceptable to the Malays and give them a proper training.
5. For instance, Haji Ibrahim, a younger brother of the *Penghulu Besar* of Teluk Ayer Tawar, is the head of one of the three large *Jumahas* of North Province Wellesley. About two years ago the *Penghulu* having, very properly, procured the dismissal of the *Kali* for malpractices, it was at first intended by the family and their friends that Ibrahim should succeed him. But it was thought this would not look well after the part the *Penghulu* had taken, and it was arranged that an old *Kali*, who, several years before, had resigned the office, should, resume it for a time, until Haji Ibrahim could be installed with less risk of provoking invidious remarks. A daughter of the *Penghulu*, formerly married to the Province Land Surveyor, Amin Ud Din (an elder brother of the present Assistant Surveyor Saiboo) and afterwards to a Malay gentleman of Kedah in the Raja's service, about a year ago eloped with Tunku Jusoh, a brother of the Raja and Governor of the District behind Province Wellesley, who brought her to Penang. With much difficulty a divorce was arranged, and she is now the wife of the Tunku, thus cementing the intimacy that has always subsisted between the royal family and that of the *Penghulu*.
6. The appointment of a second or deputy head for each division and village primarily intended to meet the case of some of the volunteers of a Division being called away under one of the heads to act against gang robbers in another Division and the remainder being left under the other head in charge of the village, and also as a provision against the sickness or absence of a *Penghulu* or *Katua* will further lessen the risk of any of the headmen trying to domineer.
7. *Penghulu Mukim*. *Mukim* is the territory or rather the group of families attached to a mosque, a parish.
8. See Note at end.
9. It takes a long time to gain the confidence of the Malays. When a European Official, or any person of position, with whom they are not well acquainted, puts questions to them, they are doubtful of his motives in proportion to their ignorance, and seek to give such replies as will be at once pleasing to him and not unpleasant in their consequence to themselves or their friends. If there are any native bystanders they are doubly cautious, as they know that every word they say may be reported to those whom it may affect. A Malay seldom speaks out the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, unless to those he trusts and when there are no other listeners.
10. The Police Magistrate.
11. The Deputy Commissioner of Police.
12. The Assistant Engineer.
13. To the imagination of the ordinary Malay the power and resources of the former are boundless. I once overheard a group of Malays talking about a criminal case; and the conclusion at which they arrived was that "he could make the innocent guilty and the guilty innocent." The native surveyors are supposed to have the power of conferring the right to lots of land by surveying them, and the *Datu Sukat Tanah* in his visits to the inland districts is received with more distinction than the highest European Officers of Government.
14. Hence the frightful extent to which various disgusting cutaneous diseases prevail in every village and almost in every house, and the great mortality, effectually checking the natural increase of the population, from fever, small-pox, diarrhoea and cholera.
15. One of the present *Kalis* (not now recognised by Government) makes a living by selling inspection of the notes of marriages kept by, or for, his father, who was the great *Kali* of Penang in his day. In a case that occurred not long ago he demanded \$1,000 to search for and produce one of these notes. In this respect he is not worse than any other native would be who had the custody of papers of value. A *Penghulu Besar*, who also acted as a sort of Notary for his district, drew up a will for a Malay who went on the pilgrimage, leaving the will in the *Penghulu's* keeping. The persons interested could not get it without paying a fee of \$30. I advised them to take legal proceedings to recover it, but they said that the *Penghulu* might deny that he had it, or produce it and give some evidence to invalidate it, and he was so highly reputed by the officers of Government and so much liked and trusted by the Judge that he was sure to be believed. In the former case compulsion would have been equally hazardous, as the opposite party might have made the *Kali* present to burn the paper,

GLIMPSES OF PENANG'S PAST

and he would merely have had to say in Court that no such paper was to be found among his father's records. The Kali's father was a very gentlemanly and pleasant Arab of Mecca, a universal favourite of the Europeans, including the officials. In one of the first cases in which I was engaged in the Court he was called as a witness on the other side to speak as to some paper. In cross examination I asked him if he could read and write. He indignantly desired the interpreter to give him a Koran and began to read fluently from it, but unfortunately it turned out that he held it upside down, and I fear he never quite forgave me the discovery. He knew a great deal of it by heart.

16. See Note at end.

17. See No. 7 of this Journal p. 88.—Ed.

A NOTE ON EARLY LEGISLATION IN PENANG

by TAN SOO CHYE.
(Received, August 1949)

Originally published in *JMBRAS*, Vol. 23 Pt 1 (No. 151), February 1950.

WHEN PENANG was formally occupied on August 11, 1786, it was virtually a desert island inhabited by a few Malay families who eked out an existence by fishing and extracting of wood oil and damar. Immediately after the occupation, its settlement commenced and the enterprise was so successful that three years later Captain Light wrote that there was a population of 10,000 persons, and that this number was being continually increased. In 1795 the island's polyglot population rose to over 20,000 comprising peoples of many lands—British, Portuguese, Dutch, Armenians, Siamese, Parsees, Arabs, Malays, Chinese, Chulias, Bengalees, Javanese, Bugis and Achinese.

In the face of this increasing multitude the task of the Superintendent in maintaining order was one of considerable difficulty, there being at the time no recognised body of laws. As many systems of law were in force as there were nationalities on the island, and all those laws were probably tempered or modified by the law of nature, which appears to have been the chief guide of the European Magistrate, who constituted the Court of Appeal. This state of legal chaos continued until the promulgation of the Charter of 1807.

It was quite natural for the native inhabitants to desire that they should be tried and governed under their own laws. Captain Light saw no objection and in 1792 instituted the system whereby the partial administration of justice among the native inhabitants was delegated to the various headmen under the appellation of Captain of the Chinese, Captain of the Malays, and Captain of the Chulias. These Captains who were nominated by the Superintendent adjudicated in petty civil cases among people of their own tribes, subject to an appeal to a European Magistrate, who himself tried the more important civil cases. All matters concerning their religious ceremonies, domestic disputes and recovery of debts among each other to a certain amount, were left to the headmen. Their jurisdiction in civil cases

extended to ten dollars, and though they were permitted to hear cases of debt exceeding ten dollars, they were only to do so in the capacity of arbitrators, since they lacked the power to enforce their decrees. They were required to keep registers of marriages, births and deaths, to ascertain the arrivals and departures of members of their tribe, to regulate assessments, and to regulate the police of their districts. For the latter duty the Captains of the Chulias and Chinese had each five peons to go their rounds. Their Courts were held on Mondays and Thursdays.

The system was closely analogous to that obtaining in the Netherlands East Indies where the Government had at its disposal certain advisers among the Chinese and Arab population. These advisers also acted as intermediaries in affairs affecting their own people and were known as Chinese Mayors, Captains and Lieutenants, and Arab Captains and Lieutenants. All appointments and promotions were made by the Governor-General. In Penang the institution appears to have been adopted for the reasons given in a despatch dated January 25, 1794 from Captain Light to Sir John Shore, Governor-General of India. In the despatch Light observes: "Very few people residing here excepting the Chulias, were ever acquainted with European Governments. Brought up under feudal laws and customs they cannot at once change opinions that they have imbibed from their infancy. To endeavour to subject these people to our strict military law and discipline would soon depopulate the island of all the most wealthy and useful inhabitants. A mild and at the same time an active Government is necessary. The inhabitants must at all times have recourse to the Chief, and as they are composed of many different nations they are jealous of each other, and will not submit their cause to the decision of one whom they think is a partial administrator".

Similar reasons were given by Sir George Leith, Bart., Lieutenant Governor (1800-1803) in support of the same system. Colonel Wellesley (later the Duke of Wellington) who was in Penang in 1797 in his *Memorandum on Pulo Pinang* also spoke approvingly. To implement the system, Sir George Leith issued on May 1, 1800 a set of *Instructions* to the Native Captains laying down their powers and duties. Previous to Leith's administration the general principle of these *Instructions* had been submitted to, and approved by, the Supreme Government in 1797. Notwithstanding the fact that the

actual *Instructions* had not been sanctioned by the Governor General in Council, they were carried into effect by the gentleman who officiated as Magistrate at the time they were issued until he delivered over charge of that office to Mr. Dickens, the Judge and Magistrate, who arrived on August 7, 1801. The validity of these *Instructions* Mr. Dickens refused to recognise and this was one of the causes leading to the well-known Leith-Dickens conflict. The Lieutenant Governor complained to Bengal that it was evident to him that the Judge and Magistrate “wishes to possess powers and control, particularly over the Native Captains and the Police”. He considered it essential that both the Native Captains and the Police should be under his own immediate authority as “if delegated to the Judge and Magistrate, it would tend essentially to lessen the dignity and authority of the Lieutenant Governor without contributing in the smallest degree to the preservation of good order in this settlement”.

On March 15, 1800 instructions were issued by the Government of Bengal to Sir George Leith, directing him to frame regulations for the administration of civil and criminal justice. In drawing up the regulations for the administration of justice to native inhabitants the Lieutenant Governor was to be guided by the following principles:

The laws of the different peoples and tribes of which the inhabitants consist, tempered by such parts of the British law as are of universal application, being founded on the principles of natural justice, shall constitute the rules of decision in the Courts.

In *The Law of the Straits Settlements* Braddell says that Leith does not seem to have framed any regulations under these instructions—a statement which an examination of the Straits Settlements Records in the Archives at Raffles Museum has shown to be incorrect. The relevant records reveal that in conformity with his instructions Leith transmitted to the Supreme Government on November 15, 1800 a draft of the Regulations for the better Administration of Justice at Prince of Wales Island, framed with every possible care and attention and with the assistance of a gentleman¹ then at Penang eminent for his professional knowledge and abilities.

The Regulations were comprised under the eight following heads:—

- | | | |
|-------------------|------------|--|
| Regulation | 1st | Appointment of Judge and Magistrate and of Court of Judge and Magistrate at Prince of Wales Island. |
| “ | 2nd | Establishment of Court of Session. |
| “ | 3rd | Establishment of Court of Appeal. |
| “ | 4th | High Court of Wards. |
| “ | 5th | Chinese, Chuliah and Malay Commissioners and Assessors for trying petty causes not exceeding in value Spanish Dollars Twenty Five, the decision to be final. |
| “ | 6th | For proceedings towards Administration of Criminal Justice, and appointing certain persons holding official situations, to act as Justices of the Peace at Prince of Wales Island. |
| “ | 7th | For prohibiting British Subjects (King's & Company's Officers and Servants excepted) and other Europeans and Americans from residing at Prince of Wales Island, or suing in any of the Courts there, unless they enter such Bonds as mentioned in this Regulation and certain Rules respecting British Subjects who refuse obedience to any of the Courts, Magistrates or Regulations. |
| “ | 8th | For Guidance and General Observation of the Courts, Judge and Magistrate, Justices of the Peace and Commissioners for deciding causes at Prince of Wales Island, and for the further administration of justice there. |

On June 20, 1802 Sir George Leith forwarded to the Governor General in Council a copy of a letter he had received from Mr. Dickens, the Judge and Magistrate, together with the latter's draft of two Regulations, one for the Criminal Code, the other for an efficient Police, and his own observations thereon. At the same time Leith mentioned that he had not received any answer respecting those regulations he transmitted in October (? November), 1800. He deemed it better, therefore, to defer proposing any new ones, as he was at a loss to know whether or not the former ones were approved. They certainly were not. In 1803 it was recorded that those draft Regulations were under the consideration of the Governor General in Council, and that until they should have received the sanction of the Governor General in Council, or until some other Code of Laws should have been established for the Administration of Justice at Prince of Wales Island, the conduct of the Lieutenant Governor and of the Judge and Magistrate must be governed by the Rules prescribed by the Governor General in Council on the 1st August, 1794.

No definite action was taken with regard to this code of ten Regulations until late in the year 1804, when Lord Wellesley, then Governor General, delivered the code to R. T. Farquhar, Lieutenant Governor, who was in Calcutta on leave of absence, his Lordship being of opinion that they were ill arranged and too verbose, and desiring that they might be revised and condensed and again submitted for the ultimate determination of the Governor General in Council. On March 8, 1805 Farquhar returned to Penang and soon after gave Mr. Dickens this code to revise and condense. With obvious alacrity Dickens set about the task and on April 4 returned the code together with four Regulations marked respectively Regulations 1, 2, 3 and 4.

First Regulation For creating and establishing in Prince of Wales Island a Court of Judicature by the name of "The Court of the Judge and Magistrate, of Prince of Wales Island" and for granting to the said Court of Judge and Magistrate certain powers necessary for the due administration of justice.

Second Regulation For erecting and establishing a Court of Appeal at Prince of Wales Island.

Third Regulation For erecting and establishing a Court of Oyer and Terminer and Gaol Delivery and enacting laws for the due punishment of crimes and misdemeanours.

Fourth Regulation For the security of titles to purchasers and mortgages or houses and lands within Prince of Wales Island and to prevent fraud and imposition in the sale and mortgage of the same.

The revised Regulations were pigeon-holed. In 1805 Penang was raised to the status of a Presidency and the Governor with his Council arrived on the island on September 19 of that year. On the previous day Farquhar had returned Dickens the four Regulations with a note saying that a variety of pressing business had prevented him from taking them into consideration, preparatory to their being sent to the Governor General in Council. However, all was not labour lost. In October, 1805 Dickens submitted to the new Government the four Regulations and a Memoir tracing the early legal history of the settlement "as a proof that for five years and upwards his endeavours have been constantly exerted to fulfil the duties of his station as Judge and Magistrate of Prince of Wales Island".

On November 22, 1805 an Advertisement was issued, notifying that after the 30th day of November, 1805 the Court and jurisdiction of the Native Elders, and the Establishment belonging thereto, was to cease and to be abolished, and the duties heretofore performed by the said Court were to be transferred to the Police Magistrate under the orders of the Honourable the Governor and Council. At the same time the two following Proclamations were made:

Proclamation

Whereas the Hon'ble the Governor and Council have deemed it expedient, that from, and after, the 1st day of December next, all actions of debt, or for damages where the cause of action does not exceed the sum of (50) Fifty Spanish Dollars shall be heard, and summarily determined in the first

instance, by a Commissioner for that purpose nominated and appointed.

The Hon'ble the Governor and Council have been pleased to pass certain Regulations, and due obedience thereto, as Law, from all descriptions of Persons, Inhabitants of Prince of Wales Island and its Dependencies, is required, and demanded by the said Hon'ble the Governor and Council.

The Regulations for the conduct of the Commissioner are to be seen at the Offices of Secretary, and Judge and Magistrate.

The Hon'ble the Governor and Council have published the above Regulations subject to revisal and amendment, as cases shall arise, and they rely on the assistance and co-operation of all well disposed Persons in this Community, towards carrying them into effect for the general good, and to assure all such, that the vigilance of Government will be ever awake to observe any infringement thereof, and until the arrival of the Charter of Justice from His Majesty, they are determined that their utmost authority shall be exerted to enforce general obedience thereto, by every description of Persons resident on this Island.

By Order of the Hon'ble the Governor and Council
Fort Cornwallis

(Signed) H. S. PEARSON,

The 22nd November, 1805.

Secretary to Government.

It is of interest to note that under the first Proclamation one Paul Kellner, a native of Germany, was appointed Police Magistrate and Commissioner of the Court of Requests with a salary of \$300 a month. A year later he was dismissed after having been found guilty of various acts of corruption and otherwise grossly improper conduct in the execution of his duties, and Mr. Thomas McQuoid, a European settler, was appointed in his place.

The long-awaited Charter of Justice expected before the close of 1805 did not arrive. As late as January, 1807 the Governor and Council was again representing to the Court of Directors in London "the dangerous evils arising out of the want of regularly established law authority on the Island with jurisdiction over Europeans and Natives" and drawing the attention of the Honourable Court to the fact that there were not less than twenty

convicted felons and murderers under close confinement, on whom sentence of death had been passed, one since the year 1797, but for whose execution, no order had ever been given. The Governor and Council goes on to observe: "We need not point out to you the wretched state of these unfortunate prisoners, and the evil consequences arising to society from the want of summary punishment, but most earnestly entreat your positive orders may be given respecting them as early as possible".

Appendix

The Lieutenant Governor's *Instructions* to the Captain Malay dated 1st May, 1800

- 1st** You are hereby appointed Captain of all People under the denomination of ... in Pulo Penang.
- 2nd** You are to keep order among your People, to see that they behave quietly and peaceably in their habitations, as you will be answerable for the same, and you will be protected and supported by Government in the duty of your office.
- 3rd** You are to hold a Court at your own house twice a week on the days preceding the Cutcherry days.
- 4th** You are to try all petty causes between People of Your Tribe, such as People quarrelling, fighting, or abusing each other, and all Religious and Family disputes you are to determine according to the Laws of your own Religion.
- 5th** In all cases of Debt under Ten Dollars your decision shall be final.
- 6th** In all cases of Debt, if the demand is for more than 10 Dollars, and either of the Parties not satisfied with your decision they may appeal to the Magistrate, after acquainting you with their intention

so to do, and you are to inform the Magistrate thereof who will give them a hearing the second Court day following.

7th In all cases of Appeal, the complainant is to deposit in the Magistrate's Court (or give security) one Court day previous to that on which the cause is to be tried 5 per cent. on the demand if under 500 Dollars, if above 500 Dollars as far as one thousand dollars 4 per cent., and all above 1,000 Dollars 3 per cent.

8th The money so collected to be kept in the Magistrate's Office towards defraying the expense of paying the Officers belonging to the same.

9th On the cause being decided the person who is cast is to pay the amount of the deposit.

10th You are to have two men to sit with you in your Court, and all disputes are to be decided by the majority of voices.

11th In order to prevent all causes of jealousy or discontent among your People the men for this office are to be chosen as directed in the following Article.

12th On the first day of every month you are to give in the names of twelve creditable Housekeepers, to the Magistrate and they are to be summoned, their names written on 12 pieces of paper, and put into a box, and the names of the first Eight that are drawn out these men are to sit with you in your Court one month, 2 of them sitting every week and in case anyone is sick and cannot attend, one of the four, whose names were not drawn, is to attend in his place.

13th The names of the Eight Men so chosen are to be published by beat of Gong, and none of them to be exchanged, but by the consent of the Magistrate who in case of emergency will appoint one of the four whose names were not drawn to act.

- 14th** In the case of any person appointed as above directed refusing to attend without shewing sufficient reason, he will be fined 5 Dollars, the second time 10 Dollars and forfeit the protection of the Court for six months, the third time he will be confined in the Common Jail for one month.
- 15th** If the parties in dispute are of two different tribes, you are to appoint two men of each tribe in dispute, and they may choose another person for an Umpire, a majority of these Five to determine in all disputes under 10 Dollars, if above 10 Dollars and the parties are not satisfied with the decision, they may appeal to the Magistrate as directed in the Seventh Article.
- 16th** In case one of the parties complains to his Captain that he thinks himself injured by the decision of the Five People as above directed, the Captains of the two parties are to make the same known to the Magistrate who will order two men out of the Eight of each cast that are in dispute to sit with the Captain of the third cast and the decision of the majority of these Five to be final.
- 17th** You are to keep Registers of all Marriages, Births and Deaths among the People of your Tribes for which purpose you are allowed a Writer and you are to bring such Registers and show them to the Lieutenant Governor every three months on the first day of the month.
- 18th** Upon the arrival of any People of your Tribe on the Island, you are to make the necessary enquiries about them, and inform the Lieutenant Governor thereof, and if any stranger comes to lodge in any man's house if it be only for a night, the Landlord is to give to his Captain (or those acting under him) in writing the name and occupation of such person as he the Landlord must be made answerable for the behaviour of such person.
- 19th** You are to attend the Magistrate's Court on Court days and to bring with you a Leby who is qualified to administer oaths to such people as may have occasion to swear in Court, and in case of any

disturbance, discontents or combinations among your People, you are to make the same known to the Lieutenant Governor, and you are to see the prices of rice, paddy etc. settled and examine the weights and measures among the People of your Tribe.

Written by Order of the Lieutenant Governor

(Signed) Geo. Leith

Lt.Governor.

(Signed) W. E. Philips

Secy. to the Lt. Governor

Fort Cornwallis,
Thursday, 1st May 1800.

References

- “Bookworm”. 1924–26
Braddell, Roland. 1931
Cullin, E. G. &
Zehnder, W. F. 1905
Leith, Sir George. 1805
- Penang in the Past.
The Law of the Straits Settlements.
The Early History of Penang.
A Short Account of the Settlement,
Produce and Commerce of Prince of
Wales Island.
- Napier, W. J. 1898
An Introduction to the study of the Law
of the Straits Settlements.
- Purcell, V. W. W. S. 1928
Early Penang.
- Straits Settlements Records: Letters to India (Bengal) 1800–1802.
ibid. 1803
ibid. Letters to London 1805–1806.
ibid. 1807–1810.
ibid. Penang: General Orders and Notices
1805–1808.

Notes

1. Probably either George Caunter, the Magistrate, or Philip Manington the Second Assistant, who also acted as Magistrate.

THE EARLY LAND ADMINISTRATION AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF PENANG

by K.G. TREGONNING

Originally published in *JMBRAS*, Vol. 39 Pt 2 (No. 210), December 1966.

ALTHOUGH VARIOUS aspects of the early years of Penang after its settlement in 1786 have been treated in detail, and the character and achievements of Francis Light, the founder, have received new attention, the early agricultural development of the island, and the varying policies with regard to the administration of its land, have been little studied. This brief essay is an attempt in that direction.

It was not considered necessary to supply Light with any Land Regulations before he left Calcutta in 1786 (or indeed while he was in Penang) and the few agricultural injunctions issued to him while preparing to sail merely consisted of a directive from the East India Company in Calcutta that he grow greens, grain and fruit, both for the settlement itself and for the refreshment of ships bound for China. He was advised to be careful while clearing land so as to avoid the common error of cutting down every tree without regard to the convenience of the inhabitants, and minions in Fort William (apparently oblivious as to what would grow in the tropics) requested him to rear sheep, as well as cattle, hogs and poultry on the land so cleared. The allocation of land and the mode of tenure was left entirely to his discretion.¹

Penang when it was ceded to the East India Company in 1786 was an island fifteen miles long, from north to south, and ten miles wide, covered in jungle. Sprawling diagonally across its 108 square miles then as now was a range of hills, shaped somewhat like a Chinese fan. The thin handle of the fan lay on the southeast, virtually on the coast; it then spread out northwards and northwest, but not in regular uniform ranges so much as in ridges and hills in great profusion, rising in height, until near the northern coast the tallest hills climbed up to 2,600 feet. In the north-east

was a triangle of plain, on which Light established Georgetown. This plain penetrated almost to the foot of the mountains in a flat valley that became a favourite agricultural area, Ayer Hitam (Black Water) Valley. The main plain, however, was a strip three miles wide down the east coast, facing the Malay Peninsula, from Georgetown to the south. It was crossed by several small streams, of which, from the south coming north, the Kluang, Dua, Glugor and Pinang were the most important. Isolated by the mountains, and rarely visited for twenty years, there was a patch of plain on the west coast as well, while scattered through the hills were isolated handkerchiefs of soil where a frugal Chinese could scratch a living, and where even today he can live undisturbed and unknown.

In 1786 this island was unbroken by any path, and no agriculture, no crop of any kind competed against the struggling mass of trees and vines and luxuriant undergrowth that fought for life over its length and breadth. The clearing of land began of necessity on arrival, and as Light was well aware of the dangers of depending on Kedah and elsewhere for his food he pressed ahead with his efforts. "That we may not depend entirely on the pleasures of our neighbours", he wrote in 1788, "I have employed upwards of 100 Malays in clearing the woods, it being now the dry season, and advised the inhabitants that all those who do not cultivate an orlong² of land shall pay a duty next March. I have agreed to pay the Malays 4 1/2 Spanish dollars for every orlong cleared fit for cultivation. This I shall dispose of again to the inhabitants ... A considerable number of fruit trees, coconuts, and plantanes have been planted lately. The wild hogs, deer, and monkeys are our greatest worries, in one night they destroy the labour of many days".³

Two years later, in January, 1790, he found time from his numerous other duties to write a survey of what had been done in the way of agriculture since the first tree fell in 1786. He divided the cleared land into ten sections, beginning on the east coast, at the Southerly limit reached by the cultivators, opposite the small islet of Jeraja, prominent later as the discussed site for naval base.

"At Soonghy Cluan", (Sungei Kluan), he wrote, "a small river opposite the south end of Jeraja, there are sixty families (250 persons), who have cleared about 600 orlongs which in its present state yields this year 3,600 lbs

of rice. This land will yield more than treble the quantity after the stumps and trunks of the large trees are decayed, which generally happens in three years. They will then be able to make use of cattle in their village. They have likewise planted a considerable number of coconuts, betelnut, fruit trees, plantains and sugar cane”.

“From the River Pinang to Soongly Cluan” (that is a distance of five miles or so, coming north towards Georgetown, up the eastern plain), “the land is mostly occupied, a distance of five or six miles, by Chinese and Malays, the ground cleared and planted this year, nearly 200 orlongs of the produce is rice, about 2,000 lbs. Several pieces of ground are laid out for pepper and gutta gamba along the sea side, and coconuts everywhere”.

“From Pinang River to Prinqho (or new river) the land is low and covered with mangrove ... from the new river to the point the land is occupied with houses. From the Fort northwards to the entrance of McPherson’s Road the houses and gardens continue”.

“From the Sea Side to the first ridge (or permatang), are plantations of rice, fruit trees and vegetables ... the cultivation extends in from the road on both sides from 100 to 600 hundred. From here this year 2,000 lbs of rice.”

“At the Campoon (kampong) now called Salisbury Plain, resides Poonglim Dr. Hakim, with 30 families. From here this year 1,000 lbs, these being the least industrious of our people. On the plain are Layton’s grazing farm, Messrs. Pigore, Rabau, Mylne, James Glass and Sergeant Major Gregg’s plantations a little further to the south-west”. This area was immediately behind Georgetown. He returns to the south and continues. “On the west side of Pinang River is James Scott’s plantation, consisting of 200 orlongs of newly cleared ground. On the east side of Pinang River is Francis Light’s plantations of 200 orlongs, newly cleared and planted with paddy. Interspersed are several China gardens which supply the bazaar with greens, beringals, beans, cucumbers, radishes, sweet potatoes, yams and pineapples”.

“In the bay formed by Jeehoase Teekhouse Point and the Fort the plantations are as follows: after passing the Siamese church (this was the Roman Catholic Church built by Father Garnault for his flock of Eurasians from Phuket and Kedah in 1787) there are three Chinese gardens, and from the gardens to the River Nipa is a plain of one mile ... cultivated by Chinese”.

“At Nipa River are Chinese brick makers, these with sawyers continue for half a mile to the Company’s ground ... From the Company’s ground along the bottom of the bay continue the plantations of the Inhabitants, each family having from one to five orlongs in front and as far back as their abilities will allow them to go. The cultivation here is 60 orlongs, 1500 lbs.”⁴

This description is not that of a jungle island, and even though it excluded any account of Georgetown itself, it is clear that a considerable number of clearings had been made. Five years later Major Kyd, sent by India to report on the possibilities of the island, noted that “the whole of the east side of the island, from the sea to the range of hills, a space of about 12 miles by 3 of flat land or gentle activity, is either entirely cleared and brought into cultivation or is fast approaching to this state. This is nearly the whole of the land of the island that is fit for cultivation”. He added that “no land revenue is collected, no land system is yet devised”.⁵

It was time enough, for by 1795 the land problem had become pressing. It was a problem with which Light and his successors had been saddled by Bengal, which continued to regard Penang from the commercial point of view only. As with the administration of justice, so with land administration. Bengal was indifferent, and Light, with all the goodwill in the world, was completely inexperienced, in land regulations even more than in the dispensation of a law.

In 1786, shortly after arrival, he had written that “Captain Scott and Captain Glass, and several Malays, Chinese and Christians have applied to me for land, the subedars and marines likewise expect an indulgence ... please send me full instructions regarding the division of the lands”.⁶ In reply to his admitted ignorance, Bengal said we leave it to your discretion to receive such colonists as you think it safe and advisable to admit, and to give each Family such a Portion of Land as circumstances will allow and which you may judge expedient.”⁷ In other words, it was left entirely to him, and three years later, although the wording of the despatch varied from its predecessor, the same message was conveyed to him. “Any land applied for by settlers”, he was told, “should be portioned into lots and divided amongst them, taking as much care as circumstances will permit that these lots of land shall not exceed the ability of the persons and their families to cultivate”.⁸

Light received from Bengal no forms nor terms under which grants of land were to be given, and of his own initiative he gave verbal permission to those who asked for land. In 1788 this verbal gift, for such it was, was reinforced by a Public Declaration "that every person settling and clearing land on Penang became thereby virtually possessed of a property in the soil to him and his heirs for ever".⁹ He implemented this by issuing written grants, which gave a perpetual lease "by virtue of an Authority from Lord Cornwallis, K.G., Governor General of Fort William in Bengal".¹⁰ Presumably, in some despatch which cannot be found, Cornwallis at least had stated the term of lease, and so reduced a little of the chaos of the land administration; and this would have been consistent with the land policy adopted by the Governor General in India itself, where he also granted perpetual titles by his celebrated Permanent Land Settlement of 1793.¹¹

Although the early years were marked by an enthusiastic hacking down of timber down the east coast, the planting of rice, of fruit trees and coconuts, the establishment of vegetable gardens and the beginnings of pepper, the written grants to this newly cleared land were few. In all his nine years of office Light issued only twenty eight grants.¹² This cannot be taken as any indication that Light was reluctant to give away land. On the contrary; Stevens for example (see footnote below) blames the liberality of Light with land as one of the major reasons why Penang never acquired a revenue sufficient for the administration. Light gave land away with enthusiasm, he lacked merely the staff to record his gifts. Before a written title could be given the land had to be measured and surveyed, and the laborious work transferred to maps and records. All this was quite beyond Light's administrative capabilities. He just did not have the staff. His land department could not have consisted of anyone except himself, frantically busy on everything else, and a Malay land measurer. No wonder that written contracts were so few. As MacDonald said in 1796, two years after Light had died, "to ask was to have, and to appropriate without asking was equivalent to legal right".¹³

Light had endeavoured to supply some proof of ownership to land holders by the issue of "Measurement Papers". Abdul Latiff, the Malay who worked with Light in this work, would write out in his own language the

simple measurements of the land allocated, then give the date and the name of the person who had secured the land. It was intended, it would seem, that this would be a preliminary title which would be cancelled on the subsequent issue of a formal grant. The Measurement Papers gave no indication of type of tenure, nor any suggestion of a quit rent; but as the surveys essential before any official written title could be drawn up were never made, these Measurement Papers became the sign of ownership.¹⁴

The indifference shown by Bengal changed in 1794 with a policy announcement. As is often the way when a distant body suddenly evinces interest in remote events, it forgot the developments that had occurred, and showed itself singularly out of touch. Light was told to “prepare without loss of time an account of all the allotments of land on the island, and to establish immediately such rates of taxation as he may deem proper and fit”. Bengal further moved “that no allotments of land be made in perpetuity on leases exceeding five years, and that Mr. Light be positively directed to reserve a sufficient quantity of land, in the most eligible situation, for the purpose of erecting public buildings”.¹⁵

Much of this was ridiculous. It was impossible for Light to reserve, in 1794, a sufficient quantity of land in the most eligible situation in Georgetown for public buildings, for he had shown no optimistic foresight in 1786 (when he had been instructed to use tents, and to erect only such buildings as were absolutely necessary) he had reserved no land then, and in the eight year old town the waterfront was crowded and the streets lined with shops. Government, as Caunter in 1799¹⁶ and Sir George Leith in 1800¹⁷ pointed out, was a poor second in the race for land. Neither was he able to drop everything and prepare a list of all land owners on the island, it was physically impossible, and he lacked also a staff to collect any system of land revenue he could devise. All that remained of the 1794 instructions was the directive that no land was to be allocated for longer than five years. This could be enforced, but coming on top of the rumours that the settlement was to move to the Andaman Islands, rumours which the committee of merchants established in 1796 endeavoured to dispel, this policy it seemed to Light would have had such an adverse effect on the growth of Penang, would have demonstrated such a lack of confidence in the island, that even

if the intention of the Supreme Government had been merely to implement his earlier recommendation that because so many Chinese and others were transients and left the island after five or seven years then their land should revert to the government,¹⁸ nevertheless to cancel all perpetual grants would be folly, and he therefore decided, with rare courage, to ignore it. The despatch was pigeon holed.¹⁹

Nevertheless this ignorant despatch became public. Light died in October, 1794, and he had made no official announcement, he had decided to ignore it, yet Mannington his acting successor wrote early in the following year to Bengal that the "instructions to Light of August 1, 1794, stating that there was to be no allotment of land for over five years, has put a total stop to the clearing and cultivating of the lands as the planters naturally conclude that the Island is to be abandoned."²⁰ Bengal for once reacted immediately, and Penang was told to reassure all those who had cleared their lands that it was theirs in perpetuity, and that the promises of Light would be honoured. Meanwhile, Bengal added, the decision to limit land grants was being reconsidered.²¹

In August, 1796, following protests from Penang that the agriculture of the island was being retarded, in particular the development of spices, Bengal revoked its 1794 direction, but in the same despatch showed its ignorance and its lack of touch by restricting grants to twenty five acres only.²² It was impossible to apply this decree to land already issued for far too many plantations were over that acreage, and if Penang was to encourage further development this allotment was far too small. MacDonald, who stated these points, was looking towards the south west, to the isolated plain of the Western District, completely cut off from Georgetown because of the splay of mountains, open to the sea and undefended. Settlers were moving down there by sea, but they needed far more than twenty five acres if they were to stay. MacDonald quietly shelved the proposal.²³

Bengal felt obliged, when it appointed Sir George Leith Lieutenant Governor in 1800, to repeat its 1796 directive, and he was instructed to rescind the 1794 order by which land grants had been restricted to five years. Without doubt this order, although never implemented, had hung like a ghost over all efforts that had endeavoured to encourage agriculture since then. He

was instructed further to render all existing and future grants perpetual. Thus did Bengal belatedly support the policy of Francis Light. Leith was asked, as had been Light, to prepare a general survey, and as he had much the same staff the request had the same negative response, and finally he was told to be careful that not too much land was retained by the government, nor issued to one person.²⁴

Leith had no doubts about the government land. The Company held a mere twenty orlongs in Georgetown itself, at the back of the town, in a mangrove swamp. It had nothing on the seashore, apart from Fort Cornwallis, and inland it had one small estate in Ayer Hitam valley, (overgrown and neglected, which he wanted converted into a Botanical Garden) and another down the east coast, at Sungei Kluan, also overgrown, which he felt could be cultivated with pepper or betelnut.²⁵ He recommended a maximum allotment of 400 orlongs, together with a clause giving possession if not cultivated. The Company accepted these proposals in August, 1800,²⁶ and Leith announced them in a Public Notification the following year.²⁷

Leith also took over the device introduced by MacDonald known as the "Cutting Paper", which superseded "Light's Measurement Paper". This was another simple land document, written in Malay, giving permission to cut the jungle and clear the land. It was meant to be a preliminary paper, but as with the Measurement Paper, it became itself the sign of a regular grant. The advantage of the Cutting Paper was that it included a clause giving the government the right of resumption if cultivation was not begun, or for any other reason, provided that compensation was made, and it fixed the term within which the cutting and clearing was to be completed. Such conditions had not been in the Measurement Papers.²⁸ These Cutting Papers remained in vogue for over twenty five years. By 1823 760 of them had been issued, covering a land area of 10,842 orlongs.²⁹

Between 1800 and 1805 the agriculture of the island was becoming increasingly diversified, as Leith and Farquhar carried on the pioneer work of Light in introducing various spices and tropical crops. We will return to this development shortly. First we must conclude for the moment our examination of the administration of the land, before we see what was grown on it. In this period (1800–1805) the administration moved on an even

keel, but it was thrown into disorder when the Presidency was established, and the rather indifferent Indian supervision was superseded by the distant scrutiny of London.

London laboured under the mistaken impression that the government had the right of resumption over all land, not merely that allocated under Cutting Papers. It told Dundas to resume possession of land not cultivated.³⁰ To discover this, Dundas had to organize a survey of the island, and to ensure that this when completed would not be out of date, he ordered the complete cessation of further land grants. No land was to be allocated until the survey had been made.³¹ This piece of bureaucratic tidyness was folly, for three years, later, after Dundas had died, Penang was pointing out that "a general stop had been put to the clearing of lands since the arrival of the new form of government". It lamented the check to cultivation caused by the action taken, urged that an immediate issue of grants be made, even though the survey was not complete, and suggested a Proclamation be issued, promising Certificates of Grants at least to all those possessed of Cutting Papers.³²

This produced results. The survey slowly continued, but early in 1809 London agreed to the resumption of land allocation. No more than 50 orlongs was to be granted to any single person, and land not cultivated by a certain date was to revert to the Company. If it was cultivated, it was granted in perpetuity.³³ This system continued until 1827, when it was replaced by a leasing system, to be discussed shortly.

The history of the administration of land in Penang begins with indifference by Bengal and open handed liberality to Light, and develops to the somewhat more detailed and cautious steps taken subsequently. It illustrates a growing interest in the land of Penang, an interest created by the thought that possibly a revenue could be extracted from it. This revenue, so badly needed by an outpost constantly in debt to Bengal, could be secured in two ways, by a tax on the produce of that land as it left the island, and by a rent charged on the land itself, a quit rent as it was called.

During the time of Light there had been scarcely a thought of this latter source of revenue, for although Light did suggest it, in 1794, he had no staff with which to collect it. After his death his successors tried to extract a revenue in this way, but the result was not worth the effort. Between 1795

and 1800 only \$457.97 was collected. Although the indefatigable Phillips, (on whose Land Report any student of land administration must lean heavily for account of this period) by a single minded stumping of the back blocks, managed to collect, when made Collector of Customs and Land Revenue in 1806, over \$2,000 annually until 1810, the sum soon dropped again: between 1795 and 1822 only \$26,000 was collected;³⁴ a negligible sum. There was never a staff adequate to collect more, nor was there ever, as the registration of land was not compulsory, an efficient Land Registry. Founded by Light in 1792 under the charge of a Malay writer, it soon became and remained confused and defective and it was not until Fullerton became governor, in 1824, nearly forty years after the founding, that the uncontrolled chaos of land registration received an effective measure of government attention.

In these forty years numerous agricultural experiments had been attempted on the soil of Penang. The virgin ground had been broken first that padi might grow, and the husks were chewed over by the oxen, Kerbau originally from India, that pulled the one pronged wooden plough. Padi and fish, with a very little meat, was the way of life in Southeast Asia, as it still remains for the peasant today, and there was in the beginning no attempt at producing a cash crop. That first came, it would seem, in 1790, the result, very characteristically, of European and Chinese initiative. Francis Light for years previous to Penang had bought tin at Phu'ket and pepper at Aceh, and in 1790 he sent the Capitan China, Che Kay, across to Aceh, where with money supplied by Light he purchased a number of seeds and planted them in Penang.³⁵ Before his death in 1794 he was writing to Bengal that the pepper plantations were increasing down the east coast so quickly that his Malay was doing nothing but examining and registering them.³⁶ By 1805 pepper produced by Penang came to 2,000 tons and for over ten years it had been the staple product and economic mainstay of the island.³⁷ Leith estimated that its export value in 1804 was \$400,000, the next most valuable export being betelnut at \$240,000 and tin at \$130,000.³⁸ It was thus nearly twice as valuable as the next most important commodity.

Nearly all of this pepper was selling not in China where the demand by the nineteenth century was negligible, but in Europe, where it was competing with South Indian and Sumatran pepper. All suffered the same fate when in

1806 and 1807 Napoleon, by his Berlin and Milan Decrees, slammed shut the doors of the Europe he dominated to the produce of the outside world. This catastrophe came on top of what appears to have been an over production, for as early as March, 1806, Penang had written "the planters and merchants of the Island have at present a large quantity of pepper in hand, and but very little demand for it".³⁹ The price, which in 1804 had stood near \$17/- per pikul, dropped to \$9/- and had dropped by 1807 to under \$8/-.

At this price the numerous Chinese and European planters were suffering hardship, and Phillips warned the government that unless they were offered some relief the lands would be abandoned, and the government would suffer a loss of revenue. He recommended that 10,000 Ibs of pepper, a third of the crop, be sent to Canton by the China fleet. This suggestion was acted upon; some 12,000 pikuls of pepper was loaded on to five East Indiamen with fortunate cargo space, and sold for \$87,000.⁴⁰

This temporary relief soon failed. Although founded to assist the China trade, by 1808 the East Indiamen loaded with opium were passing Penang by, and a regular service, Penang to China, could not be organized. In addition the London market was overstocked with cheap Malabar pepper that gained from a direct shipment, and Penang pepper by 1809 had dropped to \$16 per pikul. The planters, after the manner of farmers everywhere, were clamouring for an assured government price (\$7 was their suggestion) or for a subsidized freight of its 1808 25,000 pikuls to China.⁴¹ This was referred to London, but the Presidency on its own initiative distributed \$20,000 to the needy planters.⁴²

London was more interested in the state of its own finances than in the poverty of Penang's pepper growers, and it informed the island that as it could see no prospects on the London market it had instructed India to cancel its investment in Malabar, not to renew its contract for pepper with Travancore, and not to ship home the piled up pepper with Bencoolen. Penang should likewise restrict its pepper activities, and in particular never again, said the Directors severely, must it lend money upon such an application, as it was impossible to sustain an unprofitable cultivation by loans. As a crowning blow, Penang was told that its attempts to secure cargo space on East Indiamen bound for China were not appreciated; if there was

any room after the opium had been loaded India had been instructed to fill it with cotton.⁴³

With the end of the Napoleonic war and the opening of Europe there was a short lived revival as the price of pepper rose again. Penang wrote that "the utmost exactions of our industrious cultivators are in full employ to increase the supply ... the gardens are now rapidly resuming their former state of cultivation."⁴⁴ But Penang suffered tremendously by the shortage of shipping. Direct freight to Europe was impossible, and its pepper could compete in London against Malabar only when the price was high. It sold none there, for it shipped none, in 1816-1818, not in 1820-1821, and although it could sell in China, if it could get it there, this was only slightly less difficult than a westward journey. As the world supply increased and price dropped, so the pepper plantations were abandoned and productions declined.⁴⁵

Typical of these declining years was an investment by the government in 1826 in 500 tons of pepper, which resulted in a loss when sold in London and China of \$9,633 and \$4,276 respectively.⁴⁶ By 1830 the export of pepper from Penang was valued at less than \$5,000, two thirds of which was re-exported pepper brought across from Acheh.⁴⁷ By 1835, when Low wrote on it, pepper production had sunk from the 1810 figure of 4 million pounds to a little more than 200,000 pounds; it had become quite unimportant, the pursuit merely of a few Chinese small holders content with a local market.⁴⁸ It never revived.

Pepper, although the earliest, was by no means the only cash crop introduced into Penang. An attempt was made between 1813 and 1816 under directions from London, to grow cotton. In June 1813 Penang reported that there was no progress in the cultivation of this crop, and it wondered whether the Court of Directors had not been too optimistic. It went on saying this in 1814 and in 1815, by which time all the seeds sent from Madras had failed, as had the fifty bags from Robert Farquhar, who was by then governing Mauritius. Penang was far too wet and humid, and the scheme was abandoned.⁴⁹ Another crop which presumably failed, although there appears no record of its demise, was coffee, which Phillips attempted to introduce in 1808, after the Berlin Decree had caused the pepper slump.

He recorded in that year the planting of 25,000 seedlings; but in 1810, in an agricultural survey, the crop is not mentioned.⁵⁰

Far more successful than these two crops was the introduction and cultivation of spices. Light had initiated this, securing at great expense clove, nutmeg and cinnamon seedlings from the French Island of Mauritius.⁵¹ It would be interesting to know how this was achieved, France and England being at war, but presumably they were conveyed by some neutral vessel or country trader. The clove and nutmeg soon died, and the cinnamon had become, by 1802 merely an ornamental tree. But by then other seedlings had arrived, for when in 1796 the British secured possession of the Moluccas, one of the first tasks performed by R. Farquhar was the despatch to Penang of nutmegs and cloves for planting. No one on Penang knew much if anything about spice cultivation; the Chinese could grow pepper, but all were ignorant of this crop, heavily guarded as it had been by the Dutch, and Farquhar in 1798 had to despatch five slaves from the Moluccas to look after it all, by which time the cloves were nearly all dead.⁵²

For a few years the cultivation of clove and nutmegs was undertaken almost alone by the government, for little was known of it, and pepper was yielding satisfactory profits. Christopher Smith, the Company's botanist, was sent from Bengal to the Moluccas in 1802 on an agricultural mission, and he increased considerably the consignments of spices that had been sent from there to Penang since 1800, when five shipments, totalling over 25,000 clove and nutmeg seeds, had initiated a series of spice cargoes. By the end of 1802 Smith stated that Penang had received over 70,000 nutmeg and over 50,000 clove seeds.⁵³ They were not a success. Smith was appointed Superintendent of the Spice Plantation, the Company's estate in Ayer Hitam Valley, but by 1805 only a mere 8,000 plants were alive there. The numerous shipments from the Moluccas appeared a most expensive failure. In April 1805 the Directors in London instructed Penang to sell the estate, and it was accordingly disposed of in lots for \$9,000;⁵⁴ a paltry sum.

It would seem that this was the end of the spice experiment. A traveller who passed through on his way to China in 1805 describes the coastal plain facing the Malay Peninsula, and the crops there. The plain "is well cultivated, and laid out in gardens, plantations of pepper, betel, areca, coconut trees etc.

intersected in all directions with pleasant carriage roads, the sides of which are lined with a variety of shrubs and trees. that are in perpetual verdure.”⁵⁵ No mention you will note, of clove or nutmeg. But fifteen years later, when Finlayson passed through, on his way with Crawford to Bangkok, he describes the crops of Penang thus: “Pepper is the principal article ... the cultivation is almost exclusively in the hands of the Chinese, who conduct it with a degree of art and neatness unknown in any other part of the east ... The Nutmeg may be considered as the next in importance of the agricultural products. Its cultivation is, on the whole, attended with considerable success; the trees are large, vigorous, and produce a great quantity of fruit, yet it has required upwards of twenty years to give earnest of success; and it is stated that as yet no exportation of this article has taken place. The number of trees at present on the island is rated at 150,000 of which one third only are in a condition to bear fruit ... The Clove is also cultivated with success”.⁵⁶

This slow transformation, by which a neglected and abandoned cultivation rose up to become the second crop of the island, (and by the 1830's the first) was the work very largely of a few Englishmen, in particular David Brown, who persevered with spices on his estate at Glugor, in the middle of the eastern plain.⁵⁷ Here he built himself in 1812 a stately residence, Glugor House,⁵⁸ and here on high ground and under shade he continued experimenting and learning the technique of growing cloves and nutmegs. He was encouraged in his agricultural perversity by two factors; the low price of pepper, and secondly the restoration of the Moluccas to the Dutch and its disappearance again behind its protective curtain. Others took heart; for whereas in 1810, he and John Dunbar were alone, by 1818 there were more than thirty spice plantations in Penang.⁵⁹

In 1819 their export was given preference by the establishment in England of a protective tariff, a lower import tax being charged on the produce from a British Colony than that on a similar commodity from a foreign port.⁶⁰ In 1820 further encouragement was given to the industry by an Indian Notification which permitted to spices of all descriptions, provided they were the produce of British territories, a free entry into Bengal.⁶¹ And although this was taken advantage of by the Dutch as well, who shipped their spices from the Moluccas to Penang (or Singapore) and there reshipped

them to England or India,⁶² nevertheless, there was a steady increase in production. By 1825 over 18,000 lbs of nutmegs, which realized \$11,500 and nearly 7,000 lbs of cloves, valued at \$3,500, were exported.⁶³ The expansion continued for thirty years, by which time the export spices had become the outstanding agricultural feature of the island.⁶⁴

We cannot conclude this article without referring to the steps taken to ameliorate the land problem subsequent to the arrival of Fullerton in 1824; for while pepper languished and cloves thrived, and sugar made beginnings on Province Wellesley, the administration of the land on which they grew remained a problem. He endeavoured to tackle the chaos of land registration and uncertainty of tenure by the appointment of a Superintendent of Landed Tenures, quit Rents and Taxes on Sales of Land. Although Ibbeston the holder of the post was as energetic as Fullerton could wish for, his work was largely nullified through the lack of a surveyor.⁶⁵ Fullerton was never content merely to clean up, however, and he seized his opportunity to initiate a new policy in 1826, when London wrote him, asking "whether it be now too late to apply a remedy to the profusion and negligence with which grants of lands have been made to individuals ... at all events it will be your duty to take care that similar improvidence does not take place in disposing of the lands at Singapore."⁶⁶ Fullerton felt that this gave him the necessary sanction to formulate a new land policy which would yield more efficiently a greater land revenue. In a long minute he attacked the policy of his predecessors, and outlined his own.⁶⁷

He regarded the permanent grant of land on a quit rent fixed for ever as a serious mistake. When the land rose in value the government was unable to secure any benefit from such a rise. He pointed to the numerous clove plantations. After seven years work, Fullerton stated, and at a cost of perhaps \$40,000, the annual profit from 100 orlongs was approximately \$33,000, while the rent paid to government would be no more than \$20. He therefore recommended no further perpetual grants, but the leasing of land for certain specified periods up to fifteen years, when the terms of the lease would be reviewed. Ibbeston agreed with Fullerton, and recommended further that as all the previous titles, such as Measurement and Cutting Papers, verbal licenses and the few grants by Light and Leith, strictly speaking were either

invalid titles or not titles at all, they should be exchanged for leases. This was accepted, and Fullerton introduced his new system of leases in 1827.⁶⁸

Fullerton in 1827 (backed from 1831 by the Penang Land Regulation passed by Bengal after his action much to his annoyance had been challenged successfully in 1829 in court by a west coast Malay, one Mahmood), initiated a system of twenty year leases, (or fifty if for spices and fruit) rent free for the first quarter, to allow for clearing, followed by a rent that increased every five years. It was a complete failure. The causes of this failure, applicable to Singapore as well as to Penang, were summed up by Crawford, former administrator of Singapore, in 1838.⁶⁹

People had been loath to take up land under the leasing system, and the government had failed to secure an increased land revenue, for a number of reasons, wrote Crawford. The terms of the lease in some respects were too short. Nutmegs and cloves did not bear fruitfully until they were twenty years old, yet rent was demanded before that; and while the trees were fertile for about seventy five years, the lease expired at fifty. In other respects the lease was too long. A pepper plantation was exhausted after fifteen–sixteen years; if the grower surrendered his lease on the fifteenth year he had paid only ten years rent, a small initial sum, and the government had not benefitted at all.

Nor had it benefitted, said Crawford, going back over the land history of Penang and Singapore, from the way the system had been used. The five year rent free period had permitted many charcoal burners, barred from burning timber without a license, to avoid this restriction by acquiring land allegedly for agriculture, but then working furiously for five years on the timber, and the charcoal being chiefly for gambier, the land when they left it was exhausted and the government had secured no revenue.⁷⁰

Balestier, who wrote in 1848, gives what appears to be an agricultural picture true for the previous few decades. “The emigrants from China who yearly arrive here are of the very lowest classes of labourers in their own country, and for the most part enter into engagements with their countrymen already established here to labour for one year, in consideration of the payment of their passage money hither. At the end of the year, if perchance they have not quietly emancipated themselves before, they are free to do as they please, and as they are mostly taken up by the gambier and

pepper planters they usually bargain with a Chinese shopkeeper for money and provisions to enable them to set up with, pledging the future plantation and its products on conditions highly favourable to the capitalist.”

“After having found a suitable location they squat upon it, not unfrequently without even applying for a license or cutting paper from the local authorities, a clearing is soon made in the forest, a part is planted in gambier and a part in pepper ... the ground is gradually impoverished, becomes less valuable; lalang soon begins to show itself among the plants; as the cultivator is not the proprietor but a squatter, and as he has an abundance of fresh ground at hand, and believing it to be more for his interest to begin a new plantation than to be at the expense of procuring manure to keep the old one in good order, it is not a matter of wonder that he should remove from place to place, and, as the locust, leave a tract of desolation behind him.”⁷¹

In 1830 the drastic retrenchment programme of Lord William Bentinck swept away the post of Superintendent of Lands, created by Fullerton in 1825. No provision whatever was made for any land establishment whatever, and the collection of land revenue had to be entrusted to the police.⁷² The following year, however, (1831) after protestations from Murchison, the Deputy Resident-Councillor, Bengal passed the Penang Land Regulation, which called for a Collector of Land Revenues; and with his appointment in October, 1831, the problem of landed tenures was looked at afresh.⁷³

It was looked at afresh, but it was not solved. The lack of a staff, passive resistance by landowners who were buttressed in their opposition by the Mahmud case and the opinion by the Penang Recorder's Court that the Regulation was illegal, and the lack of a survey; all this stopped Nairne, the collector, from proceeding with the implementation of the 1831 Land Regulation, which called for the replacement of all other grants including a mere proof of three years occupation by a new one, which would become, after 1 January, 1832, the only title to land recognized by the government as legal.⁷⁴ Possibly the attitude of Sir Benjamin Malkin, the Penang Recorder, stiffening as it did the landowners on Penang was the decisive factor, for in 1837 the Penang Regulation was repealed by Bengal, and W.R. Young was appointed Commissioner, charged with reporting on what changes he considered necessary.⁷⁵

In his report,⁷⁶ (the detailed examination of which is outside the scope of this article) Young in 1838 recommended the absolute and unconditional sale of the crown lands by public auction. He put it forward as a practical measure that would dispense with the troublesome and costly machinery of a land rent collection, and which would make land administration simple enough for a skeleton staff. The money from the sales would provide a revenue until the lands were yielding; by which time the advance of population and the increased production would have opened up other sources of revenue.

This was accepted. The leasing system was abandoned in 1841, and the Court of Directors informed the Straits Settlements that the simple method of crown land sales recommended by Young and already in operation in Canada, Australia and Ceylon was to be initiated in Penang, Malacca and Singapore. Thus, after many years of frustration, experiment and failure, the Penang government reverted back in principle to the liberal policy of its founder, Francis Light.⁷⁷

Notes

1. S.S.(F).R. Vol. 1. Bengal to Light, 2 May, 1786.
2. A square orlong was approximately equal to 1 1/3 acres; a linear orlong was 80 yards.
3. S.S.(F).R. Vol. 2. Penang to Bengal, 10 January, 1788.
4. S.S.(F).R. Vol. 4. Penang to Bengal, 6 January, 1790.
5. S.S.(F).R. Vol. 5. Major Kyd to Bengal, 2 August, 1795.
6. S.S.(F).R. Vol. 2. Penang to Bengal, 25 November, 1786.
7. S.S.(F).R. Vol. 2. Bengal to Penang, 22 January, 1787.
8. S.S.(F).R. Vol. 4. Bengal to Penang, 14 January, 1790.
9. I have been unable to find this Public Declaration. It is referred to in the exhaustive report by W.E. Phillips, *Papers and Correspondence Relating to the Land Revenue Administration of the Straits Settlements, 1823-1837*, Singapore, 1884, para II. It was not available even in Phillips' day, and conscientious and thorough though he was, he had to refer to two letters to Major MacDonald, 15 May, 1796 and 5 March, 1797, from C.W. Young, a settler, in which the 1788 Report was quoted.
10. Phillips, para. 15.
11. *The Cambridge History of India*, Cambridge, 1929, Vol. V. (British India, 1497-1858), pp. 433-61.
12. F.G. Stevens, "Early History of Prince of Wales Island", *JMBRAS*, Vol. VII. Pt. III, October 1929, p. 392. Stevens, a former Colony Judge, wrote at a time (1929) when the Penang Land Office still possessed most of its old land records. Since then they have been destroyed. I have checked here, and although there are a few East India Company Records, there is nothing relating to the eighteenth century.
13. *Logan's Journal*, Vol. V. (1851). Major MacDonald to Bengal, 12 November, 1796. This letter was quoted also by London in 1805; See S.S.(F).R. Vol. 9. London to Penang, 10 April, 1805.
14. Phillips, para 13 (See also S.S.(F).R. Vol. 1. Report of the Committee to Major MacDonald, July, 1796.)
15. S.S.(F).R. Vol. 1. Bengal to Penang, 1 August, 1794.
16. Phillips, para. 12.
17. Sir George Leith, *A Short account of the Settlement. Produce & Commerce of Prince of Wales Island*, London, 1804, p. 14.

GLIMPSES OF PENANG'S PAST

18. S.S.(F).R. Vol. 2. Penang to Bengal, 10 February, 1790.
19. S.S.(F).R. Vol. 1. Mr. G.M. Young to Superintendent Major MacDonald, 15 May, 1796.
20. S.S.(F).R. Vol. 7. Penang to Bengal, 25 February, 1795.
21. S.S.(F).R. Vol. 7. Bengal to Penang, 27 April, 1795.
22. Phillips, para. 50.
23. Phillips, para. 52.
24. S.S.(F).R. Vol. 1. Bengal to Sir G. Leith, 20 March, 1800.
25. S.S.(F).R. Vol. 1. Penang to Bengal, 31 May, 1800.
26. S.S.(F).R. Vol. 1. Bengal to Penang, 21 August, 1800.
27. Phillips, para. 65.
28. Phillips, para. 55.
29. Phillips, para. 56.
30. S.S.(F).R. Vol. 9. London to Penang, 10 April, 1805.
31. S.S.(F).R. Vol. 179. Penang to London, 12 November, 1805.
32. S.S.(F).R. Vol. 179. Penang to London, 29 January, 7 April, 13 September, 1808.
33. S.S.(F).R. Vol. 180. London to Penang, 28 April, 1809; Phillips, para. 127.
34. Phillips, Appendix 5.
35. Leith, p. 65.
36. S.S.(F).R. Vol. 5. Penang to Bengal, 25 January, 1794.
37. S.S.(F).R. Vol. 179. Penang to Bengal, 12 November, 1805.
38. Leith, p. 57.
39. S.S.(F).R. Vol. 179. Penang to London, 20 March, 1806.
40. S.S.(F).R. Vol. 16. Penang to London, 24 February, 1807.
41. S.S.(F).R. Vol. A.5. Penang to Bengal, 8 December, 1808.
42. S.S.(F).R. Vol. 179. Penang to London, 11 February, 1809.
43. S.S.(F).R. Vol. 187. London to Penang, 20 August, 1809.
44. S.S.(F).R. Vol. 181. Penang to London, 6 July, 1816.
45. S.S.(F).R. Vol. B.7. Penang to London, 18 September, 1823.
46. S.S.(F).R. Vol. 194. London to Penang, 14 February, 1827.
47. S.S.(F).R. Vol. K. 15. Bengal Public Consultations, 28 April, 1830.
48. J. Low, *A Dissertation on the Soil and Agriculture of the British Settlement of Penang or Prince of Wales Island in the Straits of Malacca*, Singapore, 1836.
49. S.S.(F).R. Vol. 181. Penang to London, 13 June, 1813; 14 September, 1814, 6 May, 1815, 6 July, 1816.
50. S.S.(F).R. Vol. 179. Penang to London, 29 January, 1808; Vol. 180 Penang to London, 15 March, 1810.
51. *Logan's Journal*, Vol. V. p.355. Penang to Bengal, 6 March, 1802.
52. *Logan's Journal*, Vol. V. p.118. Penang to Bengal, 16 August, 1798.
53. *Logan's Journal*, Vol. 9. Penang to Bengal, 5 August, 1802.
54. *Logan's Journal*, Vol. V. p.425. Bengal to London, 20 February, 1806; See also *JMBRAS*, Vol. 28. August, 1895.
55. J. Johnson, *The Oriental Voyager*, London, 1807, p. 224.
56. G. Finlayson, *The Mission to Siam and Hue, the capital of Cochin China, in the years 1821-1822*, London, 1826, pp. 26-9.
57. This estate is still in operation, and still owned by a descendent of David Brown. It now grows rubber and coconuts (copra). The 1812 mansion has been demolished.
58. *JMBRAS*, Vol. VII, Pt. 3, October, 1929, Stevens, pp. 410-11.
59. Low, p. 20.
60. *Act of the 6th of George IV. Cap. III.* 5 July, 1819.
61. S.S.(F).R. Vol. 182. Bengal to Penang, 20 August, 1820.
62. T.J. Newbold, *Political and Statistical Account of the British Settlements in the Straits of Malacca*, London, 1839, 2 vols., Vol. I, p. 59.
63. S.S.(F).R. Vol. K.5. Superintendent of Lands to President, 19 September, 1825.
64. L.A. Mills, "British Malaya, 1824-67" (new ed.) *JMBRAS*, Vol. XXXIII, Pt. 3, 1960, p. 220.
65. S.S.(F).R. Vol. A. 66. Penang to London, 30 July, 1829.
66. S.S.(F).R. Vol. A. 31. Penang Public Consultations. 10 May, 1926.
67. S.S.(F).R. Vol. A. 32. Minute by President, Penang Public Consultations, 22 February, 1827.

GLIMPSES OF PENANG'S PAST

68. S.S.(F).R. Vol. A. 32. Penang Public Consultations, 31 May, 1827.
69. *Singapore Free Press*, 11 October, 1838.
70. This criticism is voiced also in the *Pinang Gazette*, 28 July, 1838.
71. J. Balestier, "View of the State of Agriculture in the British Possessions in the Straits of Malacca", *Logan's Journal*, 1848, II, p. 146.
72. S.S.(F).R. Vol. W. 1. Penang to Bengal, 30 August, 1830.
73. S.S.(F).R. Vol. V. 5. Bengal to Penang, 30 October, 1831.
74. S.S.(F).R. Vol. U. 2. Bengal to Penang, 15 December, 1831.
75. S.S.(F).R. Vol. P. 1. Penang to Bengal, enclosing Report by Commissioner Young, (27 September, 1838. para 268-271).
76. Young, para. 141.
77. S.S.(F).R. Vol. 8. London to Penang, 31 May, 1841.

GOVERNOR BANNERMAN AND THE PENANG TIN SCHEME, 1818–1819

by C. D. Cowan, M.A.
(Received May 1949).

Originally published in *JMBRAS*, Vol. 23 Pt 1 (No. 151), February 1950.

THIS PAPER SETS OUT TO TELL THE STORY of one of the few attempts made by the British East India Company in the 19th Century to carry on trade in the Far East on its own account. Apart from the Canton tea trade the Company's commercial policy was in the main directed towards leaving private merchants to bear the risk of trade East of India. This applied most obviously to the China opium trade, but was also true of the trade of the East Indian Archipelago. Woollen goods and bar iron might be exposed for sale in the Company's warehouse at Penang, but the taking of these commodities to the markets of the Malay Peninsula and the Eastern Islands was left to private European and native merchants. The trade in tin undertaken by the Company from Penang in 1818 and 1819 was begun by the authorities on the spot without the prior sanction of the Court of Directors in London or of the Governor-General in India, and was prompted by strictly local considerations, not by any general change of policy.

Great hopes were placed on the future development of Penang when in 1805 it was created the Fourth Presidency of India, a step which placed it on an equal footing with Bengal, Madras and Bombay under the Governor General. The considerations which had led to its foundation in 1786 seemed about to be fulfilled. The most important of these considerations were the need for a base to serve the naval forces defending the East Coast of India during the North East monsoon, and for a port at which the Company's ships en route to China could stop for refit and supply, so becoming independent of the Dutch-held ports which alone offered hospitality between the Coromandel Coast and Canton. At the same time it was hoped that the new settlement would grow into a great commercial centre, and provide, both from its own resources and by drawing to it much of the native trade of the Archipelago, a plentiful supply of the spices which the grip of the Dutch Company had hitherto denied at firsthand to the English.

In the event, however, most of these expectations were disappointed. As a naval base Penang was not much used after 1805. The division of the Eastern Fleet into two Commands undertaken in 1805 largely for political reasons, had made more pressing the provision of a harbour for the Eastern Command, deprived now of the use of Bombay. It was not long however before the Admiralty returned to the original system of unified command. This and the fact that there were no strong hostile forces in Eastern waters after 1805 probably had much to do with the fact that the Admiralty did not press the development of a naval establishment at the Island.

The idea of constructing large docks met with many early practical difficulties, and no progress in this direction had been made when in 1807 the Admiralty announced its decision not to go on with the idea of building its ships at the Island, and transferred the naval establishment there to Trincomalee. A frigate was in fact built at Penang, being launched in 1809 but due either to its high cost or to the pressure of the East Indian shipbuilding interest at home the Company decided not to go on with this venture, and the remaining materials were sold to a private builder. From then on maritime construction and allied industries remained at a standstill, despite the fact that the merchants of the Island periodically suggested the building of docks at their own cost, no doubt to spur on the Company, but failed to implement the idea when the Company gave it its blessing.

The cultivation of crops for export on the Island shows a similar history of failure and frustration. The first pepper, nutmeg and clove plants secured from the Moluccas in 1796 failed. Subsequent attempts at raising pepper and other spices, and coffee, were showing excellent prospects of success when the Company's goods were shut out of their European markets by the Continental system. Large stocks piled up in the Company's warehouses in London, and the market price dropped so far that the Penang products were not wanted, and the industries languished. The growth of cotton was encouraged periodically from London when war with the United States cut off the American supplies, but the crop was never sufficiently developed to compete in the open market when the coming of peace made its encouragement no longer a likely speculation and American cotton was once more available.

The most healthy branch of Penang's activities in 1815 was its trade, mainly with countries in its immediate vicinity, the states of the Malay Peninsula and Northern Sumatra, Burma and Siam. The Island's main source of wealth was its entrepot trade. It imported textiles, iron and steel, and other European manufactured goods from England, and cotton and silk piece goods and opium from India, for transference to the hands of local merchants who distributed them in small lots throughout Malaya and the Archipelago. It imported from these areas pepper, tin, spices, woods, edible birds nests, and other Eastern produce. Those local imports bought up by the Company were shipped to Europe, those by private merchants mainly to China and India, although an increasing amount of private goods found their way to Europe after the loss of the Company's Indian monopoly in 1813.

Trade with the Eastward was handicapped by Penang's position in the North of the Straits of Malacca, which made it necessary for the native prows to run the gauntlet of the pirates who swarmed in the Straits, and of the Dutch cruisers from Malacca, which endeavoured to force all passing native trade into that port unless in possession of a licence from the Dutch authorities. Nevertheless Dutch monopolies, especially the tin monopoly treaties with the native states, and the low prices they forced on the Banka and Selangor tin producers, led to a good deal of smuggling. By 1790, indeed, the Dutch at Malacca considered the English Company their masters in the tin trade of the Straits, but were prevented by the authorities at Batavia from raising their prices or lowering their port dues.¹

After the capture of Malacca in 1795, and the removal of the Dutch obstacle to native commerce from the East, trade increased fairly rapidly, but after 1810 it remained stationary. The capture of Java, far from giving Penang a golden opportunity to capture the commerce of the whole Archipelago whilst the Dutch Company was not functioning, had the opposite effect. This was no paradox but followed simply from the fact that the replacement in Java of a government insisting on the fulfilment of monopoly contracts for the delivery of goods under duress at low prices, and levying high port dues, by one more liberal in its attitude, naturally had the effect of drawing trade to Java. It removed the incentive for smuggling

and for making a long dangerous passage to an island on the Western fringe of the Archipelago, and restored Java to its full place as the natural commercial centre of the Eastern Islands. The nature of this process can be seen fairly clearly in the annual value of dutiable tin exported from Penang. From 1806 to 1811 tin exports averaged Spanish \$334,080. From 1811 to 1816 the average value fell to Spanish \$315,782. For the year 1816–1817, however, when the Dutch were again in control in Java, exports of tin rose again to \$336,356.² Since conditions in the Peninsula were fairly stable during these years it is fair to assume that the output of the Perak and Selangor mines remained constant, and that the variation is accounted for by changing amounts of tin, coming annually from Banka.

The same fluctuations can be seen in the figures for the total imports and exports of the Island for this period. From a total of £1,106,924 in 1811 imports and exports dropped to their lowest point of £759,643 in 1814, recovered slightly in 1815, and rose again to £1,046,609 in 1816.³

The tin trade seems to have made up about 20% of the total trade of Penang at the time of the return of Java to the Dutch. From 1810–11 total exports were valued at £590,521, whilst exports of tin were only one sixth of this. In 1814, however when total exports were down to £414,959 tin exports totalled about £87,000 or more than one fifth. In 1816–17 total exports averaged £525,000, and tin exports £100,400, less than one fifth.

Unfortunately all the available statistics for this period of Penang's history must be treated with great caution. The figures given by Anderson for tin are probably fairly trustworthy, being based on the tin which actually paid export duties. In the case of Braddell's statistics for total exports, however, it is not known whence he obtained his figures for goods which did not pay duties, and thus did not pass through the customs house for enumeration, and their reliability must be suspect in consequence. Again, whilst it must have been relatively easy to evade customs with small consignments of piece goods, the smuggling of tin was more difficult, so that less probably passed unlisted. It may reasonably be assumed however, both from these estimates and from the importance which they themselves assigned to it, that the trade in tin played a significant part in the prosperity of the Penang merchants.⁴

In 1817-18 the tin trade of Penang received a sudden and severe setback. The value of tin exports which had reached a peak of \$336,356 in 1816-17 dropped to \$241,845. This rapid decrease Anderson explains as being due to the greater efficiency of the Dutch naval patrols compared to those at the end of the 18th Century, and to the fact that the native traders, especially those from Banka, discovered the control of trade in Java under the new government to be less rigorous and fairer than Daendel's system had been, and overcame their reluctance to take their goods to Batavia. Certainly there was a very large naval and military force at the disposal of the Dutch at this time. Another factor may have been the fact that Banka was handed back to the Dutch in 1817 in full sovereignty, whereas their relations with this Island had previously been only on a monopoly treaty basis with the Sultan of Palembang, the native suzerain. If the trade had begun to fall off in 1817, however, it fared much worse in 1818, when the settlement of Malacca was returned to the Dutch. The value of the tin exported from Penang in the year ending June 1818 fell to \$221,458.

Whatever may have been its cause this recession in the tin trade was the occasion of great uneasiness among the merchants and officials of Penang. It was regarded as a foretaste of what would occur if the new energy which seemed to characterise the restored Dutch government in the East should show itself in an attempt to capture the trade of the Malay Peninsula through the restored settlement of Malacca. In April 1817 a petition from the merchants of Penang, asking that the decision to return Malacca to the Dutch be reconsidered, and that a boundary be defined between the Dutch and English spheres of interest in the East, had been presented to their Governor, referred to the Court of Directors in London, and eventually to the President of the Board of Control, George Canning. There of course it had met with no encouragement. One of the main objects of British policy after the defeat of Napoleon was to support the Kingdom of the United Netherlands. It was in the view of British policy, destined to bar the way to any future French threat to the North, and to play this role in European politics it must be strong. It was on this principle that the Treaty of London of 1814, which specified the return to the Dutch of their former Eastern possessions, was based. The conclusions of the Congress

of Vienna, and British policy in Europe, could not be changed in favour of the commercial interests of Penang, and no more was heard of the merchants' petition.

On 8th June 1818 a second petition was received by the Governor from the mercantile community of Penang. It was prompted, as was that of 1817, by fear of the consequences of the Dutch return to Malacca.⁵ The tin trade of the Island, from its peak in 1816, had fallen in the last quarter of 1817 and showed no sign of recovery. It continued to decline in 1818, and was further dislocated when the state of Kedah, at the instigation of Siam, attacked Perak, the main tin producing area of the Peninsula.

Much of the trade from the Eastward was, if only temporarily, lost, an eventuality which had been foreseen by Governor Petrie and the Penang Council in 1814.⁶ In this state of affairs Colonel John Bannerman, the new Governor who had just been despatched from a seat on the Court of Directors in London, and the officials of Penang were concerned, as Light had been, mainly to ensure that the trade of the Peninsula did not follow that of the Islands into Dutch hands. His ideas coincided with those of the Penang merchants, who asked that commercial treaties be concluded with the native states with which they carried on commerce in order to secure their position in these states and to forestall the Dutch in any attempt they might make to revive their monopoly treaties with Selangor and Johore and to extend these old treaties to the states to the Northwards.

Instead of referring this petition to England, where it was likely, in view of the Government's Dutch policy, to suffer the same fate as that of 1817, Bannerman decided to take action on his own responsibility. He therefore appointed W.S. Cracroft, the Malay Translator to the Government, as Commissioner to negotiate commercial treaties with Perak and Selangor. At the same time Cracroft was to mediate in the war between Kedah and Perak and by persuading the Rajah of Perak⁷ to acquiesce in the Siamese demand for the Golden Flowers (Bunga Mas) or formal tribute in acknowledgement of suzerainty, to halt the conflict which had brought the Perak tin trade virtually to a standstill. Bannerman excused this independent action to the Supreme Government in India by explaining that

“the early resumption of Malacca by the Dutch ... appeared in the judgement of the Governor in Council to call on him for the immediate adoption of measures, whose objects might be frustrated by the smallest delay, but which, bearing virtually a political tendency he would under any other circumstances have previously submitted for the consideration of the Governor-General.”⁸

Cracroft's messages from the Island of Pangkor, off the Coast of Perak, producing no effect on either of the combatants, he went up the Perak River unbidden, and after arranging an armistice with the surly Raja Muda of Perak, and sending word of it to the Laksamana of Kedah, he began three weeks of inconclusive negotiations with the court of Perak at Pasir Garam. Whilst the eventual result of these negotiations was the conclusion of a commercial treaty with Perak, the business of arbitration proceeded slowly in the face of deliberate evasion by the Raja and his ministers. There seems to have been no intention of coming to a compromise with the Siamese and giving way on the question of the Bunga Mas. The time gained in negotiations was mainly used to draw out the armistice and prepare for a renewal of the war. Cracroft, after waiting a fortnight at Perak for the court to come to a decision, moved on to Selangore, which he reached on 15th August, taking with him a copy of the Perak treaty as a model.

This Treaty, dated 30th July 1818,⁹ stipulated most favoured nation status for each party in the territory of the other, and by it Perak engaged not to renew obsolete and “interrupted” treaties with other nations which would tend to keep out British trade, nor grant monopolies to these other nations.

At Selangor, where in contrast to the proceedings at Perak, he was received with eagerness and his business transacted with despatch, Cracroft concluded an identical treaty to that made with Perak, dated 22nd August. The letter from the Raja of Selangor to the Governor of Penang reporting these proceedings, shorn of compliments, is short and to the point.

“The safe arrival of my friend's letter, by Mr. Cracroft has afforded me much joy and satisfaction. I have consulted with my friend's Agent and have received the treaty proposed by him with willingness and pleasure.”¹⁰

This is in marked contrast to the longwinded evasion coming from Perak on the subject, which evoked some blunt comment from the Ruler of Kedah.

“Mr. Cracroft acquainted me that he had had interviews with the Rajah of Perak, the result of which was a mere acknowledgement on the part of that Prince of a willingness to follow the advice given him but without any real intention of doing so. It appears therefore that the Rajah of Perak and his ministers do not pay that deference to the kind advice given which they ought to do. But I hope to be able now to compel them to come to terms, and I have given the necessary orders for that purpose. Being now much in want of gunpowder I request my friend will be so kind as to allow me to purchase 30 or 40 barrels.”¹¹

At the same time as the commercial treaties made with Perak and Selangor another treaty, virtually identical with them, was obtained by Maj. Farquhar, Resident of Malacca, from Raja Muda Jaffir, the Underking of Rhio, acting for Sultan Abdul Rahman Shah, styled King of Johore, Pahang and dependencies.¹²

All three treaties were designed primarily in the hope of retaining the trade of these states despite the Dutch return to Malacca, and to prevent the renewal of the old Dutch treaties. Nor were they instigated by Bannerman with solely Malayan trade in mind. He was at the same time acutely aware of the threat that a Dutch revival in the Straits might be to the British China trade. The treaties did however raise problems for the future.

“The Commercial Alliance lately formed with several of the neighbouring Malay Chiefs would under ordinary circumstances secure the commercial interests of this Port, but if the Dutch determine to adopt against the States of these Princes measures of force and violence it will be a question of great importance and delicacy, how far this Government will be justified in interfering should its protection be solicited by the Chiefs...”¹³

Apart from his success in the matter of the treaties Cracroft brought back with him from Perak and Selangor much interesting commercial information. Most of it seems to have been concerned with the readiness of various individuals in these two states, and in Kedah, to supply quantities of tin for export. This despite the fact that the tin trade in these countries had been brought practically to a standstill by the inability of private traders to cope with the difficult conditions then prevailing in the Peninsula owing to the Kedah-Perak war and the growth of piracy in the Straits of Malacca.¹⁴

At the same time Bannerman himself had not been idle, but had started a correspondence with the headmen of the Kroh tin mines, under the jurisdiction of Patani, to explore the prospects for trade with that area. The results were promising, as for instance the letter which the Governor received from the Penghulu of Kroh in August.

“The letter from the Hon. the Governor ... mentions the desire to establish permanent friendship with me, at which I am extremely happy, because in my opinion there is no country save Pulo Pinang in the present times where the poor man can live contented and in safety. Under this impression I make known to the Governor that here at my place of Residence 200 bahar of Tin can be annually procured. This should it be agreeable to the Governor to send some confidential person to me with a letter from him on the subject can be sent annually to him at Pulo Pinang...”¹⁵

Bannerman was faced with a situation in which the tin trade of Penang, was waning. There were quantities of tin available in the states of the Peninsula, but the political disturbances there had brought the trade to a standstill. He conceived the idea therefore that only a little government influence was needed to re-establish a trade now halted because private traders were deterred by the unsettled state of the neighbouring countries. The Company had had an offer of a monopoly of tin and rattans from Perak as far back as August 1816. Hoping no doubt to gain British support against pressure from Kedah and the Siamese the Raja had also offered the cession

of the Island of Pangkor and the Dindings for a factory in return for the nominal payment of \$2,000 per. annum. The Raja of Selangor had shown a decided anti-Dutch attitude during Cracroft's visit in 1818, and was certainly ready to enter into a contract for tin with the English Company. Meanwhile, whilst Cracroft had been in Selangor, had come an offer from Kroh of 200 bhar of tin yearly.

Therefore Bannerman determined to go into the tin business on the Company's account.¹⁶ On 11th September 1818 he appointed a committee composed of the Malay Translator to the Government (Cracroft), the Superintendent of the Penang Police, and John Anderson, the official already earmarked to perform the duties of the Company's Agent for the tin trade in the Malay states. Their terms of reference were to consider the best way in which the decision to embark on a government trade in tin could be implemented.

The Committee reported on the 15th September. It was generally optimistic regarding the prospects of securing a supply of tin from Selangor, Kroh and Perak. In Selangor, whose tin export had, they said, formed part of Penang's trade for a considerable time, they urged that immediate steps be taken to offset the fact that this state lay nearest to the Dutch in Malacca. They estimated that a supply of 700 bhar, being two thirds of the total production of the state, could be obtained annually if an Agent was sent at once to negotiate a contract. The price, they thought, would be about \$45 per bhar.

From Kroh too, they thought, a good supply could be procured. The small quantity hitherto obtained they ascribed to the small number of workmen employed in the mines there, but thought that a demand for the product would stimulate production if the difficulties of transport to Penang could be overcome. The ore had to be carried six miles from the mines to the headwaters of the Muda River on elephants, and thence shipped down the River through Kedah to Kuala Muda on the Straits of Malacca. Another problem to be faced here was the fact that the Raja of Kedah had granted a farm of the customs at Kuala Muda to two Straits Chinese residents of Penang. The price of the tin, all these difficulties being surmounted, would be "reasonable".

In Perak, the report of the Committee went on, whence in former years the export of tin had exceeded 2,000 bhar yearly the political confusion resulting from the Kedah war had produced stagnation of trade. Cracroft however thought that this state of affairs should have passed, and a stable government be in control of the situation by the time the Agent sent to Selangor had finished his negotiations there. The Agent could then go on to Perak, where he should be able to enter into a contract for 2,000 bhar, at the cheap rate of \$30 per bhar, which he assured the Committee had been the reigning price during his late visit to that country.

Taking into account the current price of tin in Penang the Company should realise a considerable profit from these supplies of ore. The contracts with Selangor, Kroh, and Perak should thus yield annually upwards of 3000 bhar, dependent on the extent to which the production of ore in the Kroh mines reacted to the stimulus of this demand. The average import of tin into Penang from all sources for the last four years had been between 8,000 and 9,000 piculs (2,700 to 3,000 bhar) so the Company and the trade of Penang should benefit considerably from the transaction.¹⁷

In conclusion the Committee recommended that a native Agent should be appointed to reside in each of the states, under the protection of the Raja, in charge of a small factory to collect the tin as it came from the mines, and that the ore should be conveyed to Penang periodically in a small vessel, a Chinese junk probably being the most suitable. Upon the factories thus established they hoped that

“the English colours might be displayed. This if effected will be a great advantage with reference to the endeavours which might be made by other European nations to supplant our influence.”

What they were actually recommending was the establishment in these states of a monopoly, such as the old Dutch monopoly in tin, in fact if not in name. The presence of these factories could serve to ensure the fulfilment of the contracts and to keep out the Dutch.

The report of this Committee confirmed Bannerman in his decision to enter the tin trade, and he proceeded to take action along the lines recommended. On

19th September 1818 Anderson was appointed "Agent for Tin" and ordered to set out for Selangor, his first objective, at once. There he was to secure a contract for as much tin as possible and to select a trusty native Agent to remain and supervise the filling of the contract. He was subsequently to perform the same task at Perak and at Patani (Kroh).¹⁸ It was also agreed that as remuneration for his services Anderson was to receive, over and above his normal income as Subtreasurer and Assistant Warehousekeeper to the Penang Government, a third of the net profits of the venture up to a maximum of \$5,000.

Instead of going to Selangor, Anderson appears to have gone first to Perak, making a contract with "the authorities" there for the small amount of 100 bhar, and advancing cash for the purpose. Who these authorities were does not seem clear. There is a letter extant from the Raja of Perak dated 8th November 1818, in reply to a communication from Anderson. The Raja states his desire to engage in this trade with Penang, but regrets his inability to do so since his country is under the control of the Kedah forces. At the time an earlier letter from the Raja of Kedah to the Governor of Penang similarly bemoans his inability to supply tin to the Company from Perak.

"And with regard to the tin in Perak which the Governor wishes to purchase I shall be extremely happy to cause it to be sold to him; but at present can no way say anything for certain on this head on account of the war with Perak not being finished."¹⁹

It seems probable that there was not one contract for 100 bhars but several small contracts with those individuals who happened to have small holdings of tin and wished in the troubled state of the country to realise cash on these for immediate use. The passage in Anderson's subsequent report which states that there was no one chief in Perak who could make engagements for the supply of fixed quantities of tin, but that the tin was in fact brought in small quantities for sale may have been based only on his experience of this state of things. The exports of Perak, as of most of the Malay States, seem to have been normally part of the Raja's commercial monopoly.²⁰

Having secured this small contract in Perak Anderson went on to Selangor, where a contract was made with the Raja for the supply of 500

bhars annually at \$43 per bhar. The agent paid cash for 100 bhars of this at the time, and then returned to Perak, where he clinched the arrangements previously made and received part of the 100 bhars agreed upon. He seems not have gone on to Patani and the Kroh tin mines, although he certainly sent letters there, but thought it more important to bring to the notice of the Penang government at once several suggestions for the future conduct of the trade based on his experiences of the preceding three months in Perak and Selangor.

Anderson's report was considered at meetings of the Penang Council on 17th December and the 25th January.²¹ Its main recommendation was that the idea of appointing native Agents to reside in each of the states with which the tin trade was carried on should be dropped. Instead the Company should obtain possession of Pangkor Island, off the Dindings, which should serve as a collecting centre for the tin of the Peninsula. This proposal implied an extension of the Company's territory, an innovation which would involve Bannerman at once with the Supreme Government of India, the Court of Directors in London, the Dutch authorities in Malacca, and the native rulers from whom a valid deed of cession would have to be sought, as well as their nominal suzerain, Siam. Despite this Bannerman took up the proposal with enthusiasm, notwithstanding the fact that his attempts to forward the other branch of the Malayan tin trade, that with the Kroh mines, had already brought him face to face with a series of exasperating difficulties and embroiled him with the government of Kedah.

The letter from the Penghulu of Kroh of 1st August 1818²² had offered a contract of 200 bhars of tin annually, and Bannerman, backed up by the optimistic recommendations of his committee had tried to get this branch of the new venture moving at the same time as Anderson commenced his operations in Perak and Selangor. He offered the Kroh tin chiefs \$40 per bhar for their tin, half of it to be paid in cash and half in any merchandize they might require at the Penang market price. They accepted his price, and for the rest of the year and the first half of 1819 a correspondence ensued which seemed to hear out the assertion of the Penang Committee that only a little stimulus was needed to produce a considerable expansion of production from these mines. On the 28th September the Penghulu wrote

“If you will assist us with advances there are other and larger mines which can be worked, the names of which are Kalian Lutan and Kalian Betong, but then there will be a proportionate increase in duties which we pay to the Raja.”²³

and again on the 1st December

“If your Honor will agree to my Raja’s wishes he will furnish the tin from Kalian Mas and Soonghy Tumengong which is included in the former, and the tin of Kalian Kroh, Intam and Ampat Ayer and Kalian Betong. If your Honour will send advances of cash I will open all these mines.”²⁴

These expectations of a large and growing tin supply which was to make Penang “the Great Tin Mart of the East” (according to Bannerman), were however marred by complicating factors. When Anderson’s report came to hand in December not one bhar of the 60 bhars reported by the Kroh chiefs as being ready for delivery in September had reached Penang.

There was first the problem of placating the miners’ local suzerain, the Raja of Patani, who found in the taxes levied on the mines a major part of his revenue, and demanded to share in their increased prosperity. His taxes he levied in the form of tin. The amount due to him from the mines was computed at the low price of \$24 per bhar. He then forced the miners to dispose of this tin for him at the Penang market price, which was considerably higher. It was much higher than the \$40 per bhar offered by Bannerman and accepted by the Kroh chiefs, being at times as much as \$54. When more mines were opened up in response to the demand from Penang the Raja’s taxes would also rise. A portion of the money advanced by Bannerman for the opening up of these mines would therefore be used for adding to the Raja’s revenue.

The Kroh chiefs, “Datu Mekong Betong and Inche Awong Mahomad who govern the district of Kroh”, therefore offered the Governor the following alternatives. Either he should accept the amount of tin specified by the Raja as a part of their deliveries to the Company, paying the higher price for this amount, or he should allow them to deduct that amount of tin from the

deliveries due to the Company, and retain it so as to dispose of it themselves. This pill Bannerman swallowed, agreeing to pay the higher Penang market price for the amount of tin at present levied as taxes, although saying nothing about the position which would arise when additional mines were opened up. He asked that one of the Kroh chiefs should make the journey to Penang "that I may show him civility and make a firm and lasting agreement between us, and also consult about the expense of working more mines, with reference to which let my friends settle what would be the actual sum required." At the same time he consigned to the Kroh chiefs by his agent, one Jurakan Soleyman, cash and goods to the value of \$2400, including a chest of opium, various piece goods, 2 muskets and a horse. It was the despatch of this money and goods to pay for the 60 bhars of tin which the Kroh miners had in readiness for him, which involved Bannerman in his second and more serious difficulty.

There was a continuous water route from Kuala Muda by way of the Muda River and the Ketil River and its headwaters to within about six miles of Kroh. The modern motor road from Sungei Patani to Kroh roughly follows this. But Bannerman's consignment of money and goods got no further than Kuala Muda. There it was stopped by the agents of the tax farmer who controlled all goods going up and down the river, as the representative of the Raja of Kedah. The agent in charge of the consignment could produce no evidence that the necessary dues had been paid to the holders of the Farm, two Chinese merchants, residents of Penang. It was therefore declared confiscated, removed from the Company's boats and stored on shore, in despite of the not very effective presence of a guard of Company's Sepoys.

These proceedings moved Bannerman to write two very indignant letters, one, on the 21st October to the Raja of Kedah, and one to the unfortunate Chinese, Che Seong and Che Toah on the 31st.

To the Chinese Farmers he was brief. "The Government will hold you personally responsible for the safety of Opium, Money and Gold forcibly detained by your Agent of Kuala Muda. In the meantime a reference has been made to H.H. the Rajah of Kedah, to which answer may be daily expected."²⁵

The letter to the Raja of Kedah, however, was considerably²⁶ longer, and inaugurated a lengthy and acrimonious correspondence. In the first place

Bannerman was at pains to show that there had been no intention on the part of the Company to avoid payment of the duties. He had endeavoured to ascertain from the Farmers the amount due and make payment before the goods were despatched from Penang. The Farmers however, (or one of them) had been absent in Kedah at the time, so that since the Company's business was pressing the Governor had ordered his boats to sail, believing that

“the high character of the British Government would assure him and all his people that there was no intention to evade the payment of his duties at Qualla Mooda, which would be certain to be discharged the moment their amount was represented, and therefore that none of them would dare to molest the boats when they saw a party of the Company's Sepoys in charge of the property they contained.”

He therefore asked for immediate redress from the Chinese Farmers at the hands of the Raja of Kedah.

Secondly he went on to discuss the matter of the farm at Kuala Muda generally. He had heard, he said, from Che Toak, that he imposed a duty on all goods travelling up and down the Muda River. The duty of 20% charged Bannerman denounced as excessive, but expressed the hope that the Raja had only in fact farmed the retail of goods destined for Kedah, not authority to levy duty on goods passing through the state to and from the interior. It would, he said, not be consistent with the good relations then existing between Kedah and Penang for the former to shut out Penang from her trade with the interior tariffs.

There is some reason suspect that the Penang Government was not so much the innocent injured party which this letter represents. They had been aware of the obstacle which the tax farm at Kuala Muda placed in the way of a successful tin trade with the Kroh mines for some time. The Committee appointed by Bannerman in September to explore the prospects of the tin trade had pointed out the existence of the Farm, the fact that it had still four years to run, and that some arrangement would have to be come to with Kedah by treaty to get over this, and ensure the free navigation of the river.

“If this cannot be effected”, the report of the Committee went on “we are informed by Mr. Caunter that there is a junction between the Pry and Muda Rivers by which the tin may be conveyed hither.”²⁷

It is possible that at that time the Prai estuary, to the South of Kuala Muda and opposite Penang, may have been linked to the Muda by way of the Korok River, which reaches almost to the Muda at Pantai Perai. It was at ‘Pantei Pry’, “a point higher up the river” that Bannerman offered to take delivery of the Kroh tin if Kuala Muda proved unsatisfactory; from this point it could pass easily on to the headwaters of the Prai, down to Kuala Prai and so to Penang.²⁸

It is certain that when on 22nd September 1818, at the same time as Anderson was setting out on his tin purchasing mission, Cracroft and Caunter were appointed as Commissioners to proceed to Kedah, one of the objects of their mission was to consolidate the alternative trade route down the Prai River. The Raja of Kedah himself summarised the business upon which Cracroft and Caunter addressed him as follows:

1st: A portion of territory is requested from the North side of Qualla Meerbow to the South of Qualla Mooda, extending 60 orlongs inland the same as the territory formerly ceded. To make a settlement and factories therein for mercantile purposes.

2nd: Two portions of land of 20 square orlongs each are requested on the banks of the Pry River in the interior to make factories.

3rd: To Governor requests permission for prows bearing the Company’s pass to trade up and down the Qualla Mooda and Pry on account of the Company.”²⁹

The extension of the Company’s land on the mainland Northward from the Muda to the Merbok River would give them control of both banks of the Muda and of both banks of the Merbok up to Sungei Patani. The exact location of the two portions of land asked for to make factories on the Prai is not known. Their purpose was obviously to make certain the grip of the Company on the alternative river route from the interior down to Kuala Prai. These concessions would place in the hands of the Penang Government

the control of all the rivers from the interior whose mouths lay opposite Penang. The Farm at Kuala Muda would be extinguished. In this connection the request for land for factories on the Prai was probably intended as an alternative measure, should the attempt to gain control of the Muda fail. If they obtained control of the Muda the Company would have no use for the Prai route, except insofar as they might wish to deny all the East-West trade routes to others.

The Raja of Kedah returned an evasive answer to these requests, alleging the absence of his chief ministers in Perak as the reason why no decisive answer could be returned at that time. The quarrel over the seizure of the Company's goods at Kuala Muda breaking out at the same time, Cracroft and Caunter returned to Penang with this part of their assignment unaccomplished.

It is against this background of Bannerman's definite foreknowledge of the Farm at Kuala Muda and what it entailed for the tin traffic, and his attempts to circumvent or gain control of the obstacle, that the correspondence between him and Kedah on the subject of the Farm must be viewed. It is perhaps too much to say that Bannerman sent off the boats to Kuala Muda with the duties unpaid meaning that they should be detained by the Farmers' agents there. But when they had been so detained he certainly made the most of the opportunity so presented to try and frighten the Raja into revoking the grant of the Farm.³⁰

By empowering a subject of the Government of Penang to hold up the trade of that Government, he said, the Raja was embroiling Penang and Kedah in a serious quarrel. The written commission given by the Raja to the Farmers only granted them the retail of goods consumed in Kedah. It did not mention a right to exclusive control of the Muda River or to prevent the transit of goods through the territories of Kedah. The duties charged by the Farmers amounted in fact to a total prohibition of trade, being ruinously high. They levied \$15 per bhar on tin, which on the \$40 per bhar which the Company was paying for their tin from Kroh came to over 37%. For one country to deny to another at peace with it access to the trade of a third was, said the Governor, a breach of the Law of Nations and must lead to a rupture between the two.

“I am very anxious to be on terms of friendship with the Rajah of Kedah and to give him no uneasiness or trouble, but I must tell my friend that if he cannot comply with my request it will be my imperative duty to refer the whole subject to the Governor-General of Bengal, which reference can only be avoided by prompt acquiescence to the suggestions I shall now offer.”

These ‘suggestions’ were that the Raja should at once send an agent of his own to Kuala Muda who should release the confiscated goods and pass them to their destination, accepting from the Company the existing “normal” duties on behalf of the Raja. The Farmers Bannerman refused to deal with. Their agent at Kuala Muda must be instantly dismissed for his insolent conduct. These were to be preliminary measures to the general readjustment of the export duties, and “such as the honour and dignity of the Company’s Government cannot dispense with.”

Unfortunately for Bannerman and the Penang tin trade the Raja of Kedah, much as he wished to remain on good terms with the British authorities, feared the displeasure of the Siamese even more. The East India Company had not up to that time been noted for their energetic interference in the politics of the Malay States. The Company might threaten or cajole but it did not act except when the safety of Penang itself was threatened. The Siamese on the other hand had since 1816 been exerting continuous pressure on Kedah and the northern states, and the Company, who owed their possession of Penang and Province Wellesley to the hope on the part of Kedah that they would act as a counterweight to Siam, had been singularly unwilling to play this role. The cession of Province Wellesley had been made despite the displeasure of the Siamese, and the Raja of Kedah feared that any fresh concessions to the Company would bring more concrete evidence of Siamese anger on his head. Already he had been forced to attack Perak at the bidding of his northern overlords, and to contribute to their expedition against Burma. He was being pressed to stop the delivery of rice to Penang, without which the Island could not feed itself, and to send subsidies in the form of tin and money northwards.

He remained therefore unmoved by the threats and blandishments of Penang. He could not, he said, terminate the Farm without breaking his

word to the Farmers. He agreed that a general duty of 20% on all goods which the Farmers were levying was excessive, but pointed out that the duty of \$15 on tin was not new but that sanctioned by custom. Any revision of the duties must be a question between the Governor of Penang and the Farmers; he could not interfere with them once he had granted them the Farm. All he could do was to give a vague promise that these considerations would not bind him when the term of the Farm had expired in four years time. Meanwhile he would write to the Farmers asking them not to levy duties higher than those which conformed to established usage, and not to conduct their business so as to involve him in quarrels with the Government of Penang. He directed them to restore the Company's goods and cash which they held, and to receive from Penang the duties on them, "reckoning them according to former custom." At the same time he asked the Government of Penang for a loan of \$30,000 to help him out of his difficulties with Siam.

From this position he would not stir, despite the nonpayment of the pension due to him from Penang. There is some indication of a desire to renew negotiations on the subject under Bannerman's successor, Governor Phillips, after the pension had been paid, but it was then too late.³¹ The Siamese invasions of 1821 swept the Raja from his throne and left the Company to deal with a more truculent neighbour.

Although the goods which had been the occasion of this unsatisfactory correspondence were eventually returned by the Chinese Farmers with "a suitably submissive apology" there is some evidence that even this satisfaction was not obtained without further pressure. There are two Orders in Council in the Penang records for 1819 which direct the return to Che Toah and Che Seong of a Land Grant belonging to them and held under mortgage to the Government. It is not unlikely that this Land Grant was seized by Bannerman in 1818 as security against the return of the Company's goods.³²

When therefore the Governor and Council of Penang met to consider Anderson's report in December and January they had a mixed background of promised success and threatened failure between them. That part of the Company's tin trade concerned with the North of the Peninsula, which had been inaugurated by Bannerman in his correspondence with Kroh had been brought to a standstill, rather had never started to move. It had

failed to surmount difficulties which were in the last analysis political. The quarrel over the Kuala Muda Tax farmer had involved Bannerman in a deadlock with Kedah which could only be broken by the exertion of political pressure. The correspondence with the Kroh chiefs went on, but the Farmers continued to obstruct traffic at Kuala Muda. A quantity of tin was collected at Kroh, but the first shipment of 60 bhars was stopped by the Farmer, so that shipment of the rest had to be halted. It was therefore only possible to hope that future events might bring about a change in the attitude of Kedah, or place in the hands of the Penang Government the means of bringing about such a change. In the meantime the Kroh miners were encouraged to go on collecting tin and offered an advance of cash to make this possible.³³

With respect to Anderson's work in Selangor and Perak, however, the future was more hopeful. Considerable contracts had already been placed in these states and partially filled. It was expected that the political disturbances in Perak would in the near future be resolved, and that the quantity of tin available there would be greatly increased. The main feature of Anderson's report was his recommendation that the Company take steps to occupy the Island of Pangkor, on which they should set up a small factory which would serve as a collecting centre for all the tin from the Malay States. Incidentally he pointed out that an English settlement there would probably destroy the scourge of piracy in the waters around Penang.³⁴

The original suggestion of the Committee on the tin trade had been that contracts be entered into with the Native Rulers, and that small establishments under native agents be maintained at the capital of each state to collect the tin and ensure fulfilment of the contracts. This system, said Anderson, would involve many disadvantages, especially in Perak. There was no one chief who could contract for the whole of the state's tin supplies (the Raja being at that time powerless owing to the Kedah war), so that many small contracts would have to be made with individual miners or merchants. They usually required cash in advance to finance their activities, and since they were absent for some time in the interior collecting the tin, could easily abscond with the cash. The Company's prices were liable to be lower than those offered by some other traders who had not large overhead

charges to meet, so that there would be a constant temptation for the miners to evade their contracts.

Occupation of Pangkor would provide a collecting centre whither the native traders could bring their tin, strategically situated near the mouth of the Perak River, and between the Trong River to the North and the Burnam to the South, all main water routes from the interior. The price offered could be higher, since the Company would not have to sustain the cost of native agents and of smaller establishments in each state, and there would be no troublesome contract system to maintain. There were also tin mines on Pangkor itself, and in the Dindings, and "a large quantity is said to be procurable if there were sufficient workmen and capital to work the mines." On the Dindings River the son of the Raja of Selangor had lately formed a settlement to milk the Dindings' tin miners as they brought their tin downriver.

He thought that the occupation of this Island was essential in any case to forestall any Dutch move. If the Dutch held Pangkor they could cut off any trade coming out of the Perak River. Their settlement would be a great encouragement to smuggling, and it would be impossible to hold any native trader to a contract against his will. A Dutch Pangkor, in fact, could play the role the 18th Century Penang had done towards the Dutch tin trade centred on Malacca. The remains of a Dutch fort on Pangkor was sufficient evidence that the Dutch had had pretensions in this part of the Peninsula.³⁵ The Perak chiefs feared that they would attempt to return after their re-occupation of Malacca, and encouraged Anderson in the idea that a British occupation "would be an advisable measure, and concurred with me that the tin trade could not possibly be of advantage in that quarter at least to the Hon. Company, without such an establishment."

Having met with an irritating check to his activities in Kroh, Bannerman, followed by his Council, greeted this chance of making some definite headway in the trade with the Southern states with enthusiasm. The Governor commented optimistically that whilst Anderson may have met with some difficulties in Perak the scheme as a whole seemed to hold out promise of great success. He had in mind already the prospect of Penang as the great tin mart of the East, attracting to its warehouses the tin of the

Malay Peninsula and of Junk Ceylon in large enough quantities to attract the ships passing through to China, where a ready market awaited it. He wished at once to place troops on Pangkor to guard against a Dutch move in that direction whilst enquiries are made to define the legality of Dutch and Malay claims to the area.³⁶ The Penang Council, however, had a little time for second thoughts before the subject was again considered, and in their minutes tabled on the 25th January 1819 Councillors Phillips and Erskine sounded a note of caution.³⁷

Phillips, after noting that the Dutch claims rested on their previous nominal control of Perak, and that the claims of Selangor and Kedah were based, the first on the right of ancient conquest and the latter on the fact of their conquest of Perak, went on to say that the Malay Rulers would probably be ready to transfer their claims to the Company in return for a consideration, but that he expected the Dutch to prove more difficult. He therefore thought that no move ought to be made until the authorities in India had been consulted and their backing was assured. Otherwise withdrawal might be necessary in face of Dutch opposition, causing much loss of face and prejudicing the relations of the Company in Penang with the Malay States.

Erskine was of similar conviction. He suggested that a ship be sent to lay off the Island, providing temporary accommodation for the Agent for Tin, the Colonial Engineer, and such other officials as might be thought necessary. An accurate survey of the place and an assessment of its potentialities might then be made without assuming any commitments or rousing any active opposition. He stressed the importance of following up this opening, and of sparing no pains in forwarding the efforts of Anderson and the whole tin prospect as of primary importance for the future of Penang.

In fact a letter had already been sent to the Governor-General in Bengal on the 22nd January, asking for his approval of the annexation of the Island.³⁸ It briefly reviewed the motives which had prompted the appointment of an Agent for Tin, and stressed the importance of fore-stalling the Dutch in any attempt they might make to regain possession of Pangkor. They had already made one such attempt early in January, and if they were in the future successful in this policy Pangkor would at once block all the trade of Penang

with the Malay States. The fact that the possession of the Island would materially decrease the amount of piracy in those seas was stressed as a material factor. The amount of Bengal treasury funds expended in keeping anti-pirate vessels in Penang waters must have made this a very important argument in favour of the acceptance of the scheme in Bengal.

The copies of correspondence of a Dutch mission at Pangkor with the Perak chiefs to which Bannerman refers do not seem to have survived in the records. There is however no reason to doubt the truth of the reference. Both Anderson and Low refer to it, and there is a well documented reference to a later Dutch Mission to Selangor in April and May 1819, led by the same envoy and having the same general objects, the resurrection of the obsolete treaties which gave the Dutch Company monopoly rights in the Malayan tin trade.³⁹

Bannerman concluded by urging on the authorities in India despatch in their decision. "The great importance of holding possession of this commanding spot, would have induced this Government to occupy it at once, but the positive instructions recently received from the Supreme Government, to avoid the possibility of a collision with the Dutch authorities, has urged the propriety of making a pause, and of referring the matter for the consideration of the Supreme Government." His impatience to have his hands freed to counter any Dutch move in the Peninsula was to be justified in the near future. In the meantime he settled down to wait for the reply of the Supreme Government, and Anderson resumed his activities collecting tin in Perak and Selangor.

During March there was a sporadic correspondence with Selangor.⁴⁰ The Raja intimated to Bannerman that 100 bhar of tin was awaiting collection, that he contemplated going on pilgrimage to Mecca and would like to wait in Penang until an Arab vessel should be available to take him thence, and that a supply of muskets and cannon was wanted in Selangor. Bannerman acknowledged the readiness of the tin and said he would send for it, regretted that no cannon were available but that some muskets would be sent, and offered to arrange for the Raja's journey to Penang. Then came a letter dated 1st May 1819⁴¹ containing the welcome news that 200 bhars of tin were now ready, and the not so welcome information that a Dutch mission from Malacca had found its way to the Court of Selangor. A copy of a letter from Timmerman Thyssen, the Dutch Governor of Malacca, dated

28th March was enclosed. Thyssen offered to assist the Raja as much as was possible to promote the prosperity of his country, and expressed himself much pleased on hearing that the ruler of Selangor intended to help Perak expel the Siamese (an intention which Raja Ibrahim indignantly repudiated). More specifically he directed the Raja's attention to the old Dutch treaty of 1786, which he wished renewed and extended.

Commissioner Stekker, the Fiscal of Malacca and leader of the Dutch mission, being apparently met with procrastination and fair words whilst news from Penang which could be used as a counterweight to the Dutch was anxiously awaited, Governor Thyssen sent a second letter more pointed in its terms than the first. It was impossible, he said, to set aside a treaty solemnly sworn to, as that with the Dutch had been in 1786. In Johor, Lingga, Pahang and Rhio the people had immediately seen when the Dutch returned that they had been wrong to come to an understanding with the English. There "the Sultan possessed his country in the same way as my friend does his of Salangore, viz., that he would not do anything whatsoever without the consent of the King of Holland."⁴² Therefore he wished that the Raja and chiefs should accept a new treaty on the lines of that of 1786.

The Treaty referred to is that executed between Raja Ibrahim and Commissioner Couperous on 29th July 1786.⁴³ By it the Raja acknowledged the sovereignty of the Dutch East India Company, from whom he held Selangor as a fief. In the commercial sphere the Raja undertook that all Dutch ships should have free access to the ports and rivers of his state, but that the ships of other European nations and Chinese junks should be excluded. All vessels from Selangor must call in at Malacca and take a pass before proceeding down the Straits; they should be admitted to all Dutch harbours, but must pay the normal duties for non-Dutch vessels there. The Raja bound himself and his successors to deliver all the tin produced in Selangor to the Dutch in Malacca at the rate of \$36-38 per bhar, depending on the quality of the tin, or at \$34-36 per bhar if collected by Dutch vessels.

The enforcement of these terms could not but be distasteful to the ruler of Selangor, if only for the monetary loss he must suffer under the tin monopoly clause of the treaty. The price stipulated was far below what he could get from Penang, or from any private trader. Moreover Selangor

had been free from European interference for nearly thirty years, and had managed to remain in the Siamese sphere of influence. Raja Ibrahim therefore sent a desperate letter to Bannerman at Penang, complaining that his Treaty with the English Company, which he had shown to the Dutch Mission, as he had been told by his English friends to do, had not acted as the all powerful charm which he had been led to believe it was. The Dutch had brushed it aside and refused to recognise the validity of any engagement save the Dutch treaty of 1786. He was, he said, "like one divided between iron on the right hand and iron on the left hand—cut in two."⁴⁴ He asked that the Penang Government should make their position clear. Either they must release him from his obligation towards the Company, so that he could comply with the Dutch demand with a clear conscience, or they must get him out of his trouble by sending an Agent of their own to settle the matter with the Dutch for him.

This news did not come as a great surprise to Bannerman. The Dutch, he told the Penang Council on 27th May,⁴⁵ as he had always predicted, and spurred on by the British occupation of Singapore in February, had attacked the independence of Selangor and Perak from Malacca. At the same time he was prevented from taking any effective action in Selangor by the attitude of the Supreme Government and the authorities in England. In the matter of the proposed occupation of Pangkor a reply from the Supreme Government defining their policy was still awaited. Nevertheless he thought that the seriousness of the Dutch move as it affected Penang justified him in preventing the Raja of Selangor from becoming the tool of Dutch policy. If they succeeded in Selangor, Perak would be the next object of their attentions, and then probably Kedah. The large Dutch-controlled area around Penang which would result would cripple its trade and political relations with the Malay States.

It was therefore resolved that Cracroft, who had negotiated the commercial treaty of 1818, should be sent as Agent to Selangor. The formal object of his mission would be to collect the tin, amounting now to 250 bhars, which was awaiting shipment to Penang.⁴⁶ Whilst there however he should impress upon the Raja the formal nature of his engagements with the English Company, and taking care not to come into open collision with the

Dutch endeavour to secure continuance of those engagements, pointing out to the Raja the financial advantage of standing by his contract. Should the Raja still wish to go on pilgrimage to Mecca Cracroft was to bring him back to Penang. At the same time he must "establish in the mind of the Rajah" and of his chief ministers that the temporary administration left functioning in his absence would not be competent to alter existing engagements and treaties, thus preventing any formal action on the part of Malacca. This again must be done without collision with the Dutch. Offering the Raja a passage was merely a means for him to evade discussion with the Dutch, and avoid them forcing him into any further commitments. Cracroft was to stress the fact that it implied no admission on the part of the Company of any obligation to support his government in Selangor against any third party, but was "merely a token of personal friendship". Bannerman wished, whilst avoiding any action which could be represented either by the authorities in India and England, or by the Dutch, as positive opposition to the Dutch authorities to remove any chance of the Dutch mission being able to achieve any concrete diplomatic success.

Before Cracroft left on his errand permission was received from the Bengal authorities to proceed with the projected occupation of Pangkor. Cracroft was therefore furnished with additional instructions⁴⁷ ordering him, in addition to the other objects of his mission, to ask the Raja of Selangor for the cession of the island, after he had ascertained that he was in fact in possession of complete sovereignty there and that there was no likelihood of his grant being disputed by the Dutch or any other power. He was to observe that whilst possession of all the smaller islands surrounding Pangkor was also requested the Company had no intention of occupying them, but merely wished to secure the exclusion of the Dutch. It was impressed upon the envoy that in accordance with the orders of the Supreme Government and the policy of the Court of Directors, all conflict with the Dutch on the subject was to be avoided. If he found when he arrived at Selangor that a regular treaty had in fact been obtained by the Dutch he was to avoid all negotiations on the subject.

On arrival at Selangor Cracroft found that the Dutch had been more successful there than had been hoped. Raja Ibrahim, after making a vain

attempt to enlist Bannerman's support against them, had found that the Company were not prepared for an open collision. He had therefore been left with no choice but to sign a revival of the treaty of 1786.⁴⁸ Cracroft seems to have concluded that it would be better not to broach the subject of Pangkor, a decision in which he was supported by the authorities at Penang, and the sole result of his mission as far as the tin trade was concerned was that he brought back with him to Penang 310 bhars of tin in early July.⁴⁹

Bannerman had applied first to Selangor in the matter of Pangkor partly because the Cracroft mission was about to leave for that place, and partly because the son of the Raja was in de facto possession of the Island. Shortly afterwards however, he despatched letters to the Raja of Kedah and the de facto rulers of Perak asking for their views on the matter. The Raja of Kedah confirmed the fact that he claimed Pangkor by virtue of his conquest of and suzerainty over Perak, but was not willing to cede the Island to the Company because of his fear of Siam.

"I feel a difficulty how to act, because I attacked the Perak country at the desire of the King of Siam, and the Boonga Mas which was commanded has been sent from the former to the latter state; for this reason, were I ever so much disposed this way, I should hesitate, as I am apprehensive of giving offence to the King of Siam, for I recollect he formerly acquainted me in regard to his late Majesty of Kedah's grant to the Company of Pry and along the North side of^{f50} ... and the Southern bank of the Qualla Mooda, which extends 600 Orlongs by the sea side, that he was by no means pleased, as the Quedah country is tributary to Siam."⁵¹

Because of the usefulness of the East India Company as a counterweight to possible Dutch influence, however, he left a loophole open for discussion by suggesting the despatch of an emissary to Kedah to discuss the matter more fully.

The Perak chiefs, who were neither in possession of the Island nor free agents, being under the control of Kedah, indicated that they were perfectly willing to part with what they did not possess, provided the Company made

a substantial money payment. Failing this, although they could not prevent the Company taking the Island by force they would not make formal cession.⁵²

The Company's attempts to trade in tin and to make of Penang a great tin market was thus by August 1819 in this position. The Northern branch of the tin trade, that from the Kroh mines, promised well, but delivery of the tin was held up by the matter of the Chinese tax Farmer at Kuala Muda, and the unwillingness of the Raja of Kedah to come to any compromise on the matter. From Perak and Selangor a certain amount of tin (650 bhars in all) had been collected in fulfilment of the contracts made by Anderson, but the political condition of these states made it unlikely that larger quantities would be immediately available, and Bannerman's attempt to obtain the cession of Pangkor, which would provide a convenient collecting centre, and make intervention in these states unnecessary, had not met with success. Moreover, the foundation of Singapore in February had introduced a new factor into Bannerman's calculations.

A discussion of Bannerman's opposition to the foundation of Singapore lies outside the scope of this monograph, based as it was on his view of the true role of Penang in the Eastern trade of the East India Company, on his personal enmity for Raffles, and more on his interpretation and support of the policy of his superiors in London towards the Dutch in the East. The Commercial Treaties of 1818 had been negotiated, and the tin trade undertaken by the Company in order to prevent the return of the Dutch to Malacca bringing with it a resumption of their monopoly in the Peninsula and cutting off totally Penang's trade with the Eastward. With the foundation of Singapore, however the Dutch at Malacca were themselves outflanked. Anderson, writing in 1824, had grasped at once the role which Singapore was to play in the commerce of the Straits and the Peninsula.

"The establishment of Singapore has necessarily drawn away much of the more Eastern trade, which formerly centred on Pinang and Java; "but this is not an evil we have any reason to complain of ...: the British trade has been somewhat increased on the aggregate, and so long as this desirable object can be secured it matters not whether the Emporium is situated a few degrees farther North or South. Had Malacca never been given up and timely arrangements been made to

prevent the Dutch forming any establishment to the Southward of that place, in these Straits, it is not an unreasonable inference that the same extension of trade, under the same management, would have been the result; for a few leagues would have made no difference whatever to the Eastern traders... We have now a chain of settlements along the Eastern side of the Straits and have the Key in our hands..."⁵³

The survival of the settlement of Singapore seemed, however, by no means probable in 1819, especially to Bannerman. To him Raffles' venture seemed only to have accomplished what he feared; it had, he said, provoked the Dutch to renew their unwelcome activities in the Peninsula, and he saw the Dutch attempt to reassert their control over Selangor as the direct outcome of the British landing on Singapore. To him, without foreknowledge of the success of the settlement at Singapore, or of the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1824, it seemed only the more necessary to take what steps he could to salvage as much of the trade of the Peninsula as was possible from the Dutch and the Siamese without provoking an open rupture with either of these powers. He had the support of the majority of the Penang Council in this view.⁵⁴

On the 8th August 1819, however, Bannerman died.

The problems which awaited solution before the tin trade of Penang, as envisaged by its Governor, could proceed, were in the last resort brought about by the activities of the Dutch and of the Siamese. Because of the policy of the British Government and the Court of Directors these problems had to be solved without risking the active hostility of these powers. At the same time their solutions, and the capture of the tin trade of the Malay States, by diplomacy, would involve both Siam and the Dutch giving up their own ambitions in the Peninsula. This they were hardly likely to do without some substantial compensation elsewhere, and this compensation it was outside Bannerman's power to provide.

This difficult and delicate task Bannerman as the originator and leading spirit of the tin scheme might have tackled. His colleagues on the Penang Council, the most senior of whom, Phillips, now became Governor, decided however that enough had been done to justify the original purpose of Government participation in the trade. They therefore resigned the

existing difficulties to the consideration of the Supreme Government in Bengal and the Court of Directors in London. Anderson was directed to wind up his accounts as Agent for Tin and to dispose of the tin already collected by public auction. The matter of the Dutch in Selangor was referred to the Supreme Government and to London, and it was suggested that the problem of the Siamese in the Peninsula and the obstacles their actions presented to British commerce might be settled by the dispatch of a mission from the Governor-General to the Court of Siam.

The Penang Council did not give up completely, however, the idea of drawing a large part of the Eastern tin trade to Penang. In addition to the pious hope that the initiative of private merchants might now overcome the obstacles to trade which had halted it in 1818, and follow up the work which the Company had begun, they drew the attention of the authorities in London and India to the importance of the possession of Junk Ceylon, off the west coast of the Kra Isthmus, in this connection.

“... while the Governor in Council ventures most respectfully to recommend the subject to the attention of the Supreme Government at this time he does so from the conviction that the period is most favourable for us obtaining the purposes in contemplation, either by means of a mission to Siam, or by negotiation with the existing authority on the Island itself.”⁵⁵

It had often been urged that the Company should endeavour to secure this island for its valuable tin deposits and it had been recommended during the period before the acquisition of Penang as a rival site for the Company's naval base on the Eastern shores of the Bay of Bengal. There was no immediate response to this suggestion in 1819, but the latter did in fact form one of the items on the agenda of Crawford when he was dispatched on a mission to Siam in 1821. In asking for Junk Ceylon, however, as in the case of his other objects, the furtherance of the Company's trade with Siam by the negotiation of a Tariff Agreement, and the pleading of the case of the Raja of Kedah, whose country had just been overrun by the Siamese, he met with complete lack of success.

Since it was decided to wind up the Government's part in the tin trade all the tin collected by Anderson was smelted and put up for auction in small lots during August. There were however no buyers at remunerative prices, and it was disposed of in two lots to the Captains of two of the Company's ships, the General Harris and the Warren Hastings, at an overall price of \$18 per picul, the buyers paying export duties and shipping charges. Half of the purchase price was received in cash on the spot, the balance being forwarded by the Select Committee of Supercargoes when the tin was disposed of at Canton in December. Since it had been purchased by the Company at an average price of \$43 per bhar this selling price of \$18 per picul (\$54 per bhar) produced a handsome profit. After disposal by Anderson of various stores held by him as Agent for Tin, and the payment of all expenses, it yielded a clear gain of \$5396.41, of which Anderson, in accordance with his original arrangement with Bannerman in 1818, took one third. In addition to this the revenue of Penang benefitted from export duties to the extent of \$800.⁵⁶

This balance sheet does not however include the expenses of the least successful and probably most costly part of the tin venture, that concerned with the Kroh mines.

This result was generally taken by the East India Company's officials in Penang to indicate that with a little perseverance the tin trade could prove highly remunerative both to the private merchants to whom it was now left, and to the revenue of the Government. They thought in fact that profits could be even higher, since in the beginning of any new venture experience has to be paid for by high expenses. Moreover the Company had undertaken the trade in the first place because they considered that the cost of reopening a trade stagnating because of political uncertainty was beyond the means and prestige of private enterprise. The winding up of Anderson's venture then by no means represented a loss of faith in the future of Penang as the centre of this trade, nor lack of confidence that the obstructions put in the way of the trade by the Dutch in the South and the Siamese in the North would eventually be removed by direct action on the part of the British Government and the Company in Holland and Siam.

Clubley, an experienced member of the Penang Council, summarised this point of view when he wrote in a Minute on the conclusion of the tin trade by the Company.

“The experience we have acquired with respect to that trade, added to the trouble and the risk attending the prosecution of it point out to us, I think, that enough had been done already for the beneficial purposes which were contemplated by our late respected Governor, when he proposed the arrangement in the first instance. I therefore decidedly think that we should stop now and that the trade in tin should be hereafter left to the industry of the merchants of the place who are the most concerned in the successful prosecution of it.... I quite agree with the Hon. the President in the justice of his ideas, that we shall best encourage the trade in tin by endeavouring as much as lies in our power to remove the barriers which at present either the selfish or timid policy of the neighbouring Malay governments have opposed to the free transit of that article. The opening of a free communication with Qualla Mooda will be highly desirable in this view on the one side, and on the other the possession of Pangkor ... would facilitate the trade with Perak, and render it liable to the least possible obstruction. I am aware however of the justice and propriety of the Hon. the President’s objections against our occupation of Pangkor at the present, in view to avoid any cause for jealousy either from the Dutch government or that of Siam, under present circumstances. It does not appear to me however that any objections do arise from any other quarter to prevent this desirable measure being obtained, and when the discussions which have already been referred to Europe shall be adjusted certainly hope to see that Island an integral part of this Government...”

Governor Bannerman’s participation on behalf of the East India Company in the tin trade of the Malayan Peninsula was a positive attempt to guard Penang’s trade from two threats; firstly that the Dutch, restored to Malacca, would attempt again to monopolise the trade of the Malay States; secondly that the wars between the Malay Rulers, pushed on by Siamese pressure, would produce a state of unsettlement and lawlessness, a complete breakdown of authority with the traders of Penang could not cope, and which would ruin the states as markets.

He attempted in other ways to achieve the same objects. By the Commercial Treaties of 1818 he sought to guarantee freedom of trade, and to guard against a renewal of the Dutch monopoly treaties. At the same time he endeavoured through Cracroft to mediate in the war between Kedah and Perak, and recommended to the Supreme Government that negotiations be set on foot with the Court of Siam with a view to bettering conditions under which commerce with Siam and the Northern States of the Peninsula was carried on.⁵⁷ The Company's intervention in the tin trade was a 'positive' attempt to secure these ends in that, rather than wait and see whether the Commercial Treaties of 1818 would in fact maintain freedom of trade as against the Dutch, rather than wait for affairs in Perak to settle down, Bannerman intended, by pushing on the trade in conditions with which only the resources and authority of the Company could cope, to act as caretaker of the trade until private merchants could again risk their capital with reasonable security. He meant, by securing as much of the tin output of Perak and Selangor as was possible, on terms equally beneficial to the producers as to the Company to reduce the chances of the Dutch of overcoming the paper safeguard of the Treaties.

From this view of the Government's trade in tin Bannerman advanced rapidly to a wider and more ambitious scheme. By December 1818, when he had already the problem of the Kuala Muda tax-farmer to plague him, he could yet recommend vigorously Anderson's suggestion that Pangkor should be acquired to act as a tin collecting centre. He was prepared to go even further. "Perak", he said, ... forms a part only, and but a small part, of the proposed scheme, which comprehends the whole of the Malay Peninsula and neighbouring Isles, and looks to securing the extensive produce of Junk Ceylon.

"I need not therefore acquaint my colleagues that my sentiments on the plan proposed for rendering this Settlement a great Mart for Tin remains unaltered and in full force. To accomplish this important object, which may indeed be ultimately the means of inducing the H. C. China direct ships to touch at this Port, I am well aware there are many difficulties yet to be surmounted, I shall have no objection to grapple with these, and if the Board (the Penang Council) still concurs with me on the public utility of the measure. I shall use every exertion to prosecute the same with increased vigour and efficiency."⁵⁸

Pangkor in the South and Junk Ceylon in the North were to be two depots feeding the entire Malayan and much of the Siamese tin production into the warehouses of Penang, where it would attract all the ships which had previously bye-passed the Island on their way to China, and much of the shipping of other nations. With this in mind Bannerman began to consider the advantage of a general lowering of the duties levied at Penang on foreign ships.⁵⁹

Implementation of this scheme would involve a clash with Siamese interests at Junk Ceylon and in the Peninsula, with Dutch interest in Selangor, Perak and Pangkor, and with the Court of Directors, who were averse to fresh acquisitions of territory and to interference in the affairs of the Malay States. It is not therefore surprising that Bannerman's successor was glad to represent the aim of the Government's tin trade as confined to the original idea of a "caretaker", and to declare that task no longer necessary. He relinquished to the Supreme Government the problem of the obstructions to trade arising from Dutch and Siamese policy. The settlement of Singapore, if maintained, would prevent a Dutch monopoly system being set up from Malacca. To go further with the tin scheme would only further enrage the Dutch, already stirred up by the foundation of Singapore, and begin an exchange with the Siamese which would quickly take him beyond his depth and lead him into disfavour with the Supreme Government.

The fate of the Penang tin scheme was in the event dependent on political decisions taken in Europe, and its failure is a commentary on the peculiar relations of Eastern Commerce and European politics. It needed the character of Raffles, willing to commit himself and the Company in the face of British policy towards the Dutch, to make decisions in London wait upon events in the East.

Notes

1. J. E. Hullu, *De Engelschen op Poeloe Pinang en der Tinaandel der Nederlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie in 1788*. *Bijdragen Taal-Land-en Volkenkunde van N.I.* deel 77, 605-14.
2. J. Anderson, *Observations on the Restoration of Banca & Malacca to the Dutch, as affecting the Tin Trade and General Commerce of Penang ... Prince of Wales Island, 1824*, p. 5.
3. T. Braddell, *Statistics of the British Possessions in the Straits of Malacca, Penang 1861*. Appendix Table No. 8.
4. For the purpose of comparison with Braddell's figures those given by Anderson for tin have been converted from Spanish Dollars to Sterling using the rates current in 1815 and 1816, Spanish \$1 bringing 5.55

GLIMPSES OF PENANG'S PAST

and 5.95 shillings when converted via Rupees, as accounts from Penang were. At the same time bills in Spanish Dollars from the Canton Supercargoes were negotiated by the Company in London at 5/3d. and 5/4d. per Dollar. (Letters to Penang from London, C1, 1-8).

5. Anderson, *op. cit.* pp. 10-11.
6. Governor to Governor-General, Bengal, Sept. 1814, D5, 4-11.
7. Since the Rulers of the Malay States are in most cases styled "Raja" or "Rajah" in the Ms records of the East India Company at Penang, on which this paper is mainly based, I have referred to them throughout under that nomenclature.
8. Governor to Governor-General, Bengal, 26 June 1818, D6, 104.
9. From Raja of Selangor to Penang, 22nd August 1818, F1, 69-76. Maxwell & Gibson, *Treaties and Engagements Affecting the Malay States*, 20-21.
10. Selangor to Penang, 22nd August 1818, F1, 68.
11. Kedah to Penang, 31st August 1818, F1, 80.
12. Maxwell & Gibson, *Treaties and Engagements*, 115-116.
13. Governor to Governor-Gen., Bengal, 19th Sept, 1818, D6, 123-132.
14. Anderson, *op. cit.* 21-22.
15. Penghulu of Kroh to Penang, 1st August 1818, F1, 81-82. The 'bahar' ('bhar')—a measure differing slightly from state to state but roughly equivalent to 3 piculs or 400 lbs.
16. Anderson, *op. cit.* 24-30. Penang to Court of Directors, 1st July 1819, B5, 137.
17. It is difficult to understand how the Committee can have accepted these estimates so uncritically. Anderson, who was a member of the Committee, gives elsewhere the value of the tin exported from Penang in these years (See above, p. 5). It ranged from about \$330,000 to \$250,000 p.a. A negligible quantity of tin was produced in the Island itself, so that these must have represented the value of imports upon re-export. Yet 3,000 bhar p.a. gives values of between \$80 and \$110 per bhar, which is absurdly high. Anderson thought himself lucky in 1819 to sell tin at \$54 per bhar. Either tin imports have been underestimated by the Committee, and the resulting discrepancy not noticed, or Anderson has published as export figures for tin what are in fact those of imports and exports combined.
18. Letters & Orders in Council, Penang, 19th September 1818, H2, 51.
19. Raja of Kedah to Penang, 12th October 1818, F2, 113-124. Raja of Perak to Penang, 8th November, F1, 139-40.
20. Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 33.
21. Penang Consultations, 17th December 1818 (A14, 34-8) and 25th January 1819 (A14, 84-92).
22. See above, p. 12.
23. Penghulu of Kroh to Penang, 28th Sept. 1818, F1, 108-113.
24. Same to same, 1st December 1818, F1, 140.
25. Letters & Orders in Council; to Che Seong & Che Toah, 31st Oct, 1818, H2, 85.
26. Penang to Kedah, 21st October 1818, G1, 45-54. "The British Government cannot wish to injure this Chinaman, and is therefore ready to pay him any consistent duty at Qualla Muida, but they cannot allow their own subjects to possess or exercise a right so prejudicial to their own interests and so inconsistent with that reciprocity which ought always to govern the relations of amity subsisting between the two states as the power of imposing arbitrary duties at Qualla Mooda and of excluding by this means trade and intercourse between the India Company and Patani, and other friendly states in the interior. My second object therefore is to request my friend will fix the rate of duties to be levied in his territories at Qualla Mooda in conformity with justice, reason and the custom of nations; and if he has been led to transfer to the Chinaman the right before mentioned ... I request my friend will make some amicable arrangement by persuading the Chinaman to compromise so extraordinary and inconsistent a power for some pecuniary consideration in which this government will be most ready to afford any reasonable assistance."
27. Anderson, *op. cit.* pp. 24-30.
28. Governor to Penghulu of Kroh, 15th September 1818, G1, 37-39. Even today the portage at Pantai Perai to the Korok does not appear on the map as more than 1/4 mile.
29. Kedah to Penang, 12th October, 1818, F1, 113-124.
30. For Bannerman's letters to Kedah on this subject see Penang Letters to Native Rulers, G1, 45-54, 54-65. For the Raja's letters in reply Penang Letters from Native Rulers, F1, 128-153.
31. Raja of Kedah to Penang, 20th July 1819, F2, 152-5. Same to same, 27th October 1819, F3, 19-22.
32. Letters & Orders in Council, H2, 241 & 258.

GLIMPSES OF PENANG'S PAST

33. Penang to the Penghulu of Kroh, 26th December 1818, G1, 72-5.
34. Anderson, *op cit.* pp. 33-37.
35. The first Dutch fort on Pangkor (a wooden structure) dated from 1670. The garrison was overrun and massacred in 1690 and was not replaced, but a stone pillar erected and renovated periodically to mark Dutch sovereignty. The fort was ordered to be rebuilt in 1745, but at the end 1748 the garrison was removed to a factory up the Perak River "because of the insalubrious climate of Pulo Dinding." cf. Winstedt, *History of Perak*.
36. Penang Consultations, 17th December 1818, A14, 34-8.
37. Penang Consultations, 25 January 1819, A14, 84-92.
38. Penang to Governor-General, Fort William, 22nd January 1819, D6, 160-1.
39. See below, p. 34-37.
40. Rajah of Selangor to Penang, 7th March 1819, F1, 169-172. Penang to Selangor, 2nd April 1819, G1, 77-79.
41. Raja of Selangor to Penang, 1st May 1818, F2, 130-135.
42. Selangor to Penang, 15th May 1819, F2, 124-129.
43. Contracten Malacca, bundel Buitenland No. 35C, 91-115, in the Landsarchief, Batavia. I have to thank the Landsarchivaris, Prof. Dr. W. Ph. Coolhaas, who has been kind enough to supply me with a copy.
44. Raja of Selangor to Penang, 15th May 1819, F2 124-127.
45. Penang Consultations, 27th May 1818, A14, 188-193.
46. For Cracraft's instructions, Penang Letters & Orders in Council, H2, 306-309.
47. Penang Letters & Orders in Council, 4th June 1819, H3.
48. This treaty was not however, subsequently ratified at Batavia, and Selangor became again independent (Letter dated 23rd December 1819 from Governor Thyssen to Raja of Selangor, A18, 340) Mills, *British Malaya 1824-67*, P. 77.
49. Penang, Letters to London, 6th Jan. 1820, B5, 178.
50. Illegible in Ms. Probably "Qualla Kreaan".
51. Raja of Kedah to Penang, 20th July 1819, F2, 155-159.
52. Raja Muda & Bindahara of Perak to Penang, 22nd August 1819, F3, 2-4.
53. Anderson, *On the Restoration of Banca and Malacca to the Dutch, as affecting the Tin Trade and General Commerce of Penang. 1824. Introduction.*
54. Penang Consultations, 27th May 1819, A14, 188-193. Penang to the Court of Directors, 1st July 1820, B5, 159-165.
55. Penang to Governor-General, 5th November 1819, D6, 252.
56. Orders and Letter in Council, September & October 1818, H3, 152-4, 170-2. Penang to London, 6th January 1820, B5, 249-51.
57. Governor to Bengal, 26th June 1818, D6, 104.
58. Minute by Bannerman in Penang Consultations, 17th December 1818, A14, 34-38.
59. Minute recorded 16th July 1819, A14, 283-329.

CHINESE-MALAY SOCIO-ECONOMIC NETWORKS IN THE PENANG-KEDAH-NORTH SUMATRA TRIANGLE 1880-1909: A CASE-STUDY OF THE ENTREPRENEUR LIM LENG CHEAK¹

by WU XIAO AN

Originally published in *JMBRAS*, Vol. 70 Pt 2 (No. 273), December 1997.

Introduction

In the decades after the Second War a new generation of scholars has been trying to establish the integrity of southeast asian studies. As far as Malaysian studies are concerned, these efforts are reflected in the fact that they have been trying to establish a cohesive, integrated, and domestic Malaysian history as opposed to colonial history. But, considering the heterogeneity and fragmentation both of southeast Asia in general and of Malaysia in particular, only after sufficient local case and regional studies are made can these synthesizing efforts really come true. As Prof. Wolters has argued, "Studies of Southeast Asian history must always take into account how the world was seen from a specific place."² For historical reasons, in British Malaya, there was no central administration or unitary national economic centre during the colonial period. In fact, many Malay states operated semi-independently within the region, rather than under a single central administration and economic system, although all were influenced by common wider global forces. For example, Riau-Singapore-Johor was one geo-economic region; Atjeh-Penang-Kedah and surrounding states, Java and neighboring areas, Celebes (Makassar) and its neighboring areas were other geo-economic zones. At present, such groupings are re-emerging as ASEAN "Growth Triangles" and are becoming centres for ASEAN regional economic cooperation. Reassessments of Malaysian history require recognition of the roles and identities of these wider zones and regions.

Malaysian studies have recognized the importance of local history, first

shifting the emphasis from colonial relations to indigenous society and from political history to socio-economic history. The study of local history has opened new areas for further advances for Malaysian historiography. Now, it is time to combine both local and regional perspectives, placing our local research within these geo-economic and geo-political regions. It is obvious that these political boundaries meant little to many Chinese, while differentiation within their community and their complex links with local societies changed over time. How did the Chinese actually function in Malaysia and in the Southeast Asian region? Apart from J. Cushman's pioneering work linking southern Thailand and Penang,³ little has been done. Following the methodology of Cushman, this study will discuss the interactions between a Chinese family business network and its links with the British and the local Malay State of Kedah. The paper falls into four parts: I Lim Leng Cheak's family and its regional networks; II The political and economic alliance between a Chinese family and Kedah state 1890–1893; III The British and Chinese-Kedah business linkage 1880s–1909: The role of the British Consul; and IV Conclusion.

I. The Lim Leng Cheak Family and Its Regional Business Networks

In the Malay Archipelago, each surrounding region functioned around its trading entrepot.⁴ After the establishment of the British trading settlement in Penang in 1786, Penang started to develop into an important entrepot for the regional trade. The British and Dutch concluded their political arrangements for the division of "Spheres of Influence" in the Archipelago. The Treaty of London (1824) and the Treaty of Sumatra (1871) defined the interests of Britain and the Netherlands, while Burney's Treaty (1826) and the Treaty with Siam (1869) redefined the political map of the northern Malay states and southern Siam. However, under the British policy of free trade, the northern Sumatra area, the Siamese Malay states and southern Siam were integrated into the orbit of Penang's economic system, thus forming an integral economic region. This took place within the sphere of British politi-

cal protection and the free mobility of Chinese capital and labour. Such was the background to the formation of the Penang-Sumatra and Penang-Kedah business networks of the Lim Leng Cheak family.

Lim Leng Cheak was one of the most important pioneering Chinese who had extensive business concerns in Kedah. He was not an immigrant from China but a Baba Chinese, the son of Lim It Kim (also called Lim It Xiang), one of the earliest Chinese to come to Penang. His ancestral home town is the coastal village of Lindong, which used to be under Haizhen county, Zhangzhou prefecture. It is near Xiamen island, now administered under the Xiamen (Amoy) city administration in Fujian Province. According to Chinese historical records, it was from this county that the earliest Chinese emigrants left for Southeast Asia.⁵ According to Wright, Lim Leng Cheak was born in Penang in humble circumstances in 1850.⁶ But there is another different legend concerning his family background. It is said that Lim Leng Cheak's father made a fortune quite early. His mother came from a Thai noble family, being a daughter of a Thai local Chieftain. Lim It Kim came to Penang with his brothers, Qing Cai, Qing Qiu, Qing Xun and Qing Zhu. Their father's name was Lim Ming Hou. Yet strangely Lim It Kim did not have the same character "Qing" as his other four brothers. Although it is a common practice to name children in traditional Chinese society in order to show their identity of origin, it is believed that in Lim It Kim's case he was adopted. However if Lim It Kim had made an early fortune, why were his deceased children Lim Hui Cheak (died in 1858) and Lim Sheng Cheak (died in 1860) buried in the Hokkien communal cemetery, as were their uncles and cousins, instead of at the Lim Family Cemetery at Pepper garden in Penang? Lim It Kim died in 1873, but was buried at the Lim Family Cemetery. Local historian Teoh Shiaw Kuan's explanation is that it was due to their mixed Sino-Thai ancestry. Teoh argues that since Lim It Kim's wife was from a noble family, he could not have married her if he were not rich.⁷ My research also confirms his view that Lim Leng Cheak's father had made a fortune. This is reflected in his two donations. In 1856, Lim It Kim donated \$12 to Pulau Tikus Hokkien Cemetery. In early 1863, he also contributed \$10 to the restoration of Guang Fu Temple.⁸ At that time, the donations were substantial. So, we may infer that Lim Leng Cheak came from a wealthy family. It does not however exclude

the possibility that this family legend was created after he had become a wealthy Chinese towkay.

The business network of Lim Leng Cheak initially extended to North Sumatra. At first Lim Leng Cheak was a clerk in a mercantile office in Penang. A few years later he commenced business by opening a general store. By careful management he was able to save a little capital and went to northern Sumatra, where he entered into a partnership with another Chinese merchant. They were engaged in a profitable pepper trade between Sumatra and Penang. Later the partnership managed to run a fleet of steam ships between the same ports. In 1879, he took over the entire concern when his partner retired from the business. At this time, Lim Leng Cheak developed a new role as an important business lobbyist. In late 1879, a group of British and Chinese merchants, who were interested in the trade between Penang and Sumatra, joined together to complain against the Netherlands India Government. They protested that privileges had been conceded to Dutch vessels and their cargoes in Acheen, which were not enjoyed by the British ships, such as those owned by Messrs Leng Cheak & Co. They demanded equal rights and advantages with the Netherlands subjects. It was proposed by V. Krieger, seconded by Lim Leng Cheak that the minutes of evidence be printed for circulation together with the report.⁹

The rice trade occupied an important position within the Southeast Asian states. From the regional perspective, there was a highly integrated market in Asia. Siam, Burma and Indo-China were the three main supply centres. The Malay peninsula was one of the biggest rice-importing markets of the world. Rice was re-exported from Singapore to the Dutch East Indies, from Hongkong to Japan and the Philippines, as well as to mainland China. On the national level, Singapore, Penang and Kuala Lumpur were the three distribution centres. Rice was imported from outside and redistributed to their respective neighbouring states. For Penang, the rice suppliers were mainly from Burma and the Malay state of Kedah. From Penang rice was re-exported to North Sumatra and other Federated Malay States. For the regional rice trade, Lim Leng Cheak's case provides an excellent example of networking involving Penang, Sumatra and the other surrounding states. The movements of Lim Leng Cheak's steamers *Cornelia* and *Eleanor* in 1879

illustrate the trade patterns he conducted in Acheen. The networks penetrated deeply into local society:

...The British steamer *Cornelia* sailed for Olehleh on 8th August 1879- to obtain pass for 9 or 10 different open ports on the North and East Coast of Acheen for which she had cargo of 3000 bags Rice, some Piece Goods and 25 Buffaloes. There were passengers on board 44 Achinese &c. Arrived at Olehleh 9.30 p.m., 10th August. Next morning on delivery of ships papers and request for Pass for Junkaboya, Pedir, Ayer Laboe, Somalangan, Pasangan, Klampang Dua, Telluk Samoi, Kertie and Edie. The Harbour Master declared these ports under blockade and that no pass could be issued.... Captain Reid then called upon the Governor but was again referred to the Harbour Master. By the Harbour Master's attendants on 12th August after various effort to meet him, the Captain and Supercargo were ordered away. On that day the passengers were all landed for inspection...¹⁰

In fact, rice was so scarce and dear on the coast of Sumatra that Lim Leng Cheak could have made a profit of \$10,000 with 3,000 bags of rice on one trip. According to his own statement, on the 17 October 1879, Lim Leng Cheak's steamer, the *Cornelia* cleared from Singkel (a Dutch Port on the West Coast of Sumatra), bound for Troomon, Tompat, Tuan, Soosoo, Rigas, Analaboo and Penang, with over 3,000 bags of rice on board. Owing to the Dutch blockade again, the steamer was ordered to leave Analaboo at once and came back to Penang on the 23 October. It was estimated that the actual loss incurred on this voyage was over \$3,000 and the estimated profit that he would have made on rice was \$10,000.¹¹ This was confirmed by the report of his second steamer *Eleanor*, the British barque:

The *Eleanor* cleared from Penang on 9th November for that port [Analaboe] taking 2,000 bags Rice, some Treasure and piece goods and got round to Kluang when she was obliged to put back to Olehleh through stress of weather. The Harbour Master there declared Anal-

above to be blockaded and refused permission to the vessel to proceed to the West Coast... The rice was sold at Olehleh at an estimated loss with expenses incurred of \$5,000 and the vessel was obliged to return in Ballast.¹² (See Table 1)

Table 1. Items of Cargo by the bark Eleanor (280 tons) on 9 November 1879

<u>Vessel's Name</u>		<u>Statements of Goods</u>
Eleanor	1,950	Bags White Rice
	6	Corge Black Cloth
	10	" Silk Sarongs
	8 1/3	" Long Ghee Cloth
	20	" White Cambrics
	100	In No. Earthenware Jars
	2	Casks Fish roe
	65	Dozen Crockeryware
	3	Bags Curry Stuff
	1	Case Gold Thread
	100	Boxes Soap
	2	Cases Matches
Ship's store	1	" Snuff Boxes
2 Guns	20	Corges Sarongs
8 Muskets	5	Cases Sundries
6 Spears		Treasurer \$8,000
2 Swords	6	Baskets A. Water
1 Keg Gunpowder		
200 shots		

From his political activities in Penang and the region, it would appear that Lim Leng Cheak was an important business lobbyist, rather than a political activist. An interesting example was his role during the elections of the Municipal Commissioner. In December 1892, Koh Seang Tat, a great grandson of Kapitan Koh Lay Huan who presented a fishing net to F. Light, was nominated for the Municipal Board. He was proposed by Lim Leng Cheak. In the last Municipal Commissioner elections, it was the same Lim Leng Cheak who nominated Huttenbach as a candidate and helped him to win the election.¹³ Huttenbach was a senior partner of Huttenbach Bros. & Co. and Huttenbach, Liebert & Co., Penang. His firm was the agent for the British India Steam Navigation Company Limited and the Netherlands India Mail Company called the Koninklijke Paketvaart Maatschappij. He

played a very important role in the Chamber of Commerce Penang and later was selected as a Legislative Councillor.¹⁴ *The Penang Gazette & Straits Chronicle* commented: "Mr. Huttenbach polled 409 votes, when he was proposed by Mr. Lim Leng Cheak, and now that the latter proposes Mr. Tat it becomes his duty to help him with all the energy and tact that he displayed in working for Mr. Huttenbach".¹⁵ On 10th January, the leading electors of all nationalities came forward to give Mr. Koh their hearty support. The bankers and leading European merchants voted, as well as all the leading Muslims and Chinese.¹⁶

In August 1893, the currency question caused dissension in the Straits Settlements. Lim Leng Cheak was nominated to Singapore to give evidence on behalf of the Penang Chinese planters and producers. That Lim Leng Cheak was an influential man can also be surmised from his position at the Penang horse races. The patrons of the Penang races were the most important figures, such as the Officer Administering the Government, the Sultan of Kedah, the Sultan of Johor, the Sultan of Deli, the Resident General, F.M.S., the Resident Councillor, etc. The Committee and Stewards consisted mostly of leading Europeans. Among the Stewards were only two Chinese. One was Khoo Guat Cheng, the other was Lim Leng Cheak. Thus we can see that Lim Leng Cheak maintained a wide social business network.

If the starting point in Lim Leng Cheak's business career was as a minor clerk in a small general store, the business in northern Sumatra set a solid foundation for his future involvement and success in Kedah. From the 1880s, Lim Leng Cheak realigned his business concerns from north Sumatra to Kedah, where he began to diversify his investments into tapioca planting and rice milling. In Kedah, Lim Leng Cheak was on very cordial terms with the Sultan Abdul Hamid Halim Shah. At the invitation of the Sultan, he opened up a new enterprise, a tapioca estate in the Kulim district. The tapioca estate in Kulim developed into an estate with 14,000 relongs and 1,000 male employees. In the late 19th century and the early 20th century, such an estate was rare. The Sultan also granted him twenty years' monopoly in 1888 as an inducement when he established a rice mill in Alor Star. Lim Leng Cheak had opened the first rice mill in Penang, in partnership with Phuah Hin Leong, Chua Yu Kay, Cheah Joo Jin and Cheah

Ewe Ghee. In 1893, he started another rice mill in Penang. In 1899, he opened a sugar mill at Alor Star. In addition, Lim Leng Cheak had plantations of coffee and coconuts in Kulim, Kedah. He was lessee of the Opium, Spirit and Padi Farm and a director of the Singapore Opium and Spirit Farm.

Lim Leng Cheak's tapioca plantation in Kulim was one of the largest in the region. According to his own statements in the examination of labour conditions, he had 2,000 acres under tapioca cultivation at Kulim in 1891, later developed into 14,000 relongs. He employed Tamils, Chinese, Javanese and Patani Malays, about 1,000 altogether, all free men.¹⁷ About half of the coolies were Tamils. The second largest group were Chinese, including 200 Teochius, 20–30 Hailams and 20–30 Hokkiens. He said the Teochius were the best coolies. The reason for keeping coolies of different racial groups was so that they could check on each other. As Lim Leng Cheak said: "I must keep several nationalities on my estates, so that if some strike I can fall back on the others".¹⁸ Furthermore, he placed the Javanese coolies under a Javanese and a Chinese mandor, for "the Javanese are rather lazy and irregular in their work...¹⁹ A Javanese Mandor alone would not make them work". Owing to large scale exploitation of the Malay Peninsula caused by the British Forward Movement after the 1870s, tapioca planting was a profitable business in the late 19th century and early 20th century. Amongst the land applications to the Kedah State Council in the period, many were for tapioca planting, even in the rubber boom period. However Lim Leng Cheak thought "The labour supply [was] too small".²⁰ Like other plantations in Kedah, this Kulim plantation was a typical pre-capitalist and labour intensive enterprise.

Based on Penang, Lim Leng Cheak not only extended his business to north Sumatra and Kedah, but also attempted to penetrate into Perak. In his inspection report of the Krian District, E.W. Birch, the Secretary to the Perak Government, wrote:

I feel very strongly that the Perak Government would do well to get in a capitalist to start a good mill, and to pay the people a fair price for their padi. One, Leng Chiak a very business-like Chinaman in Penang, did enter into negotiations with the Perak

Government last year, but nothing came of it. He has a rice-mill in Kedah, and is not unlikely to come to Krian, if encouragement is given to him. At this moment he will not be able to do so, but he promised me in Penang, when I sent for him to see whether he could not approach the Government early next year. He wants protection, and if he will give good prices for the grain, I think it would be well to give him the inducement he asks for.²¹

We do not know why Lim Leng Cheak did not expand to Perak to establish his rice milling empire. However, his ambition was achieved by his son Lim Eow Thoon, who successfully set up a Rice Combine in 1913. But it was certain that the Rice Combine was different from Lim Leng Cheak's original dream. If Lim Leng Cheak had got the same monopoly from the Perak Government, his family would have controlled the whole rice milling and supply industry of northern Malaya. It is worth noting that Birch, as Secretary to the Perak Government, disclosed in his report how Lim Leng Cheak had obtained a monopoly from the Sultan of Kedah. It is clear that the Sultan of Kedah wanted a capitalist to invest in the rice milling industry, while the capitalist wanted the political protection and economic privileges. So, in 1888, the Sultan granted Lim Leng Cheak 20 years' monopoly in order to induce him to erect a rice mill, which was built in 1889. This was also confirmed by a press report.²²

In Southeast Asia, for the Chinese capitalists, there were neither state boundaries nor business boundaries. This phenomenon not only explains the complex and overlapping nature of different polities under colonialism, but also suggests that both speculation and risks were the characteristics of an immigrant Chinese community. Most of the Chinese companies were independent units. Each unit was an economic empire. This phenomenon was driven by the stimulus of greater economic exploitation of British Malaya. It also reveals that there was little economic cooperation among the Chinese companies. This lack of functional division of labour not only indicated the uncontrollable Chinese economic speculation encouraged by the Colonial Government, but also reflected the fact that most Chinese companies were traditional family-oriented entities. Kinship, clanship, and friendship were

in fact the main means of collecting and accumulating capital. Furthermore, there was also a need to cope with competition and to reduce risk.

Lim Leng Cheak's business bases extended from Penang to Sumatra, Kedah, and even to Singapore. Business involved shipping, trading, farming, milling and planting. Trade covered pepper, rice and sugar milling, opium and spirit farms and coffee, coconut and tapioca plantations. According to his own account in 1892, he had three steamers: *Cornelia*, *The Wash* and *The Sportsman*. Two of them carried over 400 tons and the other about 100 tons. They went to Tongkak, Rangoon, Edge and the east coast of Sumatra. They took provisions, piece goods, coconuts and sundry goods to Rangoon, and rice and piece goods to Sumatra.²³ In the local market, they carried their produce in their own fleet – the Kedah line of passenger and cargo boats. They imported large quantities of padi and prepared both white and boiled rice in their mills. These products were supplied to the estates in Kedah, Province Wellesley, and the Federated Malay States. They were also exported to Ceylon, India and Mauritius. Sugar they sold locally, and tapioca they sent to London, Le Havre, Nantes and many other European ports.²⁴

Lim Leng Cheak died on February 16th, 1901, at the age of 51. He left an extensive and varied business empire of the first importance. His families consisted of fifteen children, among whom Lim Eow Hong, and Lim Eow Thoon were the most famous. In the mid-1920s, his sons many times met in court over property disputes. His wife was Tan Say Seang, a very generous Chinese lady who was ranked the third most generous Hokkien donor in Penang during 1850–1910. Her total donations amounted to \$8512, the first was \$8480 in the same period.²⁵ There is a classic story about her kindness. It was said that she helped a poor lady by selling her own hair decorations in order to save that lady's husband from imprisonment.²⁶

Through kinship ties the Lim Leng Cheak family business network extended within the main economic and political districts in Kedah. Business in Kedah was thus the main base for the family concerns. This is best illustrated in the life of his wife, Tan Say Seang. Tan Say Seang “was something of a planter and miner in her younger days, and spent a good deal

of time on her estates and mines in Kedah".²⁷ This economic empire was maintained by sons Lim Eow Hong, Lim Eow Thoon and his son-in-law Goh Boon Kheng. The expansion and decline of the family empire after the death of the founding father will be dealt with later in another paper.

II. The Political and Economic Alliance Between Chinese Families and the Malay State of Kedah 1890–1893

In the late 19th century, particularly after the bad experience of the Siamese invasion (1821–1842), Kedah's strategy was mainly to play off the British against Siam, in order to secure and maintain its independence. Thus Kedah maintained a close commercial and political relationship with the British in Penang, being always ready to please the British and follow their instructions. It also encouraged businessmen from Penang to invest in Kedah by offering privileged conditions. Chinese capitalists in Penang were important for maintaining the stability of the state by way of their investments in Kedah. It was Penang Chinese businessmen who always petitioned and pressed the colonial authorities to watch over them and intervene on their behalf during unstable periods in Kedah. They were an important dynamic component for the development of the state economy. As a peripheral state, Kedah needed Penang Chinese capital to open up. Thus Penang Chinese capital was encouraged and protected by the Kedah government. This was particularly reflected in the psychology of some prominent Chinese towkays. For example, when two wealthy Penang Chinese, Lim Eow Hong and Lim Thean Kee, applied for loans (\$400,000 and \$200,000 respectively) to the State Council, they claimed to be benefactors of the country and asked for favourable consideration on that ground. They argued that they had lived in Kedah for many years, contributing very considerably to opening up the country in the earlier days.²⁸ Here we see influential businessmen originating from British-ruled Penang who stood up for the interests of Kedah state. The following case study provides a good example of the combination of the political and economic interests between a Malay state and a Chinese family.

1. The Sultan of Kedah and the Penang Capitalist Lim Leng Cheak

The marriage between state and capital is called “bureaucratic-capitalism”. In the nexus between business elite and state/society and its broader significance, the state has been an important factor, as each greatly influence the other. The newly emerging current of “post-statist” literature has reconstructed the linkage between state, business elite and the underlying dynamics of Southeast Asian development.²⁹ In Lim Leng Cheak’s case, he was not a simple revenue farmer for Kedah. More importantly, he was a big capitalist who established the first rice mill in Kedah and developed large agricultural estates in Kulim. As Khoo Khay Jin points out, “Leng Cheak, indeed, was so close to the Sultan that he could be considered an integral part of the state machinery”.³⁰ Lim Leng Cheak also took part in Kedah state socio-political activities. He arranged for the Sultan’s activities, maintained his houses and steamers in Penang; he accompanied the Siamese official missions from Bangkok; he acted as the middleman between the Sultan, his royal family and the chetties and European financiers in Penang; he took care of most of the Sultan’s bills. In turn he was granted by the Sultan the monopoly of rice-milling in the whole of Kedah for twenty years. He obtained large land grants free of land rents. With the Sultan’s strong support, he had secured many Siamese loans. By acting as the state agent and manager both for Kedah’s economic administration and for the Sultan’s socio-economic and political affairs, Lim Leng Cheak consolidated and expanded his family empire.

In turn, also, the Sultan was not simply a close private friend of Lim Leng Cheak. It was obvious that the Sultan of Kedah consciously used his energy and management expertise as an influential capitalist to develop his country. The economic and political interests of Kedah were the main consideration for this alliance between the Sultan and Lim Leng Cheak. If we look into the political and economic situation in Kedah in the 1880s, it is not difficult to see why. Politically, since the Forward Movement beginning in 1875, following the Straits Settlements, the Federated Malay States were placed under the British colonial rule. This suggests not only that the British position in Malaya was much stronger and safeguarded, but also that the Siamese Malay states were significant to its strategic interests in the region.

The Sultan's power had not yet been consolidated after he came to the throne in 1882. Even as late as 1888, the Sultan wrote a very long letter to Bangkok, complaining that Tunku Dziauddin had conspired against him.³¹ The Sultan of course could not forget the bitter experience of the Siamese invasion of Kedah (1821-1842) and subsequent long-term instability.³² Economically, the country was waiting to be opened up. The structure and distribution of business activities were out of balance. The limited business was confined to a few established places. In 1889, the whole state revenue was only \$700,000, most of which came from the revenue farms. Under these circumstances, in order to develop the state and increase the state revenue, the Sultan worked to promote Lim Leng Cheak's business. Often, the Sultan managed to secure loans from Bangkok for Lim Leng Cheak. The Sultan himself stood surety for the loans.³³ Lim Leng Cheak was once in difficulties and had been asked to pay up by the bank. In his letter to Bangkok for a loan of \$50,000 for Lim Leng Cheak, the Sultan said Lim Leng Cheak "was doing a business in a big way in Kedah". He was "a good man". The Sultan particularly mentioned that Lim Leng Cheak's petition to him was endorsed by the British Resident Counsellor. The Sultan warned that Lim Leng Cheak's business in Kedah might come to a halt, if his loan requirements were not entertained.³⁴ To help Lim's business in Kedah, the Sultan also secured a large Siamese loan of \$100,000 for the development of Kedah. The Sultan even offered to sign a letter of debt joining his name together with that of Lim Leng Cheak. "To Towkay Lim Leng Cheak, whatever is suitable I can give because he has done a lot of charity in Negeri Cheraiburi (i.e. Kedah)".³⁵ The interests of state and family here found a common rallying point.

Lim Leng Cheak performed a useful role for Kedah in the debate over the maladministration of the state in 1890. In 1887, some Penang businessmen had complained of Kedah's restrictive policy over Indian Immigration, charging the Kedah Government with maladministration.³⁶ In 1890, there were more statements regarding the affairs of Kedah in *The Straits Independent*. It was alleged that the Malay States under Siamese protection were maladministered. Allegations were made that British subjects received unfair treatment from the Kedah authorities, such as being enticed there and sold into slavery and "the Siamese governors [were] eating up the country". The effects of these

reports were very serious, for they not only created political problems with the British, but also influenced the flow of foreign investment into Kedah. It is interesting that Lim, who was a British subject and businessman in Penang, came forward to dispute these statements. In a letter to the editor in January 1890, he described what *The Straits Independent* had reported as “a lot of ridiculous nonsense”. He said there was “no foundation” whatever for most of statements by them.³⁷ Lim disputed the alleged statements by presenting following points: first, he used his personal business experience to argue that the Kedah Government treated British subjects very well. He said:

I have considerable business transactions in Kedah for many years now, and all that I can say is that I, and those employed by me, have received FAIR PLAY throughout. I have thousands of acres of land under tapioca, pepper and coffee cultivation in Kedah; and owing to the kind encouragement... from the Rajah and others, I last year put up a large rice mill at Alor Star, ...I have now over \$200,000 invested in Kedah.³⁸

Secondly, he considered “that British subjects in Kedah have always had far more consideration shewn them than the ryots of the country”. He said people should not worry about “investing in lands and mines in Kedah specially”. And he believed that “in a few years time, Kedah, under its present administration, will make a tremendous stride forward, and probably, may yet compete with some of the native states under the British protection”. Lastly, as for the Siamese governors or commissioners “eating up the country”, Lim said “that is all bosh. I know this fact, that a few years ago, when H.R.H. Prince Devawongse, ... passed through Kedah on his way to Sengorah he insisted on the acting Rajah, Tunku Yousuff, accepting payment for the expenses ... in connection with his visit to Kedah”. In conclusion Lim remarked, “This does not look like eating up the country – does it?”.³⁹

After Lim's letter was published in *The Pinang Gazette & Straits Chronicle*, *The Straits Independent* took issue with his arguments. After devoting several columns of its issues to attacking Lim Leng Cheak for his temerity, it took another shot at him in its issue in a footnote, which caused dissen-

sion between *The Pinang Gazette & Straits Chronicle* and *The Straits Independent*.⁴⁰ It should be pointed out that Lim Leng Cheak came forward to protest against *The Straits Independent* not as an ordinary businessman, but as a Malay state political agent. The particular political effect lay in that it came from a Penang Chinese businessman, who was himself a British subject and had substantial investments and experience in Kedah. This shows to what extent a Chinese businessman had been politically incorporated into a traditional Malay state by business linkage.

2. The Kedah Opium Farm Question, 1891–1893

The coincidence of the interests between Kedah state and the Lim Leng Cheak family was clearly reflected in the Kedah opium farm question. This time, it was the Kedah Government and the Sultan who stood by Leng Cheak's family interests.

The 1891–1893 Kedah Opium Farm question caused a long-term public contention between two interested parties, the Penang Opium Farmers and Lim Leng Cheak. Both governments in Kedah and Penang were also deeply involved. Owing to the different opium prices and the geographical proximity of Penang and Kedah, there was much smuggling in the border areas. In order to prevent the increasing friction between the two different sets of farmers in the Straits Settlements and the neighbouring Malay states, it was suggested by the British authorities that the Singapore Opium Farmers should in the meantime tender for the Johore farm, the Malacca Opium Farmers for the Negri Sembilan Farm, and the Penang Opium Farmers for the Perak and Kedah farms. From 1887, the Sultan of Kedah and the British authorities in Penang had held frequent discussions upon the question of placing the Kedah Opium Farm under the control of the Penang Opium Farmers. But the negotiations proceeded slowly. Disagreement occurred over the terms because they were not in Kedah's favour. Sharom Ahmat's assertion that "... after 1887, the Sultan of Kedah and the British authorities in Penang agreed the opium farms in both states should be let out simultaneously to the same revenue farmer or syndicate," is untrue.⁴¹

The tenders for the Kedah Farms for the years 1892-1894, i.e. Kuala Muda, Kulim and Bagan Samak farms, were opened on 15th August, 1891. In the end, the contest was between the Penang Opium Farmers and Lim Leng Cheak. Lim was the revenue holder of several Kedah farms. He had held the Kulim Opium Farm for six years previous to this letting. His tender for the Kulim Opium Farm was the highest. The Sultan of Kedah accepted. The Penang Spirit & Opium Syndicate for 1892-1894 comprised Messrs. Chew Sin Yong, Ng Ah Thye, Khoo Thean Poh, Chan Lye Kum and two others, who were not in Penang. The Penang Opium Farmers were also the holders of the Opium Farms of Kedah proper, Kuala Muda and Bagan Samak, as well as several other smaller farms.⁴² Their tender for the next term of the Penang Farm was \$71,000 a month, an excess of \$4,000 per month, or \$48,000 per annum over the current rental.⁴³ But their tender for the Kedah Opium Farms was lower than those of other parties by \$2,800 per annum. As soon as they knew their bidding was lower than the others, the Penang Farmers wrote to Neubronner, the Consul for the Siamese States, soliciting that "he would, in consultation with the Hon'ble the Resident Councillor, recommend the acceptance of their tender by the Kedah Government in preference to any other".⁴⁴ Two days later after they had written to Neubronner, the Penang Farmers were sent for by Skinner, the Resident Councillor. They discussed their offer made for the Kedah Opium Farms in the presence of Neubronner and Lim Leng Cheak. Skinner stated that as the Penang farmers had obtained the new lease of the Penang Spirit & Opium Farm, he would secure for them the Kedah Opium Farms from the Sultan at the highest offer tendered for them i.e. \$51,000. The Penang Farmers accepted it at once, although it was higher than their tender by \$2,800. A few days later, Neubronner sent for the managing partner of the Penang Farm to come to his office, where he met Wan Mat from Kedah, the Chief Minister. Wan Mat told him that if the Penang Farmers desired to have those Farms in Kedah, they should give Lim Leng Cheak a share in the Penang Opium Farm. But the Penang Farmers refused.⁴⁵ On the 4th September, the Penang Farmers wrote to the Resident Councillor, urging earnestly and as strongly as they possibly could, that the Resident Councillor would endeavour to do his utmost to secure for them the three Kedah Farms of Kuala Muda, Bagan Samak and Kulim at the highest

offer made for them, viz., \$51,000, as suggested by himself. Since then, they had had several interviews with the Resident Councillor on the subject. However, they were unable to obtain a definite reply except that it would be necessary to give Lim Leng Cheak a share in the Penang Farms if they wished to get the Kedah Farms.⁴⁶

The Sultan of Kedah, after receiving no further communications from the Penang Farmers, then agreed Lim Leng Cheak's offer for the Kulim Farm. In the meantime he also gave him the Kuala Muda and Bagan Samak Farms. This was most interesting, because Lim Leng Cheak had not tendered for the other two opium farms. Here, the interests of one Chinese family and a Malay state were tightly bonded together, a situation reflected in the above arrangement. In the usual course, the Sultan received from Leng Cheak a deposit of \$7,000 as earnest money. On 14th September, the Sultan of Kedah, accompanied by the Siamese Consul, had an interview with the Resident Councillor and the parties concerned. The Resident Councillor again requested the Penang Kongsi to give Lim one twenty-sixth share in the Penang Farm. If they did so, would H.H. the Sultan bring pressure to bear upon Lim to admit them to share in his three farms?⁴⁷ The Resident Councillor's suggestion must have been based on the realistic consideration of the same understanding reached between the Sultan of Kedah and Lim. However, the Penang Farmers refused to admit that they had been present at the interview between the Sultan and the Resident Councillor.⁴⁸ Lastly, the Penang Farmers appealed to Trotter, then the acting Resident Councillor, about the end of October, a few days prior to the expiry of the term of their lease. They requested that another effort might also be made to obtain the two Farms of Bagan Samak and Kuala Muda for them (these two farms had been in their hands for the last term). But there was no change.⁴⁹

Two months later after Lim had begun his contract, complaints were made by the Penang Farmers that there was extensive chandu smuggling from Kuala Muda and Bagan Samak into Penang and Province Wellesley. The Penang Farmers again applied to Trotter and he brought the matter to the notice of the Sultan of Kedah. Finally Trotter prevailed upon the Sultan to use his influence with Lim to give up the Bagan Samak and Kuala Muda Farms. The Sultan of Kedah in the end gave in to the pressure of the

Resident Councillor, who was also British Consul to the Siamese Western States. As a result of a long interview on 11th December, 1891, it was arranged that Lim should give them up to the Penang Farm for a consideration of \$18,000, payable in instalments of \$1,500 per month. The Penang Farmers gladly accepted these terms. By this arrangement, it was said that a profit of \$54,000 was made at Lim Leng Cheak's expense.⁵⁰

Because opium revenue made up a large part of the state revenues of both Governments, in the Kedah Opium Farm question, the higher interests of both governments were intimately involved. The Penang Farmers argued that it was to "be regretted that the claims of one individual on private and other grounds should be allowed to interfere with the decision of a public question".⁵¹ They threatened that "If the decision of so important a question between two Governments ... be made to depend upon what one Government may consider necessary to urge, in favour of an individual in whom that power may be interested in private and personal grounds ... both the Governments and the whole community would eventually suffer most seriously", because the Government had to devise other means for introducing fresh taxes and imposts in order to meet the Colony's financial deficit, and the poorer classes would be crushed and ruined.⁵² They maintained that the Sultan of Kedah "has not 'acted perfectly straightforwardly' towards this Government or the Penang Farmers in connection with the disposal of the Kedah Farms and it was not, to say the least of it, right on his part to make over the Bagan Samak and Kuala Muda Farms to Lim Leng Cheak, who had "never tendered for them".⁵³

Lim Leng Cheak for his part argued that they failed to "see the settlement of the question at issue will interest the public much, nor will it affect the amount of taxes the public will have to pay".⁵⁴ On the contrary, he had not only "spent any profits ... in developing the resources of the district:", but also

invested largely from his private means, thus raising the Sultan's revenue from that district alone by 500 per cent". Thus he thought that the Sultan of Kedah was quite right "in renting his Farms to a man who is doing all he possibly can for the advancement of the state of Kedah by investing large sums of money in various districts, at tremendous risk in the beginning; introducing steam machinery for

millingrice, etc., etc.; thus giving employment to thousands of people, many of whom would otherwise have thrown in their lot with bad characters and given our police no end of trouble on the frontier.⁵⁵

How much interest, he enquired, had the Penang Farmers in the state of Kedah except that they expected to earn substantial profits, which were to be spent elsewhere from the profits of the Farms?

3. The Sultan of Kedah and the question of incorporating the Kedah Opium Farm

Upon the British request to incorporate the Kedah Opium Farm into the Penang Farm, the Sultan of Kedah tried to object from the very beginning of the negotiations in 1887. This was not just a question of the personal connection between the Sultan of Kedah and Kedah Chinese revenue farmers. It was notable for the coincidence of the interests between the Malay state and a Chinese family. The Chinese farmers were of course unwilling to surrender their economic monopoly to outsiders. For the Sultan, Kedah would lose a source of revenue by placing the Kedah Opium Farms under the control of the Penang Farmers.

Even before the tender for the 1892–1894 Opium Farm was considered, the Sultan's attitude was clearly reflected in discussions of the tender for the 1889–1891 Kedah Opium Farm. In 1888, Maxwell, the Resident Councillor, wrote to the Sultan asking that he should link the network of opium fanners in Kuala Muda into the Penang & Kedah Syndicate, the Sultan agreed that the opium farm tenders for Penang & Kuala Muda should be opened at the same time.⁵⁶ But the Sultan insisted that: (1) In order to facilitate the control and management, the Kuala Muda Farm could only be held in the names of residents of Kedah; (2) If the tender of the Penang Farmers was lower than the others for the Kuala Muda Farm, so long as the Penang Farmers wanted to get the Kuala Muda Farm at the same time, the Penang Farmers should compensate for the balance. In the meantime, the Sultan pointed out that the Opium Farm incorporation was a serious ques-

tion. As Kedah was under Siamese suzerainty, the Sultan was afraid that any erroneous decision could cause the Siamese dissatisfaction. The Sultan asked the Resident Councillor to find a solution for him in his dilemma. Here, the Sultan passed the buck back to the British.⁵⁷ In September, the tender for the Opium Farm in Kuala Muda 1889–1891 was opened: the highest bid was \$27,400, made by Leko, the representative of Penang Farmer Chew Sin Yong, while Choong Cheng Kean's bid was \$27,200. Choong Cheng Kean was a Kedah resident, and one of the closest friends of the Sultan and the royal family. Leko's tender was higher than Cheng Kean's by \$200. The Sultan instructed the Siamese Consul in Penang to call both parties, Chew Sin Yong and Cheng Kean for settlement. It is interesting to note that the Sultan said he would not give the contract to Cheng Kean until the head of Penang Opium Farm arrived.⁵⁸ On 17 September 1888, the Resident Councillor in Penang wrote to the Sultan, asking him to lease the Kuala Muda Farm to Leko, for he was a representative of Penang Farmer Chew Sin Yong, who held the Penang Farm 1889–1891 and his bid was higher than Cheng Kean. But the Sultan refused, explaining that Leko's tender arrived later, after the deadline at 12:00 noon.⁵⁹

On 25 June 1889, Resident Councillor Kynnersley wrote to the Sultan, asking Kedah to hand over Sungei Daun and Bagan Samak Opium Farms to the head of the Penang Opium Farm. The Sultan replied that he could not do so. The Sultan explained: (1) If the whole of the Kedah Opium Farm was to continue under the lease of the Penang Opium Farm, it would cause more complaints from the Chinese community in Kedah. The Sultan said the Chinese Opium sub-Farmers at Gunung Jerai had once complained to him previously, when he had discussed with Maxwell about the jointly leased Penang & Kedah Opium Farms. (2) He had already leased the Sungai Daun and Bagan Samak Opium Farms to the Kedah Opium Farmer, and he could not change this.⁶⁰ On 3 October 1889, Kynnersley again asked the Sultan to lease the Bagan Samak Opium Farm to the Penang Syndicate. The Sultan refused again. The Sultan told Kynnersley that he had already leased it to Choong Cheng Kean for \$5,500 for a period of two years plus ten days. The lease would not expire until 20 Safar 1309. The Sultan said in fact he never thought Kynnersley would ask him to hand it over to the Penang Farm, as

there had never been any fighting and quarrels in that area.⁶¹ The attitude of the Sultan could be explained by Swettenham's report of November 6, 1889 after his visit to Kedah:

He said he had received a complaint from the Resident Councillor at Penang ... asking him to give his Farm to the Penang Farmer, but he hardly saw how he could do that now, though he was most anxious to meet the Penang authorities as far as possible. He said this was the first he had heard about the Farms, and if he had been communicated with and the position explained to him before the Colony's Farms were let, he would have been glad to make any fair arrangement for simultaneous letting. He seemed, however, a little afraid lest Kedah should suffer by a mutual arrangement which would benefit the Penang Farmers and Penang revenues at his expense.⁶²

Therefore under these circumstances, the Sultan's attitude towards the lease of 1892-1894 Kulim Opium Farm should cause no surprise. The same considerations doubtless carried influence with the Sultan when he decided to grant the lease of the whole of the Kedah Opium Farms to Lim Leng Cheak, even though Lim did not tender for the others. The Sultan insisted that Lim Leng Cheak should have a share in the Penang Farm in return, if the Penang Farmers wanted to take the Kulim Farm. In his letter to the Resident Councillor in September 1891, the Sultan explained that since the Penang Farmers did not wish to accept Lim Leng Cheak's terms, it was not fair for him to ask Lim Leng Cheak to let the Penang Farmers have a share in the Kulim Farm. The Sultan said it would be hard on Lim. Meanwhile, the Sultan arranged for the other Opium Farms in Kedah to be handed over to Lim.⁶³ It is interesting to note that the lease of the whole of the Kedah Opium Farm to Lim came when Lim was encountering great difficulties in raising capital, and had asked the Sultan to write to Bangkok for a loan. Nevertheless, the Sultan even asked the Siamese Consul, in Penang how Lim would feel if the Siamese loan were to be less and interest high.⁶⁴ These political and economic alliances between a Chinese family and the Malay state of Kedah were further strengthened by regional contexts.

4. The Penang Petition in 1893 and Lim Leng Cheak's Kulim Opium Farm

The conflict between Penang Farmers and Lim Leng Cheak over the Kulim Opium Farm did not end until 1893. After the Governor had visited Penang, upon the request of the Penang Farmers, orders were given that the exports to Kulim were to be restricted to 3 chests per month. This action would cause great loss not only to the fanner's profit but also to the state revenue of Kedah. The interests of family and state were again bonded together. The Kulim farmer usually imported one chest for every 800 men of the population (see Table 2). According to the census made by the Sultan of Kedah in Kulim, there were 7,000 adult males in the district. But this was questioned by the Penang Farm. The Sultan took a second census, which proved the first to be correct. But still the restriction on his trade continued. So, the Sultan of Kedah offered to take a third census; and in order to end the matter, the Sultan asked that the District Officer of Bukit Mertajam be sent to see that the census was properly taken. So, nine chests of opium per month might be fairly taken as their consumption.

Later, the conflict between the Penang Farmers and Lim Leng Cheak developed into a political crisis. Reflected in the 1893 Petition Movement, this conflict between two parties, to a certain extent, developed into a conflict

Table 2. The Import of Opium by Kulim Farmer, Lim Leng Cheak 1888-1893 (unit: chest)

Year	Amount	chest/per month
1888	59	5
1889	56	4.7
1890	42	3.5
1891	60	5
1892	61	5
1893	Jan.	5
1893	Feb.	5
1893	Mar.	6
1893	Apr.	5

Source: PGSC, 7 July 1893.

between China-born Chinese traders (represented by the Penang Opium Farmers) and the Straits-born Penang Chinese traders (represented by Lee Phee Yeow, Koh Seang Tat and Lim Leng Cheak, etc.). As mentioned above, it was the Governor Sir C. Clementi Smith who backed the Penang farmers and ordered the trade restriction in Kulim.⁶⁵ In 1893, Smith was supposed to retire. But in the meantime, he forwarded to London three memorials from the Colony to ask that his Governor's term of Office be extended. These were initiated by the Singapore Chinese merchants led by Tan Jiak Kim in the interests of the Opium Farmers.⁶⁶ At the beginning of 1893, Tan Jiak Kim also wrote to Lee Phee Yeow, one of the biggest Chinese capitalists and traders in the Straits, asking him to prepare a similar petition in Penang. But Lee Phee Yeow refused and replied to the effect that as His Excellency had received a promotion, it would not be right to make any effort to retain him here.⁶⁷ The letter was in fact addressed to eight influential Chinese i.e. Cheah Tek Soon, Cheah Chen Eok, Chew Sin Yong, Chan Lye Khum, Kho Bu Snn, Lee Phee Yeow, Koh Seang Tat and Khaw Sim Kim.⁶⁸ So, the Penang Farmers Chew Sin Yong and Chan Lye Khum called a meeting at the Chinese Town Hall to discuss the petition. Later a petition was sent to retain the present Governor, which was backed chiefly by the China-born Chinese traders and the partners of the Opium and Spirit Farms and others interested in them.⁶⁹ At the meeting at the Chinese Town Hall, all eight influential Chinese attended. Five of them signed the petition, the remaining three did not. The five signatories were Government contractors: Cheah Tek Soon and Cheah Chen Eok's names were put first, they were the Singapore Opium Farmers. Chew Sin Yong and Chan Lye Khum were the Penang Opium Farmers. Kho Bu Ann had a share in the Province Wellesley Farm. Therefore it was essentially an Opium and Spirit Farmers' Petition. The number of signatures were 300, but in Penang and Province Wellesley there were more than 100 opium shops.⁷⁰

However Lim Leng Cheak, whose Kulim Farm was injured by the Government's limitation of the import of opium into his district, took a prominent part in setting up a counter petition. Just at this time, the meeting in the Chinese Town Hall and the agitation about Penang grievances took place. Lee Phee Yeow and Koh Seang Tat took up this popular outcry to get this second or counter petition to the first. For this, the *Daily Advertiser* in Singapore,

wrote: "It was well known that such a move was being made (the petition of 3,591), in fact the promoters of the first petition were asked to withdraw it, and threatened with reprisals if they did not. The threat was made by one of the leading Europeans of Penang". And the *Pinang Gazette & Straits Chronicle* was dissatisfied with it.⁷¹ There were more than 3,000 signatures, among them 300 signatures in English. Out of the 54 principal firms of Penang traders in *The Singapore and Straits Directory*, 17 signatures or 31.48% were in the petition. Lee Phee Yeow and Lim Leng Cheak were the only two ship-owners.⁷² Lee Phee Yeow, Koh Seang Tat and Lim Leng Cheak belonged to the same interest group. Lee Phee Yeow was also deeply involved in Kedah affairs. In July 1895, at the invitation of the Sultan of Kedah, a number of Europeans were entertained by the Raja Muda, Wan Mat (the Prime Minister) and others of senior rank in the Sultan's steamer "Good Luck". Separate invitations were sent to the Chinese, among them were Lee Phee Yeow, Lim Leng Cheak and Cheah Tek Soon.⁷³ So it is not difficult to infer the close connection between Lim Leng Cheak and Lee Phee Yeow. If it is remembered that Koh Seang Tat was nominated as the Municipal Commissioner by Lim Leng Cheak in December 1892, the close connection among these senior Chinese businessmen becomes evident.

It is outside our discussion here to consider the impact of the Penang petition movement on the conclusion of Smith's term in August 1893. When the Petition Movement was still on, the Kulim Opium crisis occurred in 1893. Centred on the Kulim Opium Farm, the Chinese Towkays, the coolies and Kedah State were united in Lim Leng Cheak's struggle against the control of the Penang Opium Farms. There was support both at a high political level, and at lower levels. The coincidence of the interests of the Chinese family and the Malay state of Kedah was again clearly manifested. On the 4th and 7th of July and, again on 7th of August 1893, *The Pinang Gazette & Straits Chronicle* wrote a series of articles criticizing the Government's policy towards trade in the state of Kedah. It wrote: "If the import of opium into Kulim is to be restricted, the output of tin and tapioca (from Kulim) will be restricted; the British subjects who have invested their money in mining, agricultural, or manufacturing enterprises will be heavy losers; the port of Penang will lose so much trade; our friend and neighbour H.H. the Sultan of Kedah will suffer in his revenue; and the spirit of free trade ... will be interfered with.

One cannot help asking why a British Governor thus disregards the principles of good faith and international courtesy to imitate the policy of petty West African King's?"⁷⁴ Sometime later, the same paper again commented: "... There is nothing to be gained by concealing the fact that he [the Governor] has neither treated Kedah nor its suzerain Siam with justice or courtesy; and such a course of conduct as he has adopted is not very dissimilar to that of France on a large scale. It is altogether unworthy of an English Governor".⁷⁵

III. The British and Chinese-Kedah Business Linkage 1880s-1909: The Role of the British Consul

In the above discussion, seen from the Malay and Chinese perspectives, we have presented Lim Leng Cheak's regional business networks, showing the political and economic alliance between a Chinese family and the Malay state of Kedah. Now, from the British perspective, let us view the general process and historical background for the formation of Chinese-Kedah business linkages.

The British establishment in Penang and the island's prosperity, to a great extent, contributed to the late opening of both Kedah and Southern Siam and was responsible for the large inflow of Chinese immigrants and capital into these areas. This also explains why southern Siam and Kedah were closely incorporated into the orbit of Penang's colonial economy.

The combination of capital and labour was the basic condition for capitalist production. However, for the local inland Malay states, the difference lay in that these two factors were taken from outside the state i.e. the immigrant labourers from China and India were used, together with capital from the Straits Settlements (western, Chinese and Indian chetties). Thus, for both capital and labour, the question was how to secure rights from local rulers for land concessions, property ownership, legal residence, and favourable legal jurisdiction for colonial capitalist production. These were rights the British had established in the course of their colonial conquest. The essence of the British colonial policy was to create favourable conditions for the expansion of the colonial economy based on tin and rubber. It was this colonial context which gave the necessary push to the Chinese business

networks to cross the various state boundaries.

With the integration of Kedah into the Penang economic system, the Sultan of Kedah had to attract Chinese capital from Penang into his country for development and use these strong economic ties to play the British against the Siamese. On the other hand, the British protected and promoted the Chinese business networks in Kedah. They always protested and interfered on their behalf in Kedah affairs whenever the Chinese appealed to the British Consul.

The appointment of a British Consul in Kedah clearly reflected the extent and importance of British commercial and political interests in the region. This subject had been a topic of correspondence between the Colonial Office and the Foreign Office. It took about twenty years before a resident British Consul was formally set up in Kedah in 1905. In the 1880s, there were already many British subjects in Kedah, most of them native, mainly Chinese and Malays.⁷⁶ According to Frost, before 1906 there were about 1,600 British subjects. This number did not include many others "who have never taken trouble to go to Penang and register".⁷⁷ Frost's later report said that the total number for the year 1906 was 1,194. There were many other British subjects living principally in Kedah (Tamils and Malays) who had never registered at all.⁷⁸ Although Kedah was already under British imperial influence in the late 19th century, there was no institutional system to protect British subjects in the state. In order to benefit the Colony, protect trade and extend British influence, in the mid-1880s, colonial officials urged the British Government to appoint a British Consul. But this involved the British imperial interests through the Foreign Office, not just the business of the Colonial Office. In October 1886, the British Resident Minister and Consul-General in Bangkok, suggested that "it might be desirable to appoint an officer to reside permanently in Kedah to look after the interests of British subjects".⁷⁹ An interesting point is that the costs of the office should be borne by the Siamese with the title of consul or vice-consul, but "he should receive his instructions in cases affecting the interests of British subjects or extradition of offenders, from the Governor of the Straits Settlements or from the Resident Councillor at Penang".⁸⁰ According to an understanding between the Colonial Office and Foreign Office on expenditure and work facilities, the Resident Councillor in Penang should act as the British Consul

in the meantime. However, the Foreign Office stated that the Resident Councillor should not be necessarily appointed Consul ex officio. M. Skinner was appointed as British Consul for the western Siamese Malay states.⁸¹

The fact that Kedah was already under British influence can be explained by the elements leading to the appointment of a resident British Consul at the beginning of the 20th century. One desirable requirement was to confine the influence of a Siamese Financial Adviser to Kedah state, who would re-organize and supervise the Kedah State Council for the debt crisis. The Siamese proposal caused apprehension among local colonial officers. Anderson wrote to the Colonial Office that it “would be as disastrous to the interests of Kedah as to British interests in the Peninsula”; and “Kedah is at the present time, by far the better governed and administered; ... that the people are satisfied and content”. He insisted on the appointment of a Resident Consul at Kedah, responsible to the Administration at Bangkok.⁸² The other factor was the German presence in the region. It was noticed among the British colonial officers that “the extent to which the trade and commerce of the Colony has passed and is passing into the hands of German firms cannot be viewed without apprehension”.⁸³ In December 1905, M. Frost, who had served in the F.M.S. since 1898, was appointed the first new British Resident Consul to Kedah and the western Siamese States. He arrived in Kedah in January 1906 and worked at that capacity until July 1909 when he was transferred to Perlis as British Adviser.

British Policy in the Siamese Malay States was to encourage British enterprise and to exclude foreign enterprise.⁸⁴ In the reports of the local colonial officers, we find several statements that Kedah was economically well-developed and politically well-administered. This was a discreet way of suggesting that Kedah should try to adjust itself to the emergence of a powerful political and economic centre in its neighbourhood. For the British, it provided a strong argument to urge policy-makers in London to maintain the current state of affairs in Kedah and to prevent Siam or any other third power from intervening in Kedah affairs. On the contrary, in order to promote the business of British subjects, the British frequently interfered in the internal affairs of Kedah. In land concessions, tax or duty reductions, and legal jurisdiction, British subjects enjoyed preferential conditions and privileges in Kedah and southern Siam.

As early as the 1840s, a Tunku from Kedah was tried in Penang on a charge of piracy for capturing a couple of boats belonging to the British subjects. He was honourably acquitted, but was banished to India for several years.⁸⁵ An even worse example occurred in 1907, when a Chinese named Kong Tek Seong complained to the British Consul, Frost that his private conveyance had been seized at Tongkah, because he would not pay a tax. Frost wrote in his diary: "Phra Phisarn admitted that this was the case and promised to have the conveyance returned to him. Did not know he was a B.S."⁸⁶ In order to prevent the rulers of the Siamese Malay states from granting any concessions to the subjects of a third power, the 1897 Anglo-Siamese Secret Agreement provided that: "no special privilege or advantage, either as regards land or trade can be granted, ceded, or let, by Siam in those States, ... without the written consent of His Majesty's Government".⁸⁷ Therefore, the Siamese Government issued a similar order to the Sultan of Kedah. But the local Colonial Officers knew nothing about it and were afraid that it would make it impossible for any British or other subject in Penang to carry out mining or planting operations. F.A. Swettenham wrote to the Colonial Office to contact the Foreign Office for guidance. In the end, it was found that the Treaty was for the sake of the British interests.

In the eyes of the local British officers, Kedah was within the sphere of influence of British Penang. The British colonial officers not only secured business privileges for British subjects, but also tried to exclude the influence of any third power. They kept a strict watch on any attempts to transfer lands to the subjects of a third power. In 1906, Frost reported that several large tracts of land in Kedah, about 20,000 acres, had been bought, or were being bought by a British subject from Penang. It was said that this Chinese was from the office of M. Katinkampf, the German Consul in Penang, who was also the local manager of Behn, Meyer and Co. He was being financed by the latter.⁸⁸ Beckett, the British Minister at Bangkok, addressed a communication to Westengard, the Acting Political Adviser to the Siamese Government. The latter asked the Siamese Government to issue specific instructions to the Kedah authorities to check any attempt to transfer the title.⁸⁹

The British subjects and their businesses were protected by extra-territorial jurisdiction in the region. It had been the practice for the Kedah court to submit all the evidence and draft decisions to the Resident

Councillor in Penang, who acted as a Consul in the meantime, for approval.⁹⁰ In 1906, the Kedah State Council was drafting a new Land Enactment. For foreigners, one important point was that the land-holder had to waive all his extra-territorial rights as regards the land, and agreed to be subject to the Land Laws of Kedah. Even Frost thought they were good laws and suitable to the country".⁹¹ But the Foreign Office pointed out that this surrender of his right to extraterritorial jurisdiction by any British subject only became effective with the consent of His Majesty's Government and in pursuance of an agreement between Britain and Siam.⁹² The Foreign Office instructed His Majesty's Minister at Bangkok to "ignore the Enactment until His Majesty's Legation have been furnished officially with the text by the Siamese".⁹³

In Kedah, there in fact existed two Governments: one was Malay, the other British. With regards to the British subjects, the British Consul exerted the same power as, or even more power than, the Kedah State Council, mainly represented by the Raja Muda and the Financial Adviser. He was at any time ready to protect British subjects, no matter whether their requests were reasonable or not. Under these circumstances, it was not difficult to explain why the Penang Chinese had got out of Kedah many concessions, which were rent free for their estates and for which they paid no export duty.⁹⁴ This was particularly the case for Penang Chinese planters in Kulim, who had hitherto been practically exempt from all taxation of any sort.⁹⁵ A typical example was Lim Eow Hong's case. Lim Eow Hong was a wealthy Penang Chinese, the eldest son of Lim Leng Cheak. He owned large tracts of land in Kedah on which there were arrears of land rent for the last 11 years (prior to 1906). The total amount he was due to pay was \$56,000. On June 15, 1906, Lim Eow Hong came to Frost for help. Even Frost thought Lim Eow Hong "had better pay up".⁹⁶ On November 7, Lim Eow Hong came to Frost again. Frost went with him to the Office of the Raja Muda and Hart in the afternoon. In the end, the Kedah Government agreed to waive a claim to interest and allowed him to pay up the lower rate, which amounted to only \$42,000 instead of \$56,000!⁹⁷ Another example: in 1907, the Kedah Government attempted to impose an extra tax of 1/2 a cent on fowls in addition to the export duty on account of medical inspection. Twelve Kedah traders complained to Frost and the Kedah Government was forced to remove it.⁹⁸

Chinese businessmen, in order to protect their businesses, always turned to Penang for political and social identity. In Kedah, the main sources of capital and business expertise were from Penang and the Penang Chinese. Thus, almost every important Kedah Chinese businessman, after he had made a fortune in Kedah, came to Penang and became a Penang Chinese. Choong Cheng Kean and Lim Lean Teng were two good examples. Another interesting story involved a Chinese named Tan Kim Su, who was charged with engaging in secret society activities by the Chinese capitan Giok Chi employed by the Kedah Government. He complained to Frost many times and was discharged subsequently. Tan Kim Su now in turn claimed compensation. According to Frost, as a result of this case, "a great number of Chinese shopkeepers came and registered as subjects".⁹⁹ Even two Chinese named Tan Hong and Kang Keng, who had registered in the British Consulate, were found to be Siamese subjects. From this, we can see how the British promoted their trade and commerce in the region, and under what circumstances the Penang Chinese conducted their businesses in Kedah, and why they formed close regional business networks.

IV. Conclusion

From above discussion, we can see that the political and economic alliance between the Chinese family of Lim Leng Cheak and the Malay State of Kedah took place under the presence of British colonialism in Penang. This background incorporated Kedah, economically as well as politically, into the regional networks centred on Penang. Kedah was further driven by its traditional subtle relationship with the Siamese in order to maintain her independence.¹⁰⁰ The networks which were centred on Penang with Kedah, Perak, southern Siam and northern Sumatra form the basis for Penang Chinese business networks in the period under study. The geo-economic and geo-political elements were two main reasons for its formation. The British, first of all, provided the indispensable political preconditions for the formation of the Chinese interstate business network. The Chinese businessmen and their capital, on the other hand, were the dynamic agents

and sources of these regional networks, while the surrounding local states were thus made prosperous and became parts of an integrated ring of regional business networks.

State, region and ethnicity here are combined into and clearly reflected in the roles of Chinese businessmen and their business connections. For geopolitical and geo-economic reasons, the Malay state of Kedah was politically weakened by regional circumstances i.e. its triangular relationship with the British and the Siamese. In name, Kedah tried to maintain her traditional relation with Siam. But economically, Kedah was in fact closely incorporated into Penang networks. It was such circumstances that gave the ethnic Chinese the golden historical opportunity and role to act as the active agents for the regional business networks. The period 1880–1909 marked a golden era for Chinese capital and Chinese capitalists in Penang and Kedah. The heavy British reliance on and their active promotion of the ethnic Chinese capitalists was because the latter's business networks could not be replaced. It was moreover a transitional period for the British political and economic forward movement in the Malay Peninsula. Only in the early 20th century was western capital inflow increased to a large scale. If the historical position of the Chinese as an ethnic trading community prior to western colonialism in southeast Asia contributed to their subsequent commercial domination, then, the period before the early 20th century no doubt consolidated their historical position and established Chinese business networks in the context of local society and local states in the region.

Notes

1. This study is funded by the Netherlands Foundation for the Advancement of Tropical Research (WOTRO). The Centre for Asian Studies Amsterdam (CASA) provided welcome institutional support and extra funding. To my Amsterdam promoter Prof. Heather Sutherland and my Malaysian supervisor Prof. Cheah Boon Kheng, I am very grateful for their teaching, encouragement and support. Prof. Cheah Boon Kheng has also helped a lot with the Malay sources. I am also grateful to many people and institutions for their kindness and help during my research in the Netherlands, Britain, China, Singapore and Malaysia. I remain responsible for any mistakes. Abbreviations: C.O.: Colonial Office Files; F.O.: Foreign Office Files; H.C.O.: High Commissioner's Office Files; PLCSS: *Proceeding of Legislative Council of Straits Settlements*; PGSC: *Pinang Gazette & Straits Chronicle*.
2. O.W. Wolters, *The Fall of Srivijaya in Malay History*. London: Lund Humphries, 1970, p. ix.
3. J. Cushman, *Family and State: The Formation of a Sino-Thai Tin Dynasty 1797–1932*. Singapore, 1991. See also Phuwadol Songprasert, *The Development of Chinese Capital in Southern Siam 1868–1932*. A PhD dissertation, Monash University, Australia, 1986.

GLIMPSES OF PENANG'S PAST

4. See Khoo Kay Kim, *The Western Malay States 1850-1873: The Effects of Commercial Development on Malay Politics*. Kuala Lumpur, 1972.
5. In December 1995, I visited his village and checked his family history. It took me a lot of time to find the village because of the radical changes of administrative division. There is little information about his family in China. This is in contrast to other Singkeh Chinese. I conducted research in other villages of Guangdong and Fujian Provinces.
6. Wright, A. and Cartwright, H.A., *Twentieth Century Impressions of British Malaya: Its History, Commerce, Industry and Resources*. London, Lloyd's Greater British Publishing Company, 1908, p. 820.
7. Teoh Shiau Kuan, "A Study of Hokkien Family Tombs in the 19th Century Penang", in *The Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, published annually by the Fern Toh Pau of the National Trades Union Congress of Singapore. Vol. VI (1986), p. 87.
8. W. Franke & Chen Tieh Fan, *Chinese Epigraphic Materials in Malaysia*. Vol. II. University of Malaya Press, 1985. H 1.2.5 & H 1.24.5.
9. PGSC, 28 November 1879.
10. "Report and Minutes of Evidence taken by the Committee appointed by the Chamber of Commerce to enquire into grievances brought forward by traders between Penang and Sumatra". p. 12. The Chamber of Commerce of Penang, December 1879.
11. Ibid, the Chamber of Commerce of Penang, December 1879, pp. 12-13.
12. Ibid, the Chamber of Commerce of Penang, December 1879, p. 14.
13. PGSC, 30 December 1892.
14. PLCSS, 1892, p. c455.
15. PGSC, 3 January 1893.
16. PGSC, 11 January 1893.
17. PLCSS, 1891, 101, Evid.
18. PLCSS, 1891, 103, Evid.
19. PLCSS, 1891, 104, Evid.
20. PLCSS, 1891, 104, Evid.
21. PGSC, 30 May 1893.
22. PGSC, 24 January 1890.
23. PLCSS, 1892, pp. c488-c489.
24. Ibid, Wright, 1908: p. 820.
25. Mak Lau Fong, *The Dynamic of Chinese Dialect Groups in the Early Malaya*. Singapore Society of Asian Studies. 1995, p. 113.
26. Kuwang Guo Xiang, *Bin Cheng Shan Qi* (Story from Penang), published by Xin Zhou Shi Jie Shu Zhu. Singapore, 1958, p. 171. See also Lin Po Ai, *Nan Yang Ming Ren Ji Zhuan* (Who's Who in Southeast Asia), Vol. I, p. 33, published by the Criterion Press, Penang, 1923.
27. *The Straits Echo*, 20 September 1930.
28. H.C.O. 1983/1920.
29. See Akira Suehiro, *Capital Accumulation in Thailand: 1855-1985*, Tokyo, 1989; C. Trocki, *Opium and Empire: Chinese Society in Colonial Singapore, 1800-1910*, New York, 1990; J. Cushman, *Family and State: The Formation of a Sino-Thai Tin Dynasty, 1797-1932*, Singapore, 1991; A. MacIntyre, *Business and Politics in Indonesia*, Asian Studies Association of Australia, 1991; R. McVey (ed.) *Southeast Asian Capitalist*, New York, 1992; J. Butcher & H. Dick (eds.) *The Rise and Fall of Revenue Farming: Business Elite and the Emergence of the Modern State in South-East Asia*, London, 1993.
30. Khoo Khay Jin, "Revenue Farming, Commercialization and the Growth of the Centralized State in Kedah", paper presented at conference on "Revenue Farming and Southeast Asian Transition", ANU, Australia, 30 June-2 July 1988, p. 14.
31. *The Sultan's Correspondence of Kedah*, No. 2, Sultan to Siam, Bangkok, 20 Rejab 1305 (1 April 1888).
32. See J.M. Gullick, "Kedah 1821-1855: Years of Exile and Return". *JMBRAS* 56 (2), 1983, pp. 31-86. Gullick, "Kedah in the Reign of Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin II, 1854-1879". *JMBRAS*, 58 (2), 1985, pp. 107-133. See also Kobkua Suwannathat-Pian, "The 1839-41 Settlement of Kedah: the Siamese Compromise". *JMBRAS*, 59 (1), 1986, pp. 33-48. Kobkua, *Thai-Malay Relations: Traditional Intra-Regional Relations from the Seventeenth to the Early Twentieth Century*. Singapore, Oxford University Press, 1988. Kobkua, "The Kedah Succession Crisis 1879-1882". *JMBRAS*, 62 (2), 1989. Kobkua, "Thrones, Claims, Claimants; Rulers and Rules: the Problems of Succession in the

GLIMPSES OF PENANG'S PAST

Malay Sultanates". *JMBRAS*, 1993 (2).

33. *The Sultan's Correspondence of Kedah*. No. 5, Sultan to Siamese Consul, Penang, 22 Shawal 1308 (30 May, 1891).
34. *The Sultan's Correspondence of Kedah*. No. 2, Sultan to Bangkok, 4 Rabial Awal 1309 (7 October, 1891).
35. *The Sultan's Correspondence of Kedah*. No. 2, Sultan to Bangkok, 28 Jamadil Akhir 1309 (28 January, 1892).
36. *PGSC*, 2 August 1887; 5 August 1887.
37. *PGSC*, 10 January 1890.
38. *Ibid*, 10 January 1890.
39. *Ibid*, 10 January 1890.
40. *PGSC*, 24 January 1890.
41. Sharom Ahmat, Tradition and Change in a Malay State: A Study of the Economic and Political Development of Kedah 1878-1923. *JMBRAS* 57 (I) 1984, Kuala Lumpur, p. 27.
42. *PGSC*, 19 September 1891.
43. *PGSC*, 22 August 1891.
44. *PGSC*. 26 November 1891.
45. *Ibid*.
46. *Ibid*.
47. *PGSC*, 15 September 1891.
48. *PGSC*, 19 September 1891.
49. *PGSC*. 26 November 1891.
50. *PGSC*, 12 December 1891 & 7 July 1893.
51. *PGSC*, 26 November 1891.
52. *PGSC*, 26 September 1891.
53. *Ibid*.
54. *PGSC*, 3 October 1891.
55. *Ibid*.
56. *The Sultan's Correspondence of Kedah*, No. 3, Sultan to Resident Councillor, Penang, 2 Zulkaedah 1305 (10 July, 1888).
57. *The Sultan's Correspondence of Kedah*, No. 3, Sultan to the Resident Councillor, Penang, 21 Zulkaedah 1305 (29 July, 1888). See also No. 3, Sultan to the Resident Councillor, Penang, 17 Zulhijjah 1305 (24 August, 1888). In another letter to Skinner, the new Resident Councillor, the Sultan mentioned that, when he had discussed with Maxwell on the lease of Penang & Kuala Muda Opium Farm, he wrote to the persons concerned, saying he could not entertain the new lease, because the lease of the Kuala Muda Farm had not yet expired. See No. 3, Sultan to Skinner, Resident Councillor, Penang. No date indicated.
58. *The Sultan's Correspondence of Kedah*, No. 3, Sultan to the Siamese Consul, Penang, 5 Muharam 1306 (11 September, 1888).
59. *The Sultan's Correspondence of Kedah*. No. 3, Sultan to the Siamese Consul, Penang, 17 Muharam 1306 (23 September, 1888). See also No. 3, Sultan to Resident Councillor, Penang, 25 Muharam 1306 (1 October, 1888).
60. *The Sultan's Correspondence of Kedah*. Sultan to Resident Councillor. Penang, 18 Zulkaedah 1306 (16 July, 1889).
61. *The Sultan's Correspondence of Kedah*, No. 3, Sultan to Resident Councillor, Penang, 17 Safar 1307 (12 October, 1889).
62. F.O. 422/30, Swettenham to the Governor of the Straits Settlements, 6 November 1889.
63. *The Sultan's Correspondence of Kedah*, No. 5, the Sultan to Resident Councillor, Penang, 24 Safar 1309 (28 September, 1891).
64. *The Sultan's Correspondence of Kedah*, No. 5, the Sultan to the Siamese Consul, Penang, 21 Safar 1309 (25 September, 1891).
65. About Cecil Clementi Smith, see Cheng Siok Hwa, "Sir Cecil Clementi Smith as Colonial Secretary and Governor of the Straits Settlements, 1878-1885, 1887-1893", *Journal of the South Seas Society*, Volume 28, Parts I & 2, December 1973, pp. 34-71.
66. C.O. 273/186/57, "Petition from Chinese in Singapore".
67. *PGSC*, 1 March 1893.
68. *PGSC*, 24 February 1893.

GLIMPSES OF PENANG'S PAST

69. C.O. 273/186, "Petition of Chinese in Penang".
70. PGSC, 24 February 1893.
71. PGSC, 11 March 1893.
72. C.O. 273/186, "Petition of Chinese in Penang". 13 & 14 March 1893. See also C.O. 273/188/213. "Chinese Petition from Penang", 7 July 1893; C.O. 273/188/224, "Petition from Penang", 18 July 1893.
73. PGSC, 6 July 1895.
74. PGSC, 7 July 1893.
75. PGSC, 7 August 1893.
76. C.O. 273/141. Minister Resident and Consul General, Bangkok to F.A. Weld, 29 October 1886.
77. F.O. 422/60. Paget to Edward Grey, 16 February 1906.
78. F.O. 422/61. Consul Frost to Beckett, 2 January 1907.
79. C.O. 273/141. Resident Minister and Consul General, Bangkok to F.A. Weld, 29 October 1886.
80. C.O. 273/150. H.B.M. Legation, Satow to Lord Salisbury, 22 February 1887.
81. C.O. 273/156. Foreign Office to Colonial Office, 16 March 1888.
82. F.O. 422/59. Anderson to Lyttelton, 30 November 1904. See also, Sharom Ahmat, *Ibid.*, 1984: pp. 105–108.
83. F.O. 422/59. Anderson to Lyttelton, 30 November 1904. See also, Tarek Abd El-Hamid Ahmed Amin, *Anglo-German Rivalry in the Malay Peninsula and Siam, 1870–1909*. PhD thesis, University of Malaya, 1995.
84. F.O. 422/54. Archer to the Marquess of Landsdowne, 26 March 1901.
85. PGSC, 27 August 1906.
86. H.C.O. 449/1907. British consul, Kedah: Diary and List of Registered Complaints for March 1907.
87. F.O. 422/56. Foreign Office to Colonial Office, 13 February 1902.
88. F.O. 422/61. Beckett to Westengard, 28 December 1906.
89. F.O. 422/61. Foreign Office to Colonial Office, 11 March 1907.
90. F.O. 422/60. Paget to Edward Grey, 16 February 1906.
91. F.O. 422/60. Frost to Beckett, 15 August 1906.
92. F.O. 422/61. Edward Grey to Beckett, 4 December 1906.
93. F.O. 422/61. Edward Grey to Paget, 3 April 1907.
94. H.C.O. 1042/1906. British Consul, Kedah: Diary and List of Registered Complaints for July 1906.
95. H.C.O. 812/1908. British Consul, Kedah: Diary and List of Registered Complaints for April 1908.
96. H.C.O. 844/1904. British Consul, Kedah: Diary and List of Registered Complaints for June 1906.
97. H.C.O. 1554/1906. British Consul, Kedah: Diary and List of Registered Complaints for November 1906.
98. H.C.O. 449/1907. British Consul, Kedah: Diary and List of Registered Complaints for March 1907.
99. H.C.O. 355/1906. British Consul, Kedah: Diary and List of Registered Complaints for February 1906.
100. See R. Bonney, *Kedah 1771–1821: The Search for Security and Independence*. Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1971.

ORDERING OF HOUSING AND THE URBANISATION PROCESS: SHOPHOUSES IN COLONIAL PENANG

by MAI LIN TJOA-BONATZ

Originally published in *JMBRAS*, Vol. 71 Pt 2 (No. 275), December 1998.

Introduction¹

Penang offers a valuable case-study regarding the formation and evolution of the shophouse type. Founded in 1786, the inner city area of Penang still offers a unique range of variations in shophouse styles dating back to the 19th century. However, "Penang's shophouse culture"² is still underestimated. Neither the history of the architectural heritage nor a comprehensive urban history of Penang has yet been written. In the context of an immigrant society of the colonial period, this study aims to highlight how the British-influenced legislative framework of the colonial government modified urban housing. However, the urban population and the building sector were dominated by the Chinese who implemented their building traditions. The change in the urban fabric is most obvious within the context of the urbanisation process in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This study shows how the shophouse has been transformed from one based on the courtyard to a more western influenced terrace house.

The shophouse has been reviewed in the context of inner-city renewal in Southeast Asia. This residential-cum-commercial building type is commonly regarded as the most prominent and ubiquitous characteristic of the urban landscape in Southeast Asia. The studies on the shophouse commenced in the mid-1970s, in the course of a search for viable inner-city housing. Increased consciousness of the imminent demise of the shophouse in the old centres has enhanced our awareness of its tropical design, its stylistic evolution and the conservation methods necessary to preserve it. Mainly in the 1980s the interest has been fostered by issues of architectural heritage and urban identity in revitalising historical buildings. Today the

shophouse is again regarded as worthy of preservation in the Southeast Asian building tradition, serving as a testimony to modernity and helping to redefine the old town centre, as in Singapore.

Theories of Shophouse Origins

The origins of this building type are still the subject of controversy. The impact of the Chinese migrants bringing their building traditions to the Nanyang countries from the Fukien and Kwangtung provinces of South China³ is widely acknowledged. Dating back to the 13th century, shophouses have been found in rural areas or towns such as the southern Chinese “Treaty Ports” showing close similarities to the Straits Settlements shophouses in floorplan, construction and the iconography of their decoration.

An alternative view suggests that the architectural form of the shophouse first appears with European colonisation dating back either to Portuguese or Dutch urban planning principles, later shaped by the English administrative town planning typical of 19th century cities.⁴ The earliest origins are traceable to the Royal Ordinances by Phillip II of 1573, which required arcades within the urban grid-pattern. In early Manila two-storey houses of permanent material were built in continuous rows along the street-line. In Malacca and Batavia the Dutch merchant settlements implemented an effective plot division. Changes in land ownership caused the grouping into terraces. Other structural characteristics, such as the transverse orientations of the gable-roof or the succession of the courtyards, are structural features but have been neglected in the theory of its origin. The emphasis on Sir Stamford Raffles’ regulations for Singapore in 1822 has led to a concentration on British planning control. The crucial point is that the planning regulations change rather than reflect or, to some extent, only shape the pre-existent form of the built environment. This is suggested by the pre-colonial terrace houses in the commercial quarter of Hanoi.⁵

It is also suggested that the shophouse pre-dates the European presence. From the functional point of view, it represents the traditional dwelling of Southeast Asia connected to market-places along the streets. In

Bangkok there are two such markets: the floating markets and the on-land markets.⁶ Shophouses in close association with water have recently been described from Chinese water-kampungs in Palembang or townhouses in Malacca.⁷ The concept of a shophouse in a water-kampung environment is a new feature to be considered. Further comparative and inter-cultural investigations are needed.

The problems in tracing the origins of shophouses include not only the lack of historical sources but also basic problems in defining the building type. Taking into account selected criteria as a basis for conceptualizing the shophouse denies the complexity of this building form. Therefore, we need to develop new modes of analysis that move beyond the idea of a single pedigree that denies the essential historic dimensions towards a more dynamic interpretation. The more complex approach has been suggested by Charles Goldblum et al.⁸ underlining the hybrid nature of the Sino-colonial shophouse form. Following his argument, and thus relating to the first two hypotheses of the shophouse origins, the present study is an attempt to initiate historical studies in order to get a better understanding of the transformation process of housing through historical reading of the planning regulations and then study the actual buildings which resulted.

Terminology Reconsidered

By studying the official sources of the Straits Settlements, new light can be thrown on the derivation of the term “shophouse”. In the early 19th century the administrative language uses generic terms to denote the common indigenous dwellings. The term “shophouse” can be traced back to Penang’s administrative records of 1884,⁹ in contrast to the common assumption of their post-war origin. Probably translated from Chinese dialects, the term was commonly used in colonial administration writings in the last decade of the 19th century. This was the time when planning was developing and an emerging professional group was dealing with the building codes. In the Penang municipal bye-laws of 1916 a clear-cut functional definition of the shophouse is not given as the very flexible nature of the dwelling

allows for a diversity of activities, e.g. residence, wholesaling, warehousing, manufacturing and offices.¹⁰ Later, in the 1930s, the social status led to the classification of seven housing types in the Straits Settlements. Of these, the “shop-houses” provided common housing for the labouring and artisan classes. By contrast, the clerical class preferred terrace houses.¹¹

If we consider the vocabulary used to refer to the shophouse in other Asian languages, we can observe that three features define the shophouse: the urban context, the relation to a market or street and the alignment of the construction. It is remarkable, however, that no distinctions are drawn between their different functions. In Chinese dialects 13 different terms are in use to describe the shophouse.¹² In Thai the row element and the building structure distinguish the “Hong Tao” of natural vegetable material from the brick shophouse “Duek Tao”. The Vietnamese “tube-like house” refers to the groundplan of the deep shophouses.

Building a Fire-safe Town

Two years after the founding of Penang, the settlement consisted of 200 houses, which were mainly erected in semi-permanent material. Thirty-nine brick buildings were listed in 1793, including the “Houses & Shops” of the Chinese Chee Eam. This clearly indicates that shophouses already existed at this early stage.¹³ Illustrations of the early 19th century indicate a line of two-storey godowns next to white-plastered buildings with a half-gabled and half-hipped roof, stretching irregularly but in compact rows along the coastline.¹⁴ These early houses were either tiled or, most commonly, thatched with attap. Different building practices and materials were introduced by each immigrant group forming a contrasting townscape which was much more diversified and less compact than in Singapore. The style of housing in the unplanned settlement pattern was marked by great diversity:

Turning the eye southward Georgetown and the harbour are seen. The various styles of building used in the construction of habitations in this small town have a strange effect – the European house, the

Hindoo bungalow, the Malay cottage, the Chinese dwelling and the Burman hut are mingled together with regularity, and apparently without any plan, the first settlers having built his residence according to the custom of the country....¹⁵

The speed of growth due to the increasing number of migrants and the laissez-faire attitude of the colonial authority encouraged the construction of buildings in non-permanent but combustible materials. After the severe fires of 1808, 1812, 1813 and 1818, fire prevention measures were proposed, such as inserting a set-back in front of attap houses, open fire breaks between the rows of houses, realigning and straightening the-streets.¹⁶ The more pragmatic regulations operated within the pre-existing building practice of the compartment model of housing. The strict prohibition of attap had been discussed since 1806. But as it was still the main building material at that time and rising building costs would drive the urban population out of town, the municipal policy was determined by fire prevention. The use of attap was later forbidden by the regulation passed on 10th July 1817, and thereafter attap-roofed houses were discouraged by a higher assessment rate.¹⁷ The fire precautions stipulated that the shophouse should be built of non-flammable material. This led to a gradual improvement in the durability of the town. In 1821 "the town, which had been once almost entirely burnt down, was now constructed of more solid materials..."¹⁸ This initial concern gradually provided the controlling framework for further building requirements. The ordering of public space became an issue, by introducing the covered passageway in the Penang Assessment Regulation, VI of 1826:

- VI.** Assessment chargeable for the pathway between the Houses and Drain, when the same is built over by Verandahs or Archways.
- VII.** Proprietors of Houses and Grounds to leave the regular Space of 5 feet, between the House and Drain.

In addition to Raffles' instructions to the Singapore town committee in 1822 that each house was to have a verandah, the Penang regulation specified the width, thus leading to the term "five-foot-way". On the one side, the

assessment regulation gave rise to the contest between the privately owned but publicly used pedestrian way, as it was often used as additional retail space before the shopfront. On the other hand, it regulated the alignment pattern and the uniformity of the shophouse facade. Penang's shophouse five-foot-ways had their origins much earlier than has been conventionally assumed.

In extension to the local acts, the Indian Act No. 14 of 1856 for the Straits Settlements depended to a great extent upon the desire of the local government to improve the town. Still, the main concern were fire precautions: The width of streets was regulated, projections and encroachments were prohibited. This shaped the uniformity of the shophouse facade. These characteristics were well recognised in the mental map of the Chinese city dwellers, as streets in Penang were often named after a block of uniform shophouses such as Carnarvon Street or Chulia Lane. Penang Street was known for the unit of nine houses.¹⁹ In 1862 John Thomson gave a clear picture of Penang's built-up area, substantially transformed to a more fire-proof city with the predominance of two-storey shophouses: 'We pass along long lines of low, roof-tiled, dirty buildings, tenanted by Chinese and natives of Hindostan. The lines seem interminable.'²⁰ Within a compact and regular street alignment the houses were of solid brick with tiled gable-roofs running longitudinally. The eave line projected over the first floor which was formed with timber infills and shutters. Tuscan columns or heavy piers allowed a covered space between the entrance and the drainage. The description of these "Hindu-Chinese houses" was often found in European travel literature. European travellers were not familiar with such built traditions and, therefore, stressed the hybridity of the form.

The Building Sector

The construction industry was one of the main branches in Penang's economy, and developed swiftly during the 19th century. Since the early days of the settlement the Chinese were the predominant group in this sector, working as the most skilful carpenters, construction and machinery

workers. As described by Francis Light ‘...they possess the different trades of carpenters, masons and smiths, are traders, shopkeepers and planters....’²¹ Externally imposed constraints (colonial stratification, recruitment system, immigration laws, etc.) and internally created factors (such as group networking, communication, apprenticeship) contributed to the ethnic-based organisation of the occupation structure. Defined as urban space occupation strategies, the ethnic groups specialised in certain economic niches which permeated also into the building crafts (Table 1).²²

Table 1: Ethnic Distribution of the Building Sector in Penang, 1881

Engineer, Architect, Surveyor	2	2	1	5	10
Contractor, Builder	100	134	32	2	268
Bricklayer, Mason	252	1	25		278
Stonecutter	90		33		123
Carpenter	1276	30	55	1	1362

The timber industry was the biggest sector primarily occupied by Chinese carpenters. They were better paid than other ethnic groups²³ although the Malays were known for their skilful wood carving and wooden houses. The highly regarded Lo-Pan Clan of Cantonese carpenters was founded as one of the first in the town. As shophouses were of a composite structure, mainly using timber and brick, the second important sector was connected to the brick industry. In the early years, Indian convicts were trained as brick layers, and in 1788 skilled brick layers, especially ordered from China, were employed by the East India Company for public brick buildings.²⁴ In the 19th century a Chinese contractor recruited his clan or family for the construction of a house, including the interior in any requested design pattern.²⁵ From the early days, Chinese, with the assistance of Bengal convicts, cut the local granite.²⁶ Europeans in the building sector represented a small group of skilled professionals, such as surveyors or architects. The census of 1881 indicates that the construction industry was not highly differentiated. The ethnic classification of the census fails to identify the fact that the group of Chinese craftsmen was not homogeneous but subdivided into smaller dialect groups. In mid-19th century there were

Hakka stonemasons, Cantonese brickmakers or Hokkien bricklayers in the Straits Settlements.²⁷

The Chinese predominance in the building sector explains their impact on the house form and on building technology, shaping both the construction and the decorative details. The Straits Eclectic style of the houses, including the ornate fretwork and carving of the doors, windows or airvents, as well as the stucco decor or the glazed ornamental tiles clearly reflects the Straits Chinese vocabulary of forms. The iconography of the shophouse front facade decoration has not yet been fully analysed.

The Shophouse as a Courtyard House during the Early Urbanisation Period

In the second half of the 19th century, the town was fast growing and speculative housing provided shelter for the influx of migrant workers. With the indentured immigration system, mainly Chinese and Indian workers migrated to the Straits Settlements. This immigration was later fostered by the thriving rubber and tin industries. Primarily due to Indian migrants in the 1890s, the urban population increased by as much as 84.6%. Between 1911 and 1931 the increase by decade remained around 21% (Table 2).²⁸ In 1877 the town area showed dense building in the old grid pattern extending to the Prangin Ditch and along the Western arterial road, Chulia Street (see the “Plan of George Town, Prince of Wales Island” of R.P. Bingham, kept in the Penang Library). The very long building lots along the eastern coastline

Table 2: Increase of the Population in Georgetown, 1881–1931

Years	Total Population	Increase of Population (percentage)
1881	44.565	
1891	51.627	1881-1891: 7.062 (15,8%)
1901	95.296	1891-1901: 43.669 {84,6%}
1911	101.182	1901-1911: 5.886 (6,2%)
1921	123.069	1911-1921: 21.887 (21,6%)
1931	149.408	1921-1931: 26.339 (21,4%)

indicate godowns which were built as courtyard houses.

Amendments to the public infrastructure and the quality of housing stock are found in the Conservancy Act No. II of 1879. The act laid down rules in house-building technology, such as the standardisation of the foundations, building height, material and structure. But the rules dealt with the communal space rather than the internal lay-out of the houses. Detailed building plans were required for municipal approval. This illustrates the consolidation process in the administrative framework of the city and the slow introduction of planning control. Thus, the house settlement pattern of the late 19th century continued to rely upon the terrace system, forming a compact block of houses at right-angles to the streets. This housing system is best illustrated by the front facade of the shophouses in King Street, which are still preserved until today, and the groundplan of the same row of houses shown on the map of F.W. Kelly in 1891–93. The five-foot-way incorporates a block of houses but does not run continuously along the front. The characteristic feature of housing is the prevalence of compartments with courtyards. The necessity of lighting and ventilation led to the creation of intermediary courtyards becoming the integral feature of the spatial organisation of the shophouse. It provided a horizontal progression of multifunctional spaces allowing a continuous expansion. There was no passage through the house. The first room was either open to the full length of the frontage, indicating commercial use, or was entered by a street door between two windows, indicating a residential dwelling. In the smaller types there was practically no backyard: instead, there was an airwell. The deeper shophouses were intersected by inner courtyards either placed to one side of or along the axis of the house. Additionally, backyards contained the service areas. These back-yards ran back-to-back within the block. Some compartments even stretched over the whole building block from one street to the other. The lay-out on the ground floor was more variable and less specialised, whereas the first floor was invariably assigned to bedrooms. The interior open space had multiple functions, serving as access path, providing space for household chores and, therefore, forming the centre of domestic life.

The courtyard-styled shophouses were built for extended family-households, including servants, relatives and workers. The family structure

was rather incoherent, as indicated by the census reports. The gender ratio was significantly unequal. In 1881 women formed about one third of the urban population. Encouraged by colonial laws, women migrated in larger numbers in the 1880s. Still, the proportion remained distinctly unbalanced in the central area of the town. Another factor was the disproportionately low percentage of married men in the town centre. This specific social pattern of a society of short stay inhabitants was especially remarkable in the city centre and the harbour area, where most of the male workers were accommodated either in the spacious courtyard houses or in lodging houses. An examination of the ethnic distribution of the same year in the urban districts clearly indicates the high percentage of Chinese in the centre, increasing from the commercial district at 74% to as much as 90% in the harbour area. These figures revealing the socio-demographic pattern of the city centre were mapped by the Historical Geographical Information System (HIST) at the Technical University of Darmstadt,²⁹ Whereas the majority of the local Malay population continued to live in the outskirts, including the more urban group of the 'Jawi Peranakan', European and Eurasian residential enclaves were found in the western suburbs.

The urbanisation process during the last decades of the 19th century consolidated the social and spatial segregation within the metropolitan area. It was reinforced, first, by a high migration flow of Chinese and Indian workers, causing the growth of dense populations in the centre which required low-cost rental housing. Already in the 1910s the building stock of the centre had reached its limits as indicated by the census reports. Second, the middle classes moved to the outer fringes of the city where new building stock was available.

Public Health-oriented Legislation and the Emergence of the Terrace House

At the turn of the century the supply of housing had fallen further behind the growth of the population. Overcrowding became serious within the shophouses. Outbreaks of cholera epidemics and rat plagues occurred

due to poor sanitary conditions. As a result, a set of acts came into force interpreted in terms basically of public health-oriented legislation. Whilst earlier enactments took the building type for granted, the emphasis was now placed on the internal structure of the house, realigning the housing style. The Straits Settlements Ordinances of 1896³⁰ made a first attempt to wrestle with the problem of minimum standards of space. The minimum open-space provision of a two-storey shophouse was determined at 10 feet or 15 feet for houses with more storeys, including the service area. New domestic technology and hygienic standards were considered. Emphasis was laid on good construction to safeguard ventilation, light and sanitation. Additionally, in 1916 the Penang bye-laws³¹ prescribed detailed construction standards with the advent of construction techniques using concrete and pre-cast material. To improve the habitability of the dwellings, the regulations on open space were tightened. The width of the openings was to be no less than one-tenth of the room frontage, the room height no less than 10 feet. The bye-laws reduced the attraction of inner courtyards by not only increasing the minimum width of the open space to 10 x 6 feet, excluding the service area, but also by limiting the maximum built area between the courtyards to 40 feet. The settlement system was essentially transformed by the introduction of rounded house corners of a minimum radius of 15 feet, and compulsory back lanes. All new houses were to be provided with access to a back lane with a second entrance to facilitate drainage and sewerage. The construction of the earlier compact blocks of back-to-back houses was thus forbidden.

Visual material has been collected from the plans which were submitted for approval to the Municipality of Penang under the building bye-laws. This legislation fostered a new type of construction: the modern terraced house as designed by the constructional engineer Cheah Tiang in 1929. The longitudinal section and the block plan of the shophouses in Sri Bahari resembled the terraced house governed by British bye-laws with a shorter depth, tighter lay-out and a backyard. The service areas were at the back of the unit, where a second entrance opened to the back lane. Houses with a side wing next to a narrow courtyard, similar to the British "tunnel-backed houses", were typical of the new housing stock of the town. Deeper

courtyard houses were subdivided into smaller plots. Public back lanes cut through the unity of building blocks. Higher-density housing up to three storeys for separated households was built.

The emergence of new building types in the area studied thus correlated directly with the economic and social processes of the city's expansion and the demand for low-cost rental housing. Changes in the economics of the housing market emerged. The nascent real estate sector and the fall in construction costs helped to develop the smaller type of shophouse building. Uniformity in the building design and a standardisation in the building material and the construction process set the trend. The plan of the houses became more formalised. Changes to the physical environment should be also seen as part of a wider development in social policy and domestic attitudes. The transformation in the physical pattern related closely to the composition of the household. The emergence of smaller family units in private, self-contained dwellings was a physical demonstration of the changing social values and domestic life.

Concluding Remarks

The scope of this study was to look at the official and conscious attempt to modify the housing system through the colonial building regulations. It has been shown that the shophouse developed during the *laissez-faire* era of the colonial administration, after which the built environment was improved to create a fire-safe city. The shophouse existed in the first half of the 19th century, finding its common form in the courtyard house. The Chinese were the dominant group in the building sector. Then, before the turn of the century, with the emergence of public health oriented legislation, the building was internally modified to form terrace houses. We may thus follow the transformation of these building types covering a range of design concepts shifting over time, and reflected in the changing terminology of the different periods.

Notes

1. This paper presents results of the current proceedings of the research project "Housing in Historic City Centres of Southeast Asia" at the Technical University of Darmstadt sponsored by the German Research Foundation (DFG). See "Urban Renewal in Southeast Asia", *TRIALOG*, 1, 1998; Mai Lin Tjoa-Bonatz (1997), 'Das Shop-house als Hofhaus. Zur Entstehungsgeschichte einer städtischen Wohnform', *TRIALOG*, 53 (2): 31-36.
2. Patricia Tusa Fels (1994), "Penang's Shophouse Culture", in: *Places*, 9 (1): 46-55.
3. David G. Kohl (1984), "Chinese Architecture in the Straits Settlements and Western Malaya", in *Temples, Kongsis and Houses*, Petaling Jaya. pp. 172-186.
4. Alain Viaro (1992), "Le compartiment Chinois est-il chinois?", in: *Les Cahiers de la Recherche Architecturale*, 27128, Marseille pp. 139-150; Jon S. H. Lim (1993), "The Shophouse Rafflesia. An Outline of its Malaysian Pedigree and its subsequent Diffusion in Asia", *JMBRAS*, 66 (1): 47-66.
5. William S. Logan (1994), "Hanoi Townscape Symbolic Imagery in Vietnam's Capital", in: Marc Askew and William S. Logan (eds.), *Cultural Identity and Urban Change in Southeast Asia. Interpretative Essays*, Deakin, p. 50.
6. The row of floating houses are considered to be the earliest manifestations of shophouses in the commercial Ratanakosin area of 1782-1851, whereas the on-land shophouses located in front of temples or palaces date back to the 13th century. See Yongtanit Pimonsatthan (1991), "Conservation of old Bangkok and Early Shophouses", Ph.D thesis, Tokyo, fig. 4.21.A.; Howard Malcom (1839), *Travels in South-Eastern Asia, Embracing Hindustan, Malaya, Siam and China; With Notices of Numerous Missionary Stations, and full Account of the Burman Empire*, Boston, Vol. II: fig. on page 115.
7. Peter J. M. Nas (1995), 'Palembang. The Venice of the East', in: Peter J. M. Nas (ed.), *Issues in Urban Development. Case Studies for Indonesia*, Leiden pp. 135-136; Khoo Joo Ee (1996), *The Straits Chinese, A Cultural History*, Amsterdam/Kuala Lumpur, p. 150.
8. Charles Goldblum, Kunwadee Jintavorn and Bundit Chulasai (1985), "Compartiment chinois et Chinatown", matrices de la ville "moderne" en Asie du Sud-Est. Ecole d'Architecture Paris-Villemin, G.R.A.S.E. Paris.
9. Penang Administration Report for 1884 in Proceedings of the Straits Settlements: C 398: "In the Market Square is a small drinking fountain, together with a few shop-houses, and a spacious bathing-house."
10. W. Peel (ed.) (1916), *Bye-Laws of the Municipality of Georgetown, Penang*. Revised to the 1st of March. Penang, p. 3.
11. Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of the Straits Settlements in 1931, Colonial Annual Reports No. 1999, London, 1932, pp. 16-18.
12. Chaolee Kuo (1992), "Identity, Tradition and Modernity. A Genealogy of Urban Settlement in Taiwan. Including a Case Study on Shop-House Morpho-Typology in Lukang", Ph.D-thesis, Leuven, pp. 149-150.
13. *Penang Past and Present 1786-1963. A Historical Account of the City of George Town since 1786*. Penang, 1966, p. 106.
14. For William Westall's water-colour of 1804 or James Wathen's aquaint of 1811. see Lim Chong Keat (1986). *Views of Penang*, Singapore, plate 7, 24, 25.
15. After James Wathen in 1811. See H. P. Clodd (1948), *Malaya's First British Pioneer. The Life of Francis Light*. London, p. 120. The same impression is given by John Cameron comparing Penang and Singapore in John Cameron (1865), *Our Tropical Possessions in Malayan India. Being a Descriptive Account of Singapore, Penang, Province Wellesley and Malacca*. reprinted Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1965 p. 21.
16. Straits Settlement Records Penang Council Minute by the President. SSR Series A, No. 13, 15.1.1818: See the "Plan of George Town Prince of Wales Island" of I. Wilkinson, kept in the Penang Library. which indicates the parts destroyed by fire.
17. Notification of 11.9.1819; Jeyaraj C. Rajaraj (1958), "Public Administration in Penang (1786-1832)", unpublished thesis, Singapore pp. 38-39; see also the Regulation, VI, of 1826: VIII, IX. (SSR Series K no. 5 16.12.1826, document 16).
18. John Crawford (1928), *Journal of an Embassy to the Courts of Siam and Cochin China*, reprinted Singapore: 1987, p. 11.
19. Lo Man Yuk (1900), "Chinese Names of Streets in Penang", *JMBRAS*. 33: 197-246.
20. John Thomson (1864), *Glimpses into Life in Malayan Lands*, reprinted Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1984, p. 29; Edward H. Cree (1845), *The Cree Journals. The Voyages of Edward H. Cree. Surgeon R. N. as Related in his Private Journals. 1837-1856*, reprinted Exeter, 1981 p. 148.
21. Letter from Francis Light of 25.1.1794, in Jeyaraj C. Rajaraj, op. cit., p. 66.

GLIMPSES OF PENANG'S PAST

22. Selected figures of the Report on the Census of Penang and Province Wellesley, in PLCSS. 1881: 322-22/25.
23. T.J. Newbold (1832), *Political and Statistical Account of the British Settlements in the Straits of Malacca*, reprinted Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1971, p. 15.
24. Letter of Sir Francis Light of 20.6.1788, in 'Notices of Penang', *JIA*, IV, 648, 1850.
25. John Thomson (1875), *The Straits of Malakka Indo-China and China or Ten Years' Travels, Adventure and Residence Abroad*, reprinted Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1993, pp. 17-18.
26. Notices of Penang, in *JIA*, 5: 109 (1851).
27. Mak Lau Fong: *The Dynamics of Chinese Dialect Groups in Early Malaya*. Singapore 1995: 58-79.
28. Ibid, 1881: 4, 322-329, J. E. Nathan *The Census of British Malaya*, London: 18; Hayes Marriott (1921), *Report on the Census of the Colony of the Straits Settlements taken on 10th March 1911*, Singapore (1911), pp. 9-10; C. A. Vlieland (1932), *British Malaya. A Report on the 1931 Census and on Certain Problems of Vital Statistics*, London, pp. 32, 36.
29. Mai Lin Tjoa-Bonatz (1998), "Neighbourhood in Transition. The Inner-City Area of Penang since 1900", Unpublished paper given at the symposium "Habitat and Heritage. The Context of Sustainable Development in Historic City Centres", Penang. 6-8 April.
30. Straits Settlements Ordinance No. XV. of 1896, paragraph 155.
31. See footnote 10. paragraph 7, 32, 52, 54, 56.

MEMORANDUM ON THE VARIOUS TRIBES INHABITING PENANG AND PROVINCE WELLESLEY

by THE LATE J. R. LOGAN

Originally published in *JSBRAS*, No. 7, June 1881.

[On the 30th November, 1880, the late Mr. David Aitken wrote to the Government stating that the late Mr. James Richardson Logan had written, for the Government, a paper on the Wild Tribes of Penang and Province Wellesley, which Mr. Aitken believed would be found in the records of the Lieutenant-Governor's Office, Penang.

A search was made, and the paper was found. It has never before been published, and, coming from the pen of such an authority as Mr. J. R. Logan, will be read with great interest.—Ed.]



The native races of the Malay Peninsula are the Simang, the Binua, the Malay, and the Siamese.

Simang.

The Simang are scattered in small disconnected herds throughout the forests of the broadest part of the Peninsula, comprising the Malay States of Kedah, Perak and Tringganu. They are the sole aborigines of Kedah, including Province Wellesley, in the vicinity of which some families continued to wander until the increasing denseness of the Malay, Samsam, and Chinese population, and the felling of the forests, drove them further inland. At present the nearest groups are those on the river Krian, above the British boundary.

The Simang are a variety of the Papuan branch of the oldest race of

India, Ultra-India, and the Indo-Pacific Islands, the other branch being the Dravido-Australian.

The Papuans are distinguished from the lower Dravirian tribes and castes, and from the Australians, more by the spiral growth of the hair than by any other constant physical characters. From the second great race of this ethnographical province—the Himalaic—both branches are well differentiated by the non-Mongolic shape of the head and by the comparative slenderness of the trunk and limbs, and darkness of the skin. The most striking and general peculiarity of the head is the pyramidal form of the nose, caused by the root sinking deeply in below, or forming an acute angle with the base of the prominent brow ridge.

In the Simang, the head is small, the forehead low, rounded, narrow and projecting over the root of the nose; the corona ridged or obtusely wedge-shaped; the occiput rounded and somewhat swelling; the lower part of the face oval or ovoid; the cheek bones broad, but not remarkably prominent, except with reference to the narrow forehead; the upper jaw not prognathous; the nose short and somewhat sharp at the point and often turned up, also spreading; the mouth large, but lips not thick; the projecting brow nearly on the same vertical line with the nose, mouth and chin; hair spiral and tufted; the beard of much stronger growth than with the Himalaic race; the eyes fine, middle-sized and straight; the iris large, black and piercing; the conjunctive membrane yellow; the person slender; the belly protuberant; the skin fine and soft, varying in colour from yellowish brown and dark-brown to black; average height about four feet eight inches.

The Papuan race exhibits great variety throughout its range from the Andamans to the Viti-Archipelago, New Caledonia and Tasmania. Some tribes are more Australoid than others; some are more Mongolic, especially where there has been intermixture with the Himalaic race; and some approach the more debased and prognathous varieties of the African Negro, but, as a whole, the race is much more akin to the Dravirian (where the latter has not been improved by Iranian crossing), and to the East African, than to the Himalaic. While the Australian branch, protected from the Malayo Polynesian by the character of the Southern Continent, preserves a distinct form of language, which connects it with Dravirian. No example has yet

been brought to light of a Papuan tongue possessing distinct pronouns and a distinct structure from the Malaya-Polynesian or Himalayan. Some of the vocabularies contain many upper Asiatic words not found in Malaya-Polynesian dialects. The Simang dialects, while containing a large number of Malayo-Polynesian vocables, are more Himalaic than the Malayo-Polynesian glossaries. The pronouns have the peculiar forms that were current in the dialects of that branch of the Himalaic people which predominated in the Gangetic basin and its confines before the Arians advanced into it, and which spread its language and civilization eastward till they prevailed from Guzerat to Tonquin. These pronouns and many other common vocables are still used by the Kol or Southal tribes on the Ganges, the Kyi or Kasia in the Brahmaputra basin, the Palaong and the Mon or Peguans on the Irawadi, the Kambojans on the Mekong, and the Anamese on the Tonquin. The Simang and some of the Binua tribes appear to have obtained them at the time when the Mon-Kambojan nation was established on the Irawadi, the Menam and the Mekong, before the Burmans rose into power, and long before the Shans or Siamese advanced westward into Assam and southward down the Menam, separating the Mons from the Kambojans. That a Mon Colony continued to flourish on the Muda down to a period long subsequent to the intrusion of the Arians into India, is evidenced by the rock inscriptions in characters similar to the ancient Mon, which are found in Province Wellesley and on Bukit Mariam.

The Simang are about the least civilised of the tribes of the Indian Archipelago. They wander in the forest, preying on wild animals, which they kill with spears, arrows and darts from the blow pipes; their only clothing, a piece of bark round the middle; and their temporary lairs only protected from the weather by a few branches or leaves hang over two or three sticks.

Binua.

These tribes, Himalaic in race, are scattered over the Southern half of the Peninsula, from Johor to Perak, none being found in Kedah.

The variations in the physical characters are considerable, but these

are more closely allied to the Malayan than to the finer Indonesian. In a common form of the head, it is somewhat prognathous, the zyeomata have much lateral development, the forehead is very narrow, and the eye also is more oblique than in the Malay. In some respects this type resembles that of the Kol and some of the cognate Gangetic and Ultra-Indian tribes, more than that of the Malays. But examples are also found of approaches to the finer Indonesian forms. The person is shorter than with the Malays. The trunk is very long in proportion to the limbs, which are lighter and handsomer than with the Malays. The dialects are Malay, but all the vocabularies that have been collected preserve a variable proportion of non-Malay words. Many of these are Mon-Anam, and the Perak tribes and several of the Southern Binuas still use the Kol and Simang first pronoun. The remaining non-Malay vocables are mostly Sumatran, but some have remoter Indonesian affinities. The civilization of the Binua is of the ruder Ultra-Indian and Malay kind. Where they have least intercourse with the Malays, the dress of the men is still a strip of bark passed between the legs and fastened at the waist, and that of the women a piece of bark beaten out and wrapped round them from the waist to the knees. Where there is regular traffic with the Malays, the dress of the latter has been adopted by the males, but the cloth sarong of the females retains the scanty dimensions of the original bark petticoat. The huts are ruder than those of the Malays. Their agriculture is confined to the migratory system that prevails among all the ruder Himalaic tribes, and much of their food is derived from fishing, snaring and hunting, no sorts of flesh being rejected.

The Binua appear to have spread over the Peninsula in pre-Malayan ages, extirpating the Simang in the narrower Southern portion. During the Mon-Kambojan era, that people would occupy towards them the same relation that the Malays now occupy. The language of the Mons and Kambojans would become the lingua franca of the districts around their Colonies and of the rivers on both sides of the Peninsula which their praus frequented for barter with the natives, and it would ultimately, in a large measure, displace the older dialects of the latter. When, at a comparatively modern period, the Malays from Sumatra colonised the Peninsula, their language became everywhere current, and the older dialects are fast perishing before it.

The Malays (Malayu.)

The Javanese preceded the Malays as the first dominant maritime people in the later age of Indonesian civilization, and founded Settlements in the Peninsula as well as in Sumatra. But in the era immediately prior to that of European supremacy, the Malays of Menangkabau, extending their conquests to the sea on both sides of Sumatra, became the leading and most enterprising naval people of the Archipelago. They planted Settlements of their own, or formed quarters on almost every island and on every navigable river.

The Peninsula, as far North as Tennasserim, passed into their hands, Malacca becoming the leading maritime State in the Eastern seas.

There has been considerable intermixture of blood between the Malays and the Binuas of the interior with the various foreigners who settled in their ports—Chinese, Southern Indians (Klings chiefly), Arabs, Portuguese, Burmese, Peguans, Japanese, as well as with Javanese, Bugis, Achinese, Dayaks, and other Eastern Islanders. Besides the normal variety of characters observable in every race, the maritime Malays have been further modified by this intermixture. The most common type of the least improved Malay is one of the coarsest of the Archipelago. It resembles the Siamese more than the sea-board Burman, shewing a similar flatness and expansion both of the crown and the back of the head, the meeting of the two planes being more angular than convex. When viewed in front, it bulges out laterally beyond the forehead. The nose is low and the lips thick. The lower part of the face is sometimes prognathous. The person is broad and squat, the trunk long, the limbs short and thick. The Malay varies from this lowest type coarse Mongolian with a Negro tendency to the finest form which the Turanian skull can assume without ceasing to be Turanian. The head becomes nearly oval, the occiput rounded, the nose palder, and the eye brighter, straight and more liquid. The Malay is good-natured, courteous, sociable, gregarious and gossiping, finding unflinching amusement in very small talk, jokes and pleasantries. To superiors, he is extremely deferential, but with no taint of the abject or fawning Asiatics of higher civilization. His intellect has little power of

abstraction, and delights in a minute acquaintance with the common things around him, a character that reflects itself in his language, which is as rich in distinctions and details in the nomenclature of material objects and actions as it is poor in all that relates to the operations of the mind. He is slow and sluggish, and impatient of continuous labour of mind or body. He is greedy, and, when his interests are involved, his promises and professions are not to be trusted. His habitual courtesy and reticence and the influence of his religion mask the sway of passions to which he may be secretly yielding and under which he sometimes becomes rapacious, treacherous and revengeful. It has become customary to protest against the dark colours in which the earlier European voyagers painted him, but their error was less in what they wrote than in what they left unwritten. Under bad native Governments, leading a wandering life at sea, or on thinly peopled borders of rivers—the only highways in land covered with forest and swamp—trusting to his kris and spear for self-defence, building in traditional respect the powers of the pirate and robber, and putting little value on life, the Malay became proverbial for feline treachery and bloodthirstiness. Under the Government to which Malays have been subjected in Province Wellesley, and which has certainly not erred on the side of paternal interference, for it has left them as free as English yeomen, they now form a community as settled, contented, peaceable and free from serious crime as any to be found in British India—a result due to the clearing of forests, the formation of roads, the establishment of a regular Police, and the honest administration of the law.

The Malay treats his children with great affection and an indolent indulgence. Women are not secluded, and the freedom which they enjoy in their paternal homes is little abridged in after-life. Early marriage is customary and necessary, for if it were postponed after puberty, they would not be restrained by their religion from the license which the habits of the non-Mahomedan nations of the same race permit to unmarried girls. In the Malay States the law sanctions slavery and subjects the person of the female slave to the power of her master.¹ In this Settlement, the Malay finds compensation for the deprivation of this right in that of divorce, and the extent which it is availed of renders marriage in practice little more than the

legalisation of temporary concubinage. The independence allowed to women, and the manner in which their parents and other relatives usually take their part, enable them to purchase their divorce, or worry their husbands into granting it, whenever they wish to change them.

Siamese.

The Siamese do not differ much from the Malays in their physical characters. The person has much the same height and form. The remarkable flatness of the back of the head is more generally present, the profile is also more vertical, the nose is more often slightly arched, the mouth smaller and firmer. The chief peculiarities are the lowness of the hairy scalp and the staring expression of the eye, caused by the retraction of the upper eyelid.

The Siamese belong to that branch of the Himalaic race which preceded the Tibeto-Burman on this side of the Himalayas. At a very remote period in the history of this branch, the progenitors of the Lau migrated to what afterwards became the Chinese province of Yun-nan, and thus became, in a large degree, isolated from the influence of the sister tribes who spread over the Gangetic basin and Ultra-India, while the Mons and Kambojans became the great maritime nations from the Irawadi to the Mekong, and the Anamese occupied the borders of the China Sea as far North as Tonquin. The Lau retained their sequestered inland position until the Chinese pushed their conquests and settlements into Yun-nan, when between the 7th and 8th centuries hordes of the Lau re-entered the basin of the Irawadi, established themselves at Moun-g-Goung and gradually subjected and partially occupied Assam. Thus in the 7th and 8th centuries, and subsequently in A.D. 1224, when they founded the Assam rule, a large part of Manipar and the territory now known as the Shan States, their language and civilization had been considerably modified by the influence of the Chinese. It was not till many centuries later that they succeeded in expelling the Kambojans from the lower basin of the Menam and reaching the sea. From Siam they spread down the Peninsula, and all the Malay States appear to have successively been forced or persuaded to acknowledge their suzerainty. At the end of

last century, the inhabitants of the territory between Siam and Kedah were almost purely Siamese. In 1821, they expelled the Malay Chiefs and the greater part of the Malay population from Kedah and occupied that country until about 1842, when it was restored to its Native rulers, but as a dependency on Siam. The Southern progress of the race led to parties of Siamese settling in various parts of Kedah and in the N.E. districts of Province Wellesley, in which, Siamese was till lately, and is still to a considerable extent, the current language of the oldest settlers, being Samsam, i.e., Islamised descendants of Siamese with some intermixture of Malay blood.

The Siamese language is radically Himalaic, but owing chiefly, it is probable, to the influence of Chinese, it has been transformed, like some of its sister tongues, from a disyllabic to a monosyllabic structure. Remnants of the Himalaic prefixes are found in the initial consonants of several words. The forms of the common Himalaic vocables are often broader and more consonantal in Siamese and the sister Mon-Anam languages than in the Tibeto-Burman, and they retain a similar Archaic character in many of the Malayo-Polynesian vocabularies.



These brief notes will be rendered more intelligible by a reference to the general history of the linguistic family to which the languages of the Papuans, the Binua, the Malays, and the Siamese alike belong.

The Archaic-Himalayo-Polynesian formation was related to the Scythic on the one side and the Chinese on the other. It possessed a system of minutely differentiated formatives and pronouns and a tendency to harmonic agglutination and dissyllableism like the Archaic Scythic and proto-Scythic tongues. Its present representatives may be divided into three branches. The first to separate from the Tibetan or Himalayan mother stem was the Malayo-Polynesian. In the great Asiatic Archipelago it has preserved more of the Archaic structure than the continental branches, and has developed the original phonetic tendencies until it has become highly harmonic, and, in one of its leading and most influential varieties, very vocalic. The next branch that left the Himalayan cradle was the East Tibetan or Mon-Anam. It

retains the direct collocation and many of the Archaic forms of the common roots that are found in Malayo-Polynesian. The third branch was the West Tibetan or Tibeto-Burman, to which the present Tibetan and sub-Himalayan, with many of the Ultra-Indian dialects, including Burman, belong. Its distinctive trait is an inverse collocation which may be safely attributed to its immemorial contact with the dialects of the Scythic hordes, who have, from time to time, intruded into Tibet. Both of the continental branches are very impoverished forms of the Archaic-Himalayo-Polynesian. They are distinguished from the insular branch by the decay and in many of them the loss of the ancient phonology. From the influence of the conterminous and intrusive Chinese, or at least from a tendency which is common to them with it, they now partake in various degrees of the crude monosyllabic and tonic phonology which characterises that language. The dialects that have had the longest and closest contact with Chinese, e.g., the Anam and Siamese of the Mon-Anam branch, the Burmese and Karin of the Tibeto-Burman, are now monosyllabic and present so great a contrast to the harmonic languages of the islands, that it is not surprising that Dr. PRITCHARD and other ethnologists have classed them with the Chinese. On the other hand, many of the Gangetic dialects that have not been exposed to contact with Chinese, or with their eastern sisters since their transformation, retain harmonic and agglutinative traits, similar to those that are found with a much more free and powerful development in the Oceanic tongues.



The foreign races found in the Straits Settlements are very numerous, but to describe them, however briefly, would be to enter on the ethnology of a large portion of Asia and Europe. Chinese from Kuantung and Hok-kien furnish a large portion of our population, and Chinese from other provinces are found either among the general population, or at the Roman Catholic Mission College. Anamese, Kambojans, Burmese and natives of various parts of India, Persia, Arabia, Eastern Africa and Europe represent Continental ethnography, while, in addition to the Malays—Achinese, Battas, Javanese and Bugis represent the Oceanic. In Singapore, Dayaks, natives of the

Moluccas and other eastern islanders, are also to be found. There has also been more or less admixture of blood among all these races, with various results. The most distinct classes thus produced are the Portuguese of Malacca, who, from the non-renewal of European blood are now more Malay than Portuguese; the native Chinese of Penang and Malacca, who from constant intermarriage with fresh immigrants from China, have nearly lost all trace of their Malay ancestry on the female side; and the so-called Jawi Pakan, a class between the Kling and the Malay which retains its distinctive characters by a continued intermixture with both races of its progenitors.

Notes

1. But if the master avails himself of his power, in the case of a debt-slave, he does it at the sacrifice of the debt.—Ed.

BUDDHIST TEMPLES AND ASSOCIATIONS IN PENANG, 1845-1948

by BENNY LIOW WOON KHIN

Originally published in *JMBRAS*, Vol. 62 Pt 1 (No. 256), June 1989.

Introduction

PENANG IS A COSMOPOLITAN ISLAND where almost every ethnic group has their own place of worship. Formerly called Prince of Wales Island, Penang was established as a British settlement in 1786 by Captain Francis Light. When the immigrant races of Chinese, Thais, Burmese and Singhalese came to Penang, they also brought their religious practices with them. Hence, Buddhist temples and associations were begun by these various ethnic groups.

In this paper, I will discuss nine Buddhist temples and two associations.¹ They can be easily divided into the Theravada and Mahayana temples.² Under the Theravada school, there are four Thai temples (Wat Pin Bang Onn, Wat Chaiyamangalaram, Wat Candaram and Wat Buppharam), one Burmese temple (Dhammikarama Temple) and one Singhalese temple (Mahindarama Temple), while under the Mahayana school, I have managed to discover only three temples (Kek Lok Si, Ang Hock Si and Beow Hiang Lim Si) and two associations (Penang Buddhist Association and Phor Tay Institute). My study covers all the temples belonging to the Theravada school but leaves out the smaller Mahayana temples. It has been estimated that there are more than 100 Chinese temples alone in Penang and the main problem is to identify them as Buddhist or Taoist.³ Ancestor worship, Buddhism and Taoism all find expression in a typical Chinese temple. Hence, I have selected the above three main Buddhist temples and associations of the Mahayana tradition because I believe they are more generally accepted as 'Buddhist' by the more orthodox existing Buddhist groups, especially the nation-wide Young Buddhist Association of Malaysia.

The 1947 Census Report for Malaya conducted by M. V. del Tufo, which covered both Malaya and Singapore recorded.⁴

Muslims	approx. 2 500 000
Chinese National Religions	2 500 000
Hindus	500 000
Christians	120 000
Sikhs	18 000
Pagans	35 000
Parsis, Jews, Atheists, etc.	31 000

The word 'Buddhism' does not appear in del Tufo's Census and instead 'Chinese National Religions' was used. In a sense del Tufo was correct because the Chinese practised an amalgam of Buddhism, pseudo-Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism and some superstitious beliefs. In understanding this, we can better appreciate the roles of Buddhist temples in a situation where few so-called Buddhists really knew what Buddhism was all about.

Since this paper only covers the period up to 1948, some temples will have a very short history in my research, e.g. Beow Hiang Lim Si which began in 1942 but was fully operative only in 1946. But for others, like the Burmese Temple, there is much to write about.

Before we examine individual temples, I will discuss some of the similarities and differences I have observed among the eleven institutions covered. Firstly, all the Theravada temples were set up mainly to cater for the spiritual needs of the Thais, Burmese and Singhalese communities and less for missionary reasons. Hence, originally only Wesak, Kathina (the offering of robes to monks marking the end of Buddhist Lent), and their individual ethnic New Years were celebrated. But by the early 1920s or even earlier, the Chinese New Year was celebrated because the majority of the devotees were then Chinese.⁵ This shows the increasing dominance of the Chinese ethnic group over the Thai, Singhalese and Burmese temples. By 1948, it was quite clear that there were more Chinese Buddhist devotees at all these Theravada temples than the Thais, Sri Lankans or

Burmese. While the Chinese Buddhist temples catered to the Chinese and retained their 'Chineseness', the Theravada temples of the Thais, Burmese or Singhalese lost theirs when their congregations were outnumbered by Chinese. Chinese customs and celebrations became incorporated into these temples. A very good example is Wat Chaiyamangalaram, popularly called the Temple of the Reclining Buddha.

Originally, and even up till now, the English-educated Buddhists were usually found at the Theravada temples while the Chinese-educated Buddhists would be at the Mahayana temples. English-educated Chinese Buddhists used to frequent the Mahindarama Temple mainly because the Singhalese monks there could preach in English while Chinese Buddhist monks could not. Besides, the Straits-born Chinese were generally more prone to frequent Theravada temples than the China-born. However, many Straits-born Chinese also had mixed blood with Thais or Burmese. Even today, all Theravada temples conduct their Sunday Schools in English while the Mahayana carry out their activities in Mandarin.

Another similarity was the manner in which the various temples were run. Mahayana institutions derived their income from five main sources, viz. (1) rental from property owned (e.g. the Penang Buddhist Association), (2) donations from well-wishers, (3) incense money through offerings at the temple, (4) donations from guests who lodged at the temple, and (5) offerings made in return for prognostication or divinations.⁶ In Theravada temples, the income to maintain the temples seemed to come from the same sources. In fact, monks are not supposed to indulge themselves in making charms or magic as this violates their 227 training rules.⁷ Yet many people claim that some monks, especially the less educated ones, occasionally break this rule. But in temples where the abbots are strict, such malpractices are unheard of.⁸

Historically, therefore, we can say that Buddhist temples in Penang have played two roles; one on a popular level in the form of apotropaic Buddhism where charms, divinations and ceremonies were practised, and the other where the temples or associations only carried out orthodox religious activities with no trappings of folk elements. The Penang Buddhist Association and monks of the Mahindarama Temple

seemed to make this their emphasis, even in their very early formative years. The Ven. P. Pematana's explanation quite clearly reflected the dilemma certain strictly orthodox temples faced because not all who called themselves Buddhists were spiritually matured; the temples still had to cater for such 'Buddhists' through blessing services and making of talismans.⁹ Prof. John Bloefeld, a Western scholar and a Buddhist himself, believes that 'not all Chinese are equipped to comprehend the profundities of Mahayana Buddhism'.¹⁰ This may be true of the less educated Buddhists among the immigrant Chinese but definitely cannot be taken to represent the entire Chinese Buddhist population. After all, every major religion can be operated at both the popular and intellectual (more spiritual) level. Buddhism is therefore no exception.

Generally, Mahayana temples are more elaborate and colourful and possess more icons and images of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas (Buddhas-to-be), Arahants (enlightened disciples) and celestial beings. The Theravada temples also have their share of devas (heavenly beings) and giant Buddha images but minus the pantheon of Bodhisattvas and Cosmic Buddhas which are characteristic of Mahayana Buddhist thought.

Originally, it would appear that the architecture of the early temples in Penang were typically ethnic but the later ones adopted western styles, especially after the 1930s. The Chinese Mahayana temples do not wholly resemble those found in China; lack of materials, artisans and high costs made many temples adapt to local conditions. A good example is Beow Hiang Lim Temple.

I. THERAVADA BUDDHIST TEMPLES

1. Thai Temples

1.1 Wat Chaiyamangalaram

This is the oldest Thai Buddhist temple in Penang though not the earliest temple on the island. The site on which this historic temple stands was donated by Queen Victoria to the Thai and Burmese communities of Penang for the purpose of erecting a Buddhist temple. Its founding was traced

to 1845 when a formal presentation was made on behalf of the Queen of Britain by Governor W. L. Butterworth of the East India Company on July 22, 1845, granting the five-acre piece of land to the four Trustees, Nongmay, Boonkhan, Nankayo and Boonsoon.¹¹ The first two persons were Burmese while the last two were Thais. Therefore, what was later to become a typically Thai Buddhist temple, and today the headquarters of the Malaysian Thai Organization, was originally meant for both the Thais and Burmese in Penang. But mainly because the Burmese had already acquired their own temple, – Dhammikarama Temple – sometime earlier, just opposite the Wat Chaiyamangalaram, the Burmese community usually frequented their own temple. In line with the official British policy of non-interference in the religions of the local people, a letter was sent by Governor Butterworth to his Resident Councillor L. Garling stating that government servants must in no consideration interfere with the question of monks or the religious worship of the people.¹² (See Appendix II).

Situated on what was then the District of Telok Aier Rajah (the same site as the Burmese Temple), the temple is bounded and measured as follows: East by Brick Kiln Lane and measuring on that side 728 feet; West by Shayoo and Chee Meen's grounds 702 feet; North by Northam Road 363 feet; and South by Burmah Road 298 feet. While Northam Road, Burmah Road and Brick Kiln Lane still exist today, the other two names have since disappeared. It was estimated that the area contained 4 sq. furlongs, 42 sq. jumbas and 3 1/2 sq. feet, equivalent to 5 acres, 1 road and 28 perches agreeable to the plan endorsed and certified under the name of Loongh Mohammed Aly, the Land Measurer.¹³

Though July 22, 1845 is officially accepted as the founding date of the Wat, it is popularly believed that the exact origin was much earlier.¹⁴ According to Ven. Maha Smarn, a Thai lady was the founder but nobody seemed to know her name. Like other Thai temples, the main reason in setting up the temple was for the spiritual benefit and solace of Thai Buddhists residing in the Pulau Tikus area of Penang and not so much for directing missionary activities towards non-Buddhists.

Since its official establishment in 1845, the Wat had been served by Thai monks of the Maha Nikaya order. There have been no cases of any Burmese monks residing at the temple though it was meant for both Thais and

Burmese. The first abbot was Ven. Phra Kuad.¹⁵ He was popularly respected and possessed a magnetic personality. A monument was erected at the temple where his ashes were kept after his death. We can also see the close links among the various Thai Buddhist wats in Penang: for example, two of the abbots of this temple, Ven. Phra Chan and Ven. Phra Heng also served as abbots of Wat Pin Bang Onn in Green Lane, while Ven. Phra Keow was regarded as founder of the Wat Buppharam besides also serving as abbot of Wat Chaiyamangalaram once. The current abbot (1980) was installed on July 18, 1948 and is also the most highly decorated monk, with the title of a First Class Chao Khun conferred by the King of Thailand on Dec. 5, 1977.¹⁶

The principal buildings in the temple were basically of Thai design but later Chinese influence in architecture was present. Again, this is typical of many other Theravada temples. During those early times, most of the people living in the area called Pulau Tikus were Thais and Burmese. But Chinese Buddhist support increased as years went by. The Chinese inscriptions in the main Shrine Hall proved that the wat was well endowed by the philanthropic efforts of wealthy Chinese Buddhists. Though most Chinese Buddhists were Mahayanists, yet their frequent patronage of Theravada temples showed the Chinese flexibility in religious belief.

Inscriptions on the original Buddha image built in the mid-19th century have brought to light the names of a number of persons mostly engraved on tablets of pure gold. Altogether 48 names could be identified and they are typically Chinese-sounding names like Ang Koo, Kim Kheng, Beng Chin, Khaw Chiang and Gaik Ngoo. Though some may have mixed blood with Thais through inter-marriages, it is clearly not possible that all were half-Thais.¹⁷

The wat also celebrated a host of festivals but the most important since the founding were the Thai New Year, the July merit-making, Wesak and Kathina. However, the most interesting ceremony and one which was conducted on a grand scale was the Larg Phra festival where the Buddha image was carried in a beautifully decorated chariot to the waterfall for ceremonial purposes. Thousands of Buddhists participated, but by the end of the 19th century it had died out. Nobody knows why.¹⁸

In 1910, the wat was fully consecrated with the laying of the nine Sacred Stones or Loog Nimit. Senior monks from all over Malaya and neighboring

countries and leading Buddhist elders, including Mdm. Lim Leng Chiak, were present. By 1920, problems arose as to who should collect the rents and income of the lands owned by the wat. For some time past it was apparent that the question of the proper application of the temple's funds should be determined according to the accepted practice, and in consequence of litigation in 1920, the Court made an injunction and appointed a local business firm as the Receivers.¹⁹ (See Appendix II on the resume of the Supreme Court Judgement in 1920). As a result of the Supreme Court Judgement, the Receivers Messrs. Kennedy, Burkill and Co. Ltd. of Penang were entitled to collect all rents and profits. The money was to be used only for the upkeep and maintenance of the wat, service and lighting of the wat, maintenance and upkeep of the burial ground attached to the wat and improvement of the Trust property.²⁰

By 1930, modern residential quarters for the monks were built by a Thai lady named Nang Churne Pradheepna Thallang. She also bought a giant-size bronze Buddha image from Bangkok for the temple. Later when it was found in disrepair, a Thai sculptor Nai Laow Sirindr built a new image and its completion was witnessed amidst much pomp and in festive mood. Costing a large sum of money, it was mainly borne by Mdm Lim Eow Thoon, Mdm Ho Kim Teik, Mdm Siew Oo, Mdm Kow and Mdm Goh Say Chee. Throughout my research, it is the ladies who repeatedly appeared as being the more pious, dedicated and generous. It would be a more common sight to see a lady devotee piously burning incense or lighting some candles on festive occasions than a male devotee. But with the rise of Sunday Schools, the youths also became a popular sight at the temples.

Wat Chaiyamangalaram continued to develop after the war until it possessed the third largest Recumbent Buddha image in the world today.

1.2 Wat Pin Bang Onn

Situated in Green Lane, this Thai temple was built in 1889 but there is no trace of the founder's name. It is generally believed that the temple derived its name from a Thai lady who used to secure her hair with a hair-pin (in Thai, also 'pin') and who was very gentle (in Thai, 'bang onn'). She used to make generous donations to the temple and the wat was thus named after her.²¹ Once again, a lady was associated with the founding of a temple.

However, according to the abbot of the temple, it was founded by a man — a Chinese philanthropist named Lim Phee Chiak, uncle of Lim Eow Thoon.²² It is possible that the lady after whom this temple was named was the wife of this Lim Phee Chiak since he had a Thai wife, according to the Ven. Phra Piang. But there is no doubt that the wat was set up with the Thai community in mind.

Located on a 16-acre piece of ground surrounded by many coconut trees, the earliest portion of the wat to be built was the chapel of Bot followed by a Buddha image by Thai sculptor Nai Netr.²³ Typical of all completed Buddhist temples is the eight boundary stones or sima which are deposited in the eight cardinal points of the compass surrounding the bot. They signify sanctity and the monks can only carry out ordinations or recitation of their 227 training rules (patimokkha) within the stones. Inside the bot, in the mandapa is found the Buddha's footprint carved on a single piece of stone. This is the only temple in Penang where the sacred Buddha's Footprint is found. Before Buddha images were made, the Footprint was an object of veneration.

No significant development occurred until 1926 when a modern lodging for the abbot was built from public donations. In 1931 a Crematorium was constructed. It was once again financed by a lady devotee named Meh Yok Khim. Later, a cover was made for the crematorium because of complaints from the public of the foul smell when the corpse was burnt in the open.

Though the wat had existed since 1889, yet it was only in 1934 that the name 'Wat Pin Bang Onn' was officially given to the temple by Prince Swasdi, a son of King Chulalongkorn of Thailand. Until then, it was simply called Wat Nok or 'Outer Temple' to differentiate it from Wat Nai or 'Inner Temple' which is the next door temple, today known as the Malaysian Buddhist Meditation Centre. Prince Swasdi died in 1935 in Penang and his remains were cremated in a special pavilion in front of the bot. Present at the funeral was A. M. Goodman, the Resident Councillor of Penang who came on behalf of the British government. The British, however, did not give any financial help to the temples.

In 1941, when Japan invaded Malaya, some 400 Chinese and Thais sought refuge at the wat. They lived at the expense of the temple but the Japanese did not cause them any serious trouble other than a slap on the abbot's face when he refused to bow to a Japanese officer.²⁴ My research

shows that Japanese military officers generally followed the official order not to interfere in Buddhist temples. (See Appendix III).

When the war ended in 1945, the Thai monks who had left this country because of the war returned. Likewise, the devotees came back and everything went back to normal. In 1947 when the former Prime Minister of Thailand, Phya Manopakorn, died in Penang, his remains were preserved for some time in a special catafalque before removal to Thailand. The temple was clearly very prestigious in the eyes of the Thai Buddhists for an ex-Premier to have his ashes preserved there.²⁵

The story would be incomplete, however, without mentioning something about the current abbot of the temple who is already 85 years old. Born in Thailand, he came to Penang when he was eight years old with his mother. He was ordained in July 1937 and rose to become a Phra Khru – an Ecclesiastical Sub-District Head in 1954.²⁶ When the Japanese came, he was the only senior Thai monk remaining in Penang. He then sent four monks to look after Wat Chaiyamangalaram in Pulau Tikus. In this way, Wat Chaiyamangalaram was able to remain a Thai temple after the war, unlike Wat Sawan Arun which was taken over by the Chinese because, during the war, there were no Thai monks residing there. Before he became the abbot, there were six others before him since 1889 beginning with Ven. Phra Song, and followed by Phra Pek, Phra In, Phra Chan, Phra Heng and Phra Kong. All of them, including the current abbot, could communicate in good Hokkien with their devotees.

Wat Pin Bang Onn however was to witness a great increase in missionary activities in the 1950s and early 1960s under Ven. Phra Silananda. But since his departure for Wat Buddhapadipa in London due to immigration reasons, and because the current abbot Phor Than Bah is old and partially deaf and blind, the temple has again returned to its traditional role as a purely Thai cultural and devotional center.

1.3 Wat Candaram

What was historically known as Wat Candaram is today almost unheard of, even among those who frequent it, for it is now known as the Malaysian Buddhist Meditation Center. Information about this old Thai temple is derived from personal interviews with monks and laymen involved with

this temple and the Wat Pin Bang Onn.

Located at 355 Green Lane (now Jalan Masjid Negeri) the site was originally part of the land belonging to Wat Pin Bang Onn, according to Ven. Phra Piang, the deputy abbot of Wat Pin Bang Onn.²⁷ But later, a Chinese Buddhist temple was built there called Triple Gem Temple. But this is just one version. Another version has it that, originally there was a Chinese Buddhist temple there, but later the land was donated to Wat Pin Bang Onn. Then a few Thai monks went to stay there but due to lack of Thai monks during the Japanese occupation, the temple was left empty of monks again. When the war ended in 1945, a lay caretaker took over the temple until around 1967 when it was converted into a meditation center by the Ven. Phra Khru Abhidhammapalanana Thera.²⁸ The origin of the temple is therefore still obscure. It was also popularly known as the Wat Nok or 'Inner Wat'.

However, there is some information regarding the history of the current Chinese-style Buddhist shrine hall that still stands in the compound of 355 Green Lane. The inscriptions on the marble slabs on the walls read: 'The Triple Gem Temple, built seven years after the Chinese Revolution'. Hence, it must have been built in 1918. The poems inscribed on the other slabs and pillars clearly indicate that it was set up as a Mahayana temple. However, 1918 seems more probable to be the date when it was officially declared open or consecrated rather than when it was first built. This was because another part of the marble slabs also indicates that the temple was built during the reign of Emperor Kuang Hsu of the Ch'ing Dynasty around the middle of the 19th century. This looks consistent with what was mentioned in Yew Sim Hong's article 'Testing Days at the MBMC'. According to Yew Sim Hong, founder President of the Malaysian Buddhist Meditation Center (he is now over sixty years old), the Chinese Buddhist temple was built in the characteristic Chinese architecture of the Ong clan in the 19th century. It was called Chimpō's Temple ('chimpō' means 'aunt' in Hokkien) and was named after a lady devotee Madam Khoo Chooi Pin, who used to frequent the Mahindarama Temple. Her son, Dr. Ong Huck Chye, was responsible for the acquisition of the land for the building of a Buddhist temple. But the title deeds have since been misplaced. The Wat Pin Bang Onn had an equity claim as a care-taker of the temple land.²⁹

More information is still required about the origins of this Chinese Buddhist temple. But it ought to be noted that the temple is today once again inhabited by Thai monks and operates as a Thai Buddhist center.

1.4 Wat Buppharam

This is the most recent Thai temple to be built in Penang. Unlike Wat Chaiyamangalaram or Wat Pin Bang Onn, the exact date for the founding of this temple is not known. Located on Perak Road, next to another former Thai temple, Wat Sawan Arun, it is generally believed that Wat Buppharam must have existed during the 1930s.

Information about this temple is mainly derived from a Thai manuscript on the temple's history written by its abbot Ven. Phra Daeng. It was popularly known as Wat Sah Kak Chan among the Chinese. 'Sah Kak Chan' in Hokkien means 'Three Cornered Padi Land'. Before the war, the whole area where the Wat is now situated was originally padi-fields. Later, houses were built and development took place.³⁰ As to the origin of the Thai name 'Buppharam' nothing significant could be discovered except that it literally meant 'flower'.

The temple was started by Ven. Phra Sri Keow Suvanno who came from Songkhla Province in South Thailand. He was offered a piece of land of about 10 rai (approx. four acres) for the construction of a temple by a group of devotees. When the temple was finally constructed, the first trustees were Mdm. Kim Heoh, Mdm. Kim Liew and Mdm. Siew Ean, all of whom were Chinese. Then work was begun for the construction of 'kutis' or monks' quarters, a kitchen and a shrine hall. Ven. Phra Keow remained as abbot until he passed away at an old age in the 1950s. The lay committee members who then administered the wat were keen to see the wat prosper. They were guided by a panel of Thai Ecclesiastical Advisers: Ven. Phra Khru Paled Wieng, Phra Khru Mongkolpisarn, Phra Khru Sangharaks, Phra Khru Sophana Sangklakarn, Phra Khru Patihanathammakhod and Phra Khru Suphacharapratong.

During the Japanese occupation, the temple was devoid of monks except for Ven. Phra Keow. But the Japanese did not interfere with the wat. However, immediately after the war, Wat Buppharam was spared the fate of being lost to the Chinese Buddhists through the timely intervention of the then

Thai Consul and the Ecclesiastical Advisers, as well as two officials, Messrs Ariyee Howe and C. H. Hanson. But the Wat Sawan Arun next door was not so fortunate because Chinese Buddhist monks took over the management of the temple.

Nothing more is known about the temple until 1948. Most other significant developments occurred after 1948. Today, the wat is under the abbotship of a Kelantanese Thai monk, Phra Daeng Atipalo who officially received his Position Seal as abbot of the wat on March 9, 1980 at the Wat Chaiyamangalaram.

2. Burmese Temple

Dhammikarama Temple

This is the oldest Theravada Buddhist temple in Penang and the only Burmese temple in Malaysia. From the inscriptions on the marble slabs found in the temple, the founding date was listed as August 1, 1803 when it was first known as 'Nandy Muloh' in Burmese, meaning 'a place of public worship'. The name 'Dhammikarama' was the official name, probably derived from that of a layman called Dhammika who lived during the Buddha's time.³¹ So it is a temple dedicated to Dhammika.

But further research has led me to conclude that 1803 could not have been the founding date. According to official 'Documents on the Burmese Temple' – a file held by one of the present trustees, Yeoh Phee Tin, it was stated that the temple was sold by a certain George Layton, son of the deceased Thomas Layton to a lady named Nonia Betong for 390 Spanish dollars in trust for a Burmese temple.³² It was mentioned that on November 29, 1827 the land was sold to this Nonia Betong and on May 21, 1828 it was registered as a Buddhist temple. Thus, 1803 is clearly too early for it to have been founded. The original piece of land was granted to George Layton in 1803 by the Lt. Governor of the Prince of Wales Island Sir George Leith. At that time, the vicinity of the temple was called Tulloh Aier Rajah. Hence, the error could be in mistaking the granting of the land in 1803 as the founding date.³³

The 'Documents on Burmese Temple' listed the original size as approximately 1 sq. Orlong, 387 sq. Jumbas and 32 sq. feet, vide the Registrar

of Grants. Nonia Betong, supposed to be the founder, was also jointly recorded as one of the joint trustees of the temple with Nonia Meerut, Nonia Koloh and Nonia Bulan, all women. According to Aunty Ah Soon, caretaker of the Burmese temple who herself is half-Burmese, all of them were Burmese.³⁴ But this need not necessarily be the case because Straits-born Chinese ladies usually called themselves 'nonia' too. But there is no question that the original aim in setting up the temple was for the Burmese community to have a proper place of worship.

Monks at the temple had always been Burmese. The first abbot was Ven. U Nandamala (1803?-1842), followed by Ven. U Sutti (1842-1865), Ven. U Vicara (1865-1897), Ven. Nyanavamsa or Sami Gemuk (1897-1922), Ven. U Jagaya (1922-1957), Ven. U Vimala (1957-1972) and Ven. U Panna-vamsa (1972-). The current abbot (1980), Ven. Panna-vamsa, has however left for Los Angeles to start the first Burmese temple in the U.S. He is therefore abbot only in name since he will not be allowed to stay in Malaysia for long due to immigration reasons. An interesting fact about the early Burmese monks is that they could converse in Malay and used to speak to their devotees in that language, while Thai and Singhalese monks could communicate in Hokkien and English.³⁵ It was also during Ven. U Vicara's term of office that the first Wesak celebration to be held in Penang took place at the Burmese Temple. It was organized by Dr. Jayasekera and Mr. David, two Singhalese, but was carried out on a modest scale only.³⁶

During the Japanese occupation, the Burmese temple was literally deserted of devotees. Surprisingly, few people sought refuge at the temple while all other Buddhist temples, including the Penang Buddhist Association, were filled with hundreds of Chinese refugees escaping from the Japanese.³⁷ The most plausible reasons are that the much larger Thai temple opposite had accommodated most of those fleeing the Japanese, and the Chinese as well as other ethnic groups did not want to identify themselves with anything Burmese since Burma was then a British colony and was at war with Japan. However, the Singhalese temple at Kampar Road was flooded with refugees despite the fact that Ceylon was then the British base of operations against the Japanese in South-east Asia. The situation in the Burmese Temple during the war is thus quite strange.

Since early days, the Burmese Temple celebrated a host of festivals, many of which were typically Burmese in nature, like the Burmese New Year. Traditionally, on the first day crowds went to the temple with pots of fresh, clear water which were respectively offered to the monks. Then the images in the temple were ceremoniously washed. After that, the festival became joyous and water was sprinkled or thrown over everybody in the temple, the idea being friendliness and cleansing. Aunty Ah Soon said that such ceremonial practices died out as fewer and fewer Burmese were found in Penang through the years. The Chinese New Year was substituted as the more important festival later on.³⁸ Other festivals celebrated were the Kathina celebrations when the monks were offered saffron robes at the end of their three-month Rains Residence of strict Buddhist practice. Traditionally, the Burmese celebrated the Thagin-gyut festival to mark the end of the Rains Residence where a myriad of small lanterns lighted up the monastery throughout the night. It commemorated the return of the Buddha from Tavatimsa heaven whereby the celestial beings lined His route with candles and lights.³⁹ During the early years, such practices were also common according to Aunty Ah Soon.

Today, with very few Burmese left in Penang, and most of them having been assimilated into the Chinese community through inter-marriages, the Burmese Temple is supported by the Chinese Buddhists who follow the Theravada tradition. But the monks continue to be Burmese from Burma. Nevertheless, this too seems to be coming to an end as the government is now more strict on foreign monks residing permanently in Malaysia.

3. Sri Lankan Temple

Mahindarama Temple

This is the only Sinhalese temple in Penang and it belongs to the Theravada tradition. All the monks at this temple were ordained under the Siam Nikaya Order. The temple was founded in 1918 by Ven. Attudawe Pamaratana who came from Dikwella in Ceylon. The temple was originally called the Caunter Hall Buddhist Temple, but later became known as the Mahindarama Temple. It was thus named after King Asoka's son,

Ven. Mahinda, who brought Buddhism to Ceylon.

The origins of the temple are associated with a visit originally made to Thailand with Ven. A. Pematatana. This Singhalese monk then stopped at Penang with his disciple Appuhamy where they stayed at the Batu Lancang Cemetery. Ven. A. Pematatana then began to preach Buddhism and this attracted a number of devotees, mainly Singhalese, Indians, Chinese and Thais. With this, the Ven. A. Pematatana decided to found a Buddhist temple in the Ceylonese style.

Efforts to build the temple materialized when a Ceylonese resident, M. V. Gregory bought a piece of land in Jelutong and offered it to Ven. A. Pematatana. But because of its locality being far away from the residential areas, M. V. Gregory bought another piece of land at Caunter Hall and offered it to Ven. A. Pematatana. The monk accepted this offer and a small shrine room was set up. Then a Buddhist school named after the Buddha's chief disciple, Sariputta, was established. Both Buddhism and English were taught in the religious school. According to Ven. P. Pematatana, the original intention was to provide a religious place of worship for the Singhalese community.⁴¹ But like all other Theravada temples, the Chinese Buddhists later dominated it in terms of numbers.

The site of the Caunter Hall Temple was however often flooded. Plans were made to find another locality. In 1921, Ven. A. Pematatana bought a new piece of land at Kampar Road and decided to build a new temple there. In the meantime, his disciple Ven. W. Sumanasara carried on activities at the Caunter Hall Temple. In 1926, Ven. A. Pematatana managed to return to Penang from Ceylon with Buddha images and the '24 past Buddhas' images for the temple. The '24 Buddhas' are the past Buddhas, just as Gotama is considered by Buddhists to be the most recent Buddha. In 1926 also, Ven. K. Gunaratana arrived in Penang. Ven. K. Gunaratana then made the first appeal to the British government to declare Wesak a public holiday. However, it was only after the end of the war that this wish was granted.⁴²

In July 1927, the founder Ven. A. Pematatana died. After a funeral lasting three days, his body was cremated at the Wat Pin Bang Onn in Green Lane. Even some Malays paid their respects to the late monk. According to the current abbot, Ven. P. Pematatana (not related to the founder A. Pematatana)

the Malays during those days used to ask the monks for medicine and herbs.⁴³ When he was alive, the Ven. A. Pematana also delivered lectures at the Penang Buddhist Association. This tradition of Singhalese Theravada monks lecturing at a Chinese Mahayanist association was continued by Ven. K. Gunaratana and the current abbot. There was no theological conflict among the various Buddhist temples set up by different ethnic groups of both the Theravada and Mahayana traditions.

After Ven. A. Pematana's death, efforts to extend the temple continued but lack of money hindered progress. In 1937, only \$3,500 had been collected during the past ten years; but there was still a need for \$43,500 for the Shrine Hall, kitchen and monks' quarters.⁴⁴ But Ven. Sumanasara (1927–1933) who succeeded the founder travelled all over Singapore and Burma collecting donations, and he collected altogether \$12,500. A certain Mdm. Lim Siew Chin donated \$5,000 and a set of the Pali Tipitaka (scriptures of the Theravada school) in Burmese script to the temple. The Penang Buddhist Association also made generous donations to the temple.

A Buddhist association called Nanodaya was also founded by the Ven. Sumanasara. It existed until the name was changed to the Mahindarama Sunday Pali School. On Wesak Day in 1930, the Mahindarama Temple was officially declared open. Two Chinese Buddhists were appointed trustees, Messrs. Lim Joo Chong and Lee Geok Chye, on July 8, 1933. But when the Ven. Sumanasara disrobed in 1933 due to poor health, he was also given a share in the trusteeship.

Ven. K. Gunaratana succeeded as abbot in 1933 till 1964. He was helped by Ven. M. A. Upananda Thera who became the abbot from 1965 to 1975 after Ven. Gunaratana's death. In 1936, Ven. K. Gunaratana and Mdm. Cheah Kim Ho were appointed joint trustees of the temple. Like other Theravada temples, the principal Buddhist festivals of Wesak, Kathina, Magha puja, Mahinda Day, Singhalese New Year and Chinese New Year were celebrated there.

During the Japanese occupation, the temple was crowded with many hundreds of people fleeing the Japanese. Like other temples, the Mahindarama Temple was a safe sanctuary for them. Food was provided by the temple. According to the Ven. P. Pematana, there was no instance of Japanese soldiers damaging the temple or disturbing the monks.⁴⁵

After the war, normal activities resumed. The history of Mahindarama Temple would be incomplete without a sketch of the life of the Ven. K. Gunaratana. He was an authority on Buddhism, well-versed in Pali, Sanskrit and Comparative Religion. He was appointed to a number of posts in Penang – Advisor to the Wesak Holiday Camp, Advisor to the Penang Juvenile Buddhist Center, and Advisor to the Penang Buddhist Youth Center which he founded. However, these groups were either later defunct or absorbed into other temples or Buddhist associations.

Ven. K. Gunaratana died in 1964 and was succeeded by Ven. M. A. Upananda who was again succeeded by Ven. P. Pematana when he passed away in 1974, and under the abbotship of Ven. P. Pematana the temple's numerous Buddhist activities continued.

II. MAHAYANA BUDDHIST TEMPLES

1. Chinese Temples

1.1 Kek Lok Si

Considered to be the largest Buddhist temple in South-east Asia, the Kek Lok Si was officially opened on Jan. 13, 1905 though it was completed in 1904. The official opening of the temple was witnessed by thousands of people amidst great pomp. The procession moved from the Chinese Town Hall in Pitt Street to the temple at Ayer Itam where it is still located today.

The name of the temple implies that it belonged to the Pure Land school of Mahayana Buddhism (in Chinese, ch'ing-tu; in Japanese, shin). The word 'Kek Lok' is the Chinese equivalent of the Sanskrit term 'Sukhavati' which means 'pure land'. 'Si' is used for all temples. Thus, in English it is usually rendered as 'Temple of Paradise', the 'paradise' here referring to the 'pure land' of Mahayana Buddhism.

There is an interesting story as to why the particular site was chosen for the temple. The founder, Ven. Beow Lean chose Ayer Itam because its summit appeared to him to resemble a gigantic white crane with its enormous wings outstretched against the azure sky. Thus, it was called Crane Hill, the crane being an emblem of longevity in Chinese belief. To the left of Crane Hill, was

a summit resembling a Blue Dragon, a symbol of vigilance; to its right was the summit of a white elephant, sacred to Buddhism. And the three peaks reminded Ven. Beow Lean of his native Foochow monastery.⁴⁶

The temple also received an Imperial Sanction issued by Emperor Kuang Hsu of the Manchu Dynasty. It was imprinted on an artistically carved tablet, painted in red and gold, accompanied by a fine piece of yellow silk bearing Chinese characters and representations of dragons.⁴⁷ (See Appendix IV for contents of the tablet.) Emperor Kuang also presented 70,000 volumes of Buddhist scriptures to the temple.

The man most responsible for the founding was Ven. Beow Lean who came to South-east Asia in 1885 to raise funds for the renovation of the Fa T'ang at Kuei Shan Monastery in Foochow. He visited Penang in 1885 and 1887. In 1889, Ven. Beow Lean and Ven. Poon Teong came to Penang again. According to the Penang Gazette and Straits Chronicles of Feb. 21, 1889, there was some trouble at the Pitt Street Kong Hok Temple over the unsatisfactory activities of the monks there. As a result, twenty of Penang's leading citizens (including Foo Tye Sin, Khaw Boo Aun, Khoo Thean Teik and Cheah Teik Soon) were appointed as the new Trustees in 1887, with the power to appoint and remove monks. The Ven. Beow Lean was then invited to take charge of the Pitt Street temple despite protests from the monks there.⁴⁸ With this, Ven. Beow Lean set his mind to building a new temple in Penang where monks could also reside in a more suitable locality to practise Buddhism.

With financial support from devotees in China, Ven. Beow Lean was fortunate to acquire a 10-acre site from a Hokkien Buddhist, Yeoh Sew Beow of Stewart Lane. The Penang Land Office Registry show that transfer of this site to the temple authorities was finally effected in September 1893.⁴⁹

The first building to be erected was the Hall of Bodhisattvas in 1893, two years before the final official transfer of land to the Ven. Beow Lean. In 1895, the main building was constructed by Ven. Beow Lean, Ven. Poon Teong and Ven. Teik Joo. In 1897, the principal shrine of the Kek Lok Si was completed. In 1898, the top most tier called the Tower of Sacred Books was also finished where the Mahayana Buddhist scriptures were stored. The great philanthropists who made all these constructions possible were Chang Chin Hsun, Tjong Jiok Nam, Chung Ah Quee. Cheah Soon Sang and

Tye Kee Yoon, generally called the Five Great Sponsors.⁵⁰ In 1915, the Pagoda of Ten Thousand Buddhas was built but work had to stop because of the First World War. It was however completed in 1930 when building materials from overseas were again available. The entire cost was around \$200,000 and was borne by Mdm Lim Leng Cheak, nee Tay Say Seang. Called the Pagoda of Rama VI because the Thai King performed the Foundation Laying ceremony, this was another example in early times of the close relations between the Theravada and Mahayana schools in Malaysia. The Pagoda is divided into three sections; the octagonal base being Chinese, the middle base was Thai and the topmost was Burmese. But it is rather strange why the Singhalese element was not included.

Besides being a great religious center, Kek Lok Si's founding also sheds light on the official policy of the Manchu Dynasty towards the overseas Chinese. Originally, the Manchus had discouraged the Chinese to leave the country. For instance, Emperor Chen Lung imposed a severe penalty on a certain Tan Iko for going to Indonesia and his property was confiscated.⁵¹ But by 1875, there were petitions calling for the establishment of legations and consulates overseas to look after the interests of the Overseas Chinese. This seems to be in line with the Self-Strengthening Movement in China. When Emperor Kuang Hsu (1875–1908) gave Imperial Sanction to Kek Lok Si, it was more than just an imperial document; it represented a change in official Manchu policy. But nevertheless, China still regarded Penang (and South-east Asia) as within its sphere of influence, when the Imperial Sanction was given. In fact, this is the only temple in Penang to receive such an Imperial Sanction; the Pitt Street temple built in 1800 never received one. By this, it also implied that Ven. Beow Lean had received an official diploma of ordination to build temples.⁵² For instance, when the temple was completed, the Chinese Consul in Penang, Liang Pi Ju transmitted the report on the temple to Peking and Ven. Beow Lean was summoned to Peking to report in more detail, showing that China still regarded temple building outside China as Chinese business.

Both monks and laymen have served as Trustees of this temple. The present abbot, (1980) Ven. Pai Sheng, like all his predecessors Ven. Beow Lean (1891-1907), Ven. Poon Teong (1907–1936), Ven. Wan Yin (1937–1947) and Ven.

Chee Khoon (1948–1953) were Buddhist monks from China. Ven. Pai Sheng is now also the President of the Buddhist Association of the Republic of China (BARGC) in Taiwan. So far local monks have not been able to become abbots of the temple but the lay trustees were mainly local persons. They included Tye Sook Yuen, Chee Wor Lok, Lim Eow Thoon, Khoo Sian Ewe and Khoo Chye Hean.

Today, Kek Lok Si is not only a great religious and spiritual center but also a tourist attraction on the island.

1.2 Ang Hock Si

Literally 'Brightly Prosperous Temple' – in Hokkien, Ang Hock Si – was originally a Thai Buddhist temple named Wat Sawan Arun. Located on Perak Road next to Wat Buppharam it is today run along Mahayana Buddhist lines since the Pacific War.

The origin of the temple began in 1911 when the mother of Lim Eow Thoon, Mdm. Tan Say Siang (Mrs. Lim Leng Cheak) donated a piece of land to build a Buddhist temple for the Thai monks. But no Thai monks came to reside there permanently and there was no Thai abbot at the temple. The Thai monks who used to go to Wat Sawan Arun then were 'wandering' monks. Hence, they were not concerned about the maintenance of the temple; this resulted in the wat being unkempt and dirty, with leaks and damaged buildings.⁵³ The wat was devoid of all activities and devotees were few. In a sense, this accounted for the lack of proper records during the early years. Also, the better-kept and better run Thai temple next door attracted more devotees.

During the Japanese occupation, most of the Thai monks in Malaya left for Thailand. Wat Sawan Arun was thus completely devoid of any Thai monks. It was then that Lim Eow Thoon invited Chinese Mahayana Buddhist monks to reside in the temple. They have stayed on till today. This changeover was possible because the building, even though it was originally meant for a Thai temple, the temple did not have a Thai abbot and the Thai monks were not resident monks. Hence, seeing a need for more dedicated monks who will remain there permanently, the Chinese monks were invited to take over. Also at that time, there were too few Thai monks left in Penang to occupy the wat; hence, there was no complaint from the Thai Sangha in Malaya.⁵⁴ But after the War, some Thai monks were rather unhappy over this change.

The author of 'A Biography of Phra Khru Sangharaks Bah' said that "because there were no monks to reside at Wat Sawan Arun, we lost it which had all along been a temple belonging to Thai members of the Sangha."⁵⁵

Today, the only trace of Thai influence still in this temple is a big stupa at the back which is typical of Thai Buddhist architecture. But Thai monks still regret the loss of the temple. The deputy abbot of Wat Pin Bang Onn still refers to Ang Hock Si as a Thai temple.

The period of Thai influence passed, Ven. Chi Hung from China took over the temple in 1942 and became the first abbot of Ang Hock Si. The Thai name of the temple was abandoned and 'Ang Hock Si' was used instead. During the Japanese occupation, the temple was respected by the Japanese, some of whom even paid homage to the Buddha.⁵⁷ Ven. Chi Hung and some Chinese Buddhist monks also carried out preaching sessions at the Penang prisons and there were no Japanese obstructions.

After the defeat of the Japanese in 1945, Ven. Pen Thau came from China to succeed Ven. Chi Hung. Ven. Pen Thau also built a small Buddhist temple in Pulau Jerjak for inmates of the Detention Centre at that time. The prison visits were also continued and chanting sessions at funerals were begun for devotees who requested it. The small temple was playing a more active role in promoting Buddhism compared to when it was under the Thai monks. During Ven. Pen Thau's abbotship, there were over 1,000 devotees at the temple. They were required to pay \$1.50 monthly as members: the \$1.00 for the building fund and remaining 50 cts. for religious services like buying incense and candles. However, after Independence, this had to stop because as a temple, Ang Hock Si was not allowed to collect subscriptions. As a result, devotees made donations. Ven. Pen Thau remained as abbot until 1968 when he was succeeded by Ven. Yee Thuan Bal. At the time of writing (1980) Ven. Yee Thuan was undergoing a three-year observance of silence and strict meditation at the Cameron Highlands Buddhist monastery. This is a part of the Buddhist practice of mental culture.

The loss of a Thai Buddhist temple to the Chinese Buddhists has made many other Thai temples in Penang realize that if they did not change their activities and outlook, they too might find other Thai temples falling into the hands of the Chinese. Partly because of this, more Chinese elements were added to their temples and Sunday Schools also started in a few Thai temples.

1.3 Beow Hiang Lim Temple

Construction of this temple first began in 1942 but due to the war in this country, it was only in 1946 that the temple was fully operative. Beow Hiang Lim Si is a Chinese Buddhist temple of the Mahayana school following the Pure Land tradition. It was the first major Buddhist temple to have its beginnings during the turbulent years of the Pacific War.

Before the temple was founded, the entire area where it is now situated was covered by coconut trees. Hence, the name 'Beow Hiang Lim' when translated could mean something like "the peculiar fragrance of the Dhamma penetrating the entire forest'. The piece of land for the temple was donated by a devout Buddhist couple, Mr. and Mrs. Lim Beng Chow who were converted to the Buddha's teaching after listening to a sermon by Ven. Hoay Chuan in Bukit Mertajam. When they found out that Ven. Hoay Chuan had no permanent place to preach, a piece of land was purchased and donated to the venerable preacher on which a temple could be constructed.⁵⁸

But in 1944, Ven. Hoay Chuan passed away and was succeeded by Ven. Kuang Yi (1944-1950) as abbot. Thus, during the war only a building was completed for the monks. Plans to build the Hall of Bodhisattva Ksitigarbha (in Chinese, Tay Chong Ong) did not materialize due to lack of funds and building materials. After the war, Ven. Kuang Yi went with two female disciples, Chen Hsuan Lee and Lee Lean Chau, to collect donations as far away as Singapore. It was finally completed in 1948.

The monks used Hokkien to preach to the devotees. But they were ignorant of English or Malay since they came from China and they could also speak Mandarin. The activities of the temple reflect the aims, i.e. to spread the Bodhisattva ideal of great compassion through organizing Buddhist lectures, chanting sessions and other related programs.⁵⁹ The festivals celebrated at the temple then, as now, included Wesak and birthdays of Bodhisattvas. Talks on Buddhism were delivered by the monks, chanting sessions carried out by the devotees and vegetarianism observed on certain 'holy' days. A typical practice at the temple was the 'closing of sutra chanting' just before the Chinese New Year. This is just part of a Chinese Buddhist custom to start everything new in a New Year, including starting to chant a Buddhist sutra. This practice is still in vogue today.

The temple is today run by trustees headed by the abbot, Ven. Kuang Yee who is undertaking a giant extension project which will make it the second largest temple in Malaysia when completed.

BUDDHIST ASSOCIATIONS

1. Penang Buddhist Association

The Penang Buddhist Association or PBA for short was registered with the Registrar of Societies on Feb. 25, 1925 according to the Government Gazette Notification No. 441 of March 6, 1925.⁶⁰ The founders were listed as Lee Swee Bee, Lim Chean Seang, Lim Boon Chin, Lim Eu Teong, Ong Boon Sin, Lim Teong Aik, Teoh Teik Thuan, Chew Eng Bang and Lim Say Eng.

Before looking into the history of the PBA, it is important to know briefly the history of its predecessor, the Penang Buddhist Research Association or PBRA in short. It began with Ven. Tsing Hsiu who stopped at Penang on his way home to China, and was invited by Ven. Kwang Tung of Penang to lecture on a Mahayana sutra at the Kuan Im Teng Temple in Pitt Street. Ven. Tsing Hsiu then lectured in Mandarin and Ven. Hai Tsi translated it into Hokkien. But even the monks, not to mention the devotees, were at a loss when they listened to a profound exposition on Buddhism.⁶¹ When in 1923 another learned monk was invited from China to preach Buddhism in Penang by Ven. Kwang Tung, the abbot of Kong Hock Keong Si, it was felt that a Buddhist association was needed. The aim was that this association should impart the Buddha's teachings to the Buddhists in Penang since many had shown some interest during earlier talks by the visiting monks. Hence, Messrs. Cheah Soo Tuan, Goh Siew Chuan, Lee Swee Bee, Chuah Aik Yeow, Say Thiat Sit and Lim Boon Chin went about to establish the PBRA with Siang Kheng Si as its premises in Perak Road. Messrs. Lee Swee Bee and a few others then got the Protector of Chinese to agree to its formation in 1925. The name was then changed to the Penang Buddhist Association.⁶²

The aim of the PBA was to study the Buddhist teachings free from defective influences of local superstitions and their degrading practices.⁶³ This was in reference to the rather un-Buddhistic practices carried out at the

Kuan Imm Teng Si in Pitt Street. But as M. Francis points out “nowhere in the rules and bye-laws is an attempt made to define specifically what was meant by the doctrine of the Buddha, nor was any measure mentioned, which would guard against the possibility of the association reverting to, in its own terms, malpractices such as that practised in the Pitt Street Temple.”⁶⁴ Thus, in 1927 Ven. Kee Tong found that malpractices were those of burning paper houses and elaborate funeral processions accompanied by musicians.

Though it was a Mahayana Buddhist association, the PBA had all along been ecumenical in its activities and outlook. The first Buddhist lectures were delivered by Ven. Hai San, a Mahayana Buddhist monk and Ven. A. Pematatana, a Theravada Buddhist monk. Wesak was celebrated on the date generally accepted by Theravada countries (i.e. during May) in the association. But the birthday celebrations of Bodhisattvas Kuan Yim, Manjusri and Ksitigarbha and Cosmic Buddhas like Amitabha' were given equal prominence. There was clearly no doctrinal conflict with the Theravada.

Even though the PBA was formally established in 1925, it was only four years later that a piece of land was bought opposite the Datuk Kramat Padang and the association building was finally completed in 1931. In Chinese, it took the name of 'Pin Sia Hood Hake Ee', a direct translation of PBA. All the while, the PBA had been using the premises of Siang Kheng Si in Perak Road and later Kim Ho Keong Si in Datuk Kramat Road. Construction did not stop in 1931 for in 1935 a new stretch of land was bought and houses were built on it. The monks' quarters was also enlarged to cater for a larger number of Chinese monks.

It was also during the 1928 to 1934 period that life membership was made available to devotees who made donations of \$120.00 and above. For \$240.00 and more, the donor would receive both a life membership and a place at the ancestral tablet.⁶⁶ In 1930, the first Provident Fund was set up for the purpose of allowing members to enjoy benefits. Membership totalled 540 in 1930 and there was an increase each year. A second Provident Fund was set up in 1949 due to popular requests, and a third one in 1951. There was a minimal sum of \$3.00 as an entrance fee and a monthly subscription of \$1.00. From 1930 to 1935, out of a total membership of 7,062 in the PBA, 3,761 were Provident Fund members; from 1936 to 1940, out of a total membership

of 16,164 there were 12,011 Provident Fund members. There were however no figures available during the war years.⁶⁷ From this, we may wonder whether people join truly to study Buddhism or to benefit from the Provident Fund.

PBA was by then the richest Buddhist institution in Penang. In 1939, it owned 49 terrace houses and three bungalows. These houses were rented only to members.⁶⁸ The profits derived from these rents were thus substantial. The PBA was therefore able to make generous donations. From 1933 to 1934, PBA made the following donations: \$250.00 to the Indian and Asiatic Employment Fund and the Indian Relief Fund and \$200.00 to the Po Leung Kuk; from 1935 to 1937, \$400.00 to Po leung Kuk, \$1,441 to unemployed families, \$1,000 to the University of Amoy in China, \$708.00 to the Ayer Itam Flood Relief, \$4,000 to the Silver Jubilee Home for the Aged, \$200.00 to the Malayan Chinese Olympics and \$5,000 to the Silver Jubilee of King George V. Some \$1,000 was also donated for the expenses of five Chinese monks who came to reside in PBA. During the same period a grant of \$10,000 was made to the China Relief Fund, 200 rupees to Ceylon for Wesak, \$550.00 to the Pulau Jerjak Fund and \$300.00 to the Penang Sanitorium. The PBA was thus acting as a great philanthropic institution. By 1937, the Old Folks Home at Sungei Dua had already received more than \$30,000.

Donations to temples were also generous. The Mahindarama Temple received \$1,000 and temples in India also benefitted from the PBA overseas donations. But during the war, donations stood still. After the war, it was found that the PBA had been forced to make 'voluntary gifts' to the Japanese military administration of some \$46,547.19.⁶⁹ This was PBA's share of the \$50 million all Chinese communities had to pay to the Japanese military in return for the release of expropriated Chinese property and the protection of Chinese lives.⁷⁰

After the war, a historic Peace Service was held in the shrine hall of the PBA which was attended by the then Governor-General Sir Malcolm MacDonald, Dr. Ong Chong Keng, JP, and other VIPs. The PBA continued to play its role as both a religious body promoting Buddhism and a socio-charitable body.

A function which was peculiar and most innovative, according to many, was the solemnizing of weddings in front of the image of the Buddha at the PBA. This was something unheard of in any Theravada temple.⁷¹ Even

in many Mahayana temples, marriage was considered as a strictly secular affair and nothing to do with monks. The PBA's innovation can thus be seen as an attempt to give a religious meaning to an otherwise traditionally secular affair. It could also be looked upon as trying to prove to Buddhists that what Christian priests could do in churches during weddings, Buddhist monks could perform equally well. Likewise, this attempt to follow many Christian missionary activities was reflected in the popularity of Buddhist hymns sung in the same style as some Christian hymns. By the 1950s when a Youth Section existed, there were programs like picnics, study groups, hymn singing sessions and preachings carried out by the younger generation. However, the solemnizing of marriages was later discouraged and is now almost unheard of.

Just as Thai, Burmese and Singhalese temples functioned as centres of their own respective ethnic cultures, languages and beliefs, the PBA played its role as a Chinese Buddhist institution by promoting Mandarin classes for many of its English-educated members, under Mr. Quo Da Wan.⁷² Chinese cultural dances were also taught.

In conclusion, we can say that the PBA was the first Buddhist institution which realized the need to present a correct picture of Buddhism to the public, free from the trappings of superstitions and malpractices.

2. Phor Tay Institute

The Phor Tay Institute today runs an orphanage, a primary school and a secondary school. Both the primary and secondary schools are now controlled by the government on the same lines as other Christian mission schools. The orphanage is still under the Institute. As the schools were set up only after the Pacific War ended, my paper will deal mainly with the Institute itself.

The Phor Tay Institute was set up in 1936 by a Buddhist nun of the Mahayana tradition named Hong Lien. The three-acre site on which the Institute was first set up was donated by a group of devout Buddhist devotees, Lim Phaik Ewe, Khoo Ai Lian, Lim Kwee Gaik, Yap Chai Siew, Ho Siew Hoon and Lim Kean Sean. They were also the ones who helped Ven. Hong Lien to start the Institute which became a Buddhist Nunnery.⁷⁴

The aims of the Institute were to spread Buddhism, promote Buddhist education and to set up an orphanage as part of its overall welfare and charitable contribution to society. Thus, before 1940, there were already some orphans at the Institute. They were all Buddhists but non-Buddhists were also allowed to join.⁷⁵

After Ven. Hong Lien's death, Mdm Tan Kuang Chung took control. She too became a nun and adopted the name Hui Chi. Helping the bhikshuni (Hui Chi) was another devotee, Goh Kwan Teng who also entered nunhood later, adopting the name Chui Lien. A third lay female disciple, Tan Chee Hua, helped in the running of the Institute.

In 1938, the Institute began a 'Free School' under Upasika Ong Loong Shu which was later to become the Phor Tay Primary School. Lessons were conducted in Mandarin and Buddhism was a compulsory subject. The orphanage was also expanding and around forty orphans were being cared for by the nuns.⁷⁶ It was also Ong Loon Shu who introduced the famous Chinese philanthropist Aw Boon Haw to the activities of the Institute and its orphanage. Convinced of the good work the Buddhist nuns were doing, Aw Boon Haw donated \$50,000 for the building of the Free School. Work continued until 1941 when Japan invaded Malaya. The Free School then stopped functioning.

But during the Japanese occupation, the nuns were not interfered with, or disturbed by the Japanese. It was reported that when the Japanese entered the Institute searching for British soldiers, they immediately retraced their steps when they reached the shrine hall. Instead, they saluted the Buddha image inside the shrine hall. Even when everybody in the Bagan Jermal area was required to line up at the big field there, the nuns were exempted and allowed to remain in the Institute.⁷⁷ Thus, we find a general trend of Japanese soldiers not interfering in Buddhist institutions all over Penang. Looting or desecration of temples by Japanese soldiers was unheard of.

When the British returned to Malaya, the Institute was able to continue its activities. In September 1945, plans for setting up a primary school were proposed and on Jan. 12, 1946, the Phor Tay Primary School was born. The medium of instruction was Mandarin and the subjects taught

included Buddhism, Mandarin, Chinese History, Geography, Arithmetic, Nature Study and English. The first headmistress was Mdm Tan Saw Eng. Students attending the school were usually Buddhists, living around the Bagan Jermal area. Many Chinese Buddhist parents preferred to send their daughters to a Buddhist school than a Christian one for fear of their children being converted to Christianity.⁷⁸ In 1948, the Phor Tay Secondary School was established and the subjects and curriculum were based on those of other Chinese schools, but with emphasis on Buddhism. Subjects taught still included Chinese History and Geography. Mdm Ong Loong Shu was then appointed honorary headmistress of the primary school.

Many of the orphans at the orphanage also had their education at the Phor Tay primary and secondary schools. They had a routine everyday: morning religious service at the temple inside the compound, then to school, and then back to the orphanage where they were sometimes taken out for shows or to attend other 'decent' activities like sewing. They also had three meals a day and all food was strictly vegetarian.⁷⁹ The nuns look after them well.

In conclusion, the greatest contribution the Institute has made to the Buddhist community in Penang is education. Apart from a primary school in Malacca, the Phor Tay High School in Penang is the only other Buddhist-run school in Malaysia. Though now controlled by the government, the school has managed to instil Buddhist elements into many of the school's activities, ranging from religious classes to Wesak concerts. And in terms of welfare activities, the Phor Tay Orphanage is also the only Buddhist orphanage in Malaysia.

IV. Buddhist temples and associations in Penang, 1948–1971: A Brief Survey

Mahayana Buddhist institutions mushroomed after the last war. In 1945, the Hua Giam Si was established in Datuk Kramat Road. In 1950, Hiang Sun Si was set up in Tanjung Tokong. In the mid-1950s, Suan Chin Si in Perak Road and Poh Ern Si were added to the number of Mahayana temples. In 1957, Ven. Chuk Mor opened the Buddhist Triple Wisdom Hall, formerly known as Chu Yuen Chin Sir, in Pangkor Road. It is a meditation centre. In 1955, the PBA Youth Circle was founded by an American Buddhist monk,

Ven. Dr. Sumangala. It became the first Buddhist youth circle in Malaysia. Ven. Chuk Mor also founded the Malaysian Buddhist Association at Kek Lok Si in 1959; in 1971, it moved to its new premises at 182 Burmah Road. The Young Buddhist Association of Malaysia, founded in 1970 during a seminar at the University of Malaya, used the premises at 182 Burmah Road till 1979 when it moved to its new address at 38 Dickens Street.

With the founding of the World Fellowship of Buddhists in Sri Lanka, a regional centre in Penang was established in 1951 by Khoo Soo Jin and Khoo Soo Ghee. However, no new Theravada temples were set up after 1948 but changes occurred at Theravada temples. In 1955, Ven. Silananda set up a Sunday School at Wat Pin Bang Onn. In 1958, Ven. Maha Smar opened a Sunday School at Wat Chaiyamangalaram. In 1957, a Benevolent Fund was also set up at the same temple by the abbot, Ven. Phra Khru Daeng. However, the Youth Sections at both temples were short-lived. In 1968, the Malaysian Buddhist Meditation Centre was formed. It became the first meditation temple in Malaysia, where Buddhist meditation was taught systematically. Much of the success was due to the abbot, Ven. Phra Khru Dhammabarnchanvud. Ven. P. Pematatana also established the Mahindarama Sunday Pali School in 1959. In the Burmese Temple, the arrival of Ven. U. Panna-vamsa led to an increase in missionary activities and preaching sessions by him. Ven. Panna-vamsa even taught the Abhidhamma (Buddhist metaphysics) to his devotees.

Conclusion

In this study, we have seen the frequent changes in the role of the various temples in promoting Buddhism in the country. While some temples and associations preferred to remain as institutions of 'folk' Buddhism, others chose to propagate a more refined and rational form of Buddhism. Historically, it appears that this trend will continue to repeat itself.

Notes

1. In carrying out this research, some problems were encountered. The language problem was one. Except for the Sri Lankan monks, none of the other monks could understand English. Luckily, they could speak Hokkien. Another problem was lack of proper documents and records concerning the temples; hence, in certain cases, my data of the temple's history were derived from personal interviews.
2. Theravada Buddhism (sometimes wrongly called Hinayana) is practised in Thailand, Burma and Sri Lanka. Formerly, before the Communist invasion, it was also widely followed in Cambodia, Laos and parts of South Vietnam. It used the Pali scriptures as its source while the Mahayana school, a much later development, uses Sanskrit instead of Pali. The Mahayana tradition is today found in Taiwan (formerly part of China), South Korea and Japan. Tibet and Mongolia also used to practise a more esoteric form of Mahayana Buddhism called Vajrayana, before their control by the Communists.
3. F. Brewer, "Temples in Penang", *Penang* (Penang, 1952), pp. 40–45.
4. Colin McDougall, *Buddhism in Malaya* (Singapore, 1956), p. 33.
5. Personal Interview with Ven. Phra Khru Sangharaks, abbot of Wat Pin Bang Onn, 85 years old, on Jan. 20, 1980.
6. John Bloefeld, *Mahayana Buddhism in South-east Asia* (Singapore, 1971) pp. 13–14.
7. Nanamoli Thera, *The Patimokkha* (Bangkok, 1966) talks about the 227 fundamental rules of a Theravada Buddhist monk.
8. Personal Interview with Mr. Lee Kum Fook, long time preacher and translator at the Malaysian Buddhist Meditation Center, 51 years old, on Feb. 3, 1980. His mother was a Thai.
9. Personal Interview with Ven. P. Pematana, abbot of Mahindarama Temple, aged 66, on Jan. 12, 1980.
10. John Bloefeld, op. cit., p. 13.
11. Nai Deng Sararaks, *History of Wat Chaiyamangalaram* (Penang, 1948), p. 1.
12. See Appendix 1
13. Nai Deng Sararaks, op. cit., p. 4.
14. Interview with Ven. Maha Smarn, resident monk and former Secretary of Wat Chaiyamangalaram, aged 52, on Feb. 14, 1980.
15. Ven. Phra Kuad was succeeded by Ven. Thong, Ven. Chan, Ven. Keow, Ven. Nim, Ven. Nuam, Ven. Heng, Ven. Phoon, Ven. Choom, Ven. Leun, Ven. Boonchuay and finally Ven. Daeng who is still in 1980 the abbot.
16. Interview with Ven. Maha Smarn on Feb. 14, 1980.
17. *ibid.*
18. Nai Deng Sararaks, op. cit., p. 9.
19. *ibid.*, p. 11.
20. *ibid.*, p. 13.
21. Interview with Ven. Phra Piang, deputy abbot of Wat Pin Bang Onn, aged 45, on Jan. 20, 1980.
22. Interview with Ven. Phra Khru Sangharaks on Jan. 20, 1980.
23. Nai Deng Sararaks, 'History of the Wat Pin Bang Onn', *Wat Pin Bang Onn 80th Anniversary Souvenir* (Penang, 1970), p. 12.
24. Interview with Ven. Phra Khru Sangharaks on Jan. 20, 1980.
25. Nai Deng Sararaks, op. cit., p. 13.
26. See Jane Bunnag, *Buddhist Monk, Buddhist Layman* (Cambridge, 1973), p. 196, for honorific titles given to Thai monks.
27. Interview with Ven. Phra Piang on Jan. 20, 1980.
28. Interview with Mr. Lee Kum Fook on Feb. 3, 1980.
29. See Yew Sim Hong, *Testing Days at the MBMC* (unpublished article) for a letter written by Ven. Phra Sangharaks and Mr. Nai Suwan Buramakula to Ven. Phra Khru Abhdihammपालानana Thera giving him the permission to set up the meditation center.
30. Interview with Mr. Lee Kum Fook on Feb. 3, 1980. Mr. Lee stayed in the Perak Road area when he was young.
31. For an English translation of the Dhammika Sutta of the Sutta Nipata, read John D. Ireland, *The Discourse Collection* (Kandy, ?), pp. 4–7.
32. Interview with Mr. Yeoh Phee Tin, trustee of the Burmese Temple, aged 59, on Jan. 14, 1980.
33. Mr. Yeoh Phee Tin also confirmed this.
34. Interview with Aunty Ah Soon, care-taker of the Burmese Temple, aged 61, on Jan. 11, 1980. Her mother was a Burmese.

GLIMPSES OF PENANG'S PAST

35. Colin McDougall, op. cit., p. 44.
36. M. B. Jinadasa, "The Beginnings of the Wesak Celebrations in Penang", *The W.F.B. Penang Center 25th Anniversary Souvenir* (Penang, 1976), pp. 91-93.
37. Interview with Aunty Ah Soon on Jan. 11, 1980.
38. *ibid.*
39. G. Appleton, *Buddhism in Burma* (London, 1943), p. 45.
40. P. Pematana, *History of the Mahindarama Temple* (Penang, 1970), p. 1.
41. Interview with Ven. P. Pematana, abbot of Mahindarama Temple, aged 66, on Jan. 12, 1980.
42. M. B. Jinadasa, op. cit., p. 92.
43. Interview with Ven. P. Pematana on Jan. 12, 1980.
44. P. Pematana, op. cit., p. 3.
45. Interview with Ven. P. Pematana on Jan. 12, 1980.
46. C. S. Wong, *Kek Lok Si: Temple of Paradise* (Penang, 1963), p. 10.
47. *ibid.*, p. 6.
48. *ibid.*, p. 9.
49. *ibid.*, p. 11.
50. *ibid.*, p. 12.
51. *ibid.*, p. 89.
52. *ibid.*, p. 124-126 discusses when it is possible for Chinese monks to build temples without breaking the law on temple-building set up by the Manchus.
53. Interview with Mr. Hong Chin Chye, long time clerk at the Ang Hock Si, aged 55, on Jan. 23, 1980.
54. *ibid.*
55. Nai Deng Sararaks, "A Biography of the Phra Khru Sangharaks", *Commemorating the Installation of Ven. Phor Than Bah as a 'Phra Khru'*, (Penang, n.d.), p. 3.
56. Interview with Ven. Phra Piang on Jan. 20, 1980.
57. Interview with Mr. Hong Chin Chye on Jan. 23, 1980.
58. Kuang Yee, *In Memory of the 20th Anniversary of Ven. Hoay Chuan* (Penang, 1966), pp. 109-114.
59. Interview with Ven. Kuang Yee, abbot of Boew Hiang Lim Si, aged 60, on Jan. 31, 1980.
60. Teoh Eng Soon, "History of the Penang Buddhist Association", *Jayanti Souvenir* (Penang, 1956), p. 11.
61. Lim Boon Chin, "A Short History of PBA", *Arose the World Monthly*, March 5, 1967.
62. *ibid.*, p. 4.
63. Teoh Eng Soon, op. cit., p. 10.
64. Michael Francis, "A Historical Outline of the Penang Buddhist Association" (School of Humanities, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 1974), p. 2. (Academic exercise).
65. Teoh Eng Soon, op. cit., p. 13.
66. *ibid.*, p. 14.
67. Michael Francis, op. cit., p. 7.
68. *ibid.*, p. 10.
69. *ibid.*, p. 11.
70. See Yoji Akashi, "Japanese Policy Towards the Malayan Chinese" *Journal of South East Asian Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Sept. 1970. A reason why the PBA also had to pay part of the \$50 million was what the Japanese saw as its 'undesirable' contribution to the China Relief Fund.
71. See Ven. U Silananda, *Buddhist Ceremonies in the Pali Canon* (Penang, 1972), p. 2. No monks in the Theravada countries officiate at marriage ceremonies. Neither are marriage ceremonies performed at temples or pagodas. The PBA was very 'unorthodox' in allowing marriages to take place inside their shrine hall.
72. Teoh Eng Soon, op. cit., p. 17.
73. The Order of Nuns (Bhikshuni Sangha) is still found in Mahayana Buddhism but it strictly no longer exists in the Theravada. However, there have been female ordinations in both Sri Lanka and Thailand very recently.
74. Interview with Mdm Tan Saw Eng, first headmistress of the Phor Tay Primary School, aged 75. on Jan. 4, 1980.
75. *ibid.*
76. *ibid.*
77. *ibid.*
78. *ibid.*
79. *ibid.*

Appendix I

Letter from the Governor, W. I. Butterworth to the Resident Councillor of Penang, L. Garling:

Dated: 22nd May 1845

With reference to your letter under date the 18th October 1844 and the 8th instant with their enclosure and to my several personal communications relative to the application of certain Burmese and Siamese for a formal grant of land, shown in the Book of Measurement of Lands opened at Penang in 1795 to have been made to those classes of the community for Church purposes.

I have now the honour to request that a grant of the Land in question may be made in the name of the representatives chosen by the Burmese and Siamese respectively at the meeting held at my office on Thursday the 15th instant as shown in the margin.

Burmese : Nongmay, Boonkhan

Siamese : Nankayo, Boonsoon

In the event of the death or departure of them, a successor will be named by the community in the public manner with the knowledge of the Police Magistrate, who will bring to your notice any difficulty in settling the question of succession in order that you may exercise your judgement in settling the dispute, but it must be distinctly understood that this preceding has no reference to the Priesthood or the religious worship of either portion of the community with which the Government servants must in no consideration interfere.

(Signed)

W. I. Butterworth
Governor

Appendix II

Resume of the Supreme Court Judgement:

“In the Supreme Court of the Straits Settlements Suit 1920 No. 92”
Between His Majesty’s Attorney-General in and for the Straits Settlements,
at and by the relation of Poh Oh and Maung Shoey Dong of Burmah Road,

Penang, traders, PLAINTIFF and (Phor) Than Heng of Burmah Lane, Priest and Nai Noo of Burmah Road, trader, DEFENDANTS.

26th August 1920

This cause coming on for trial this day before the Hon. Percy Julian Sproule, Judge in the presence of Counsel for Plaintiffs and for the defendants and upon application of Counsel for the plaintiffs above named and by consent of Counsel for the defendants, the Court doth declare that the defendant Than Heng above named has no right to collect the rents and income of the lands set forth in the plaintiffs' Statement of Claim or in anyway to interfere with the management thereof. And the Court doth order that the defendant Than Heng, his servants and agents be enjoined and restrained from collecting the said rents and income or in any way interfering with the management of the said lands. And the Court doth further order that the defendant Than Heng to account within one month from the date hereof to the plaintiffs for all rents and income collected by him from said lands and of his application thereof and that such accounts be taken by the Registrar and that all balances found to be in his hands be paid to the Receivers herein mentioned...

By the court
F. Robinson, Registrar

Appendix III

The general attitude of the Japanese military government towards religion (including Buddhism) in Malaya can be seen in this Despatch issued from Singapore. Reproduced below is a part of an extract.

INSTRUCTIONS OF THE SUPERINTENDENT-GENERAL OF THE
MILITARY ADMINISTRATION (Gunsei Sokan Shiji)

Military Administration
General Headquarters,
Singapore.
August 7, 1942.

9. On respecting mores and customs in administering the occupied areas.

Matters relative to respecting the existing organizational structure and ethnic mores in administering occupied areas shall be as previously stated, but great care should be taken in matters such as the hasty institution of public holidays, the casual changing of names, or the enforcement of morality and customs. In particular, religious customs should be especially respected and extreme circumspection must be used in exerting coercive pressures upon Buddhism or other religions.

Source:

Harry J. Benda et al.,
The World of Southeast Asia
(New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 222

Appendix IV

THE IMPERIAL SANCTION

THIS Imperial Sanction was presented to Abbot Beow Lean by Emperor Kuang Hsu in 1904. It is found in the left wing of the ground floor of the Tower of Sacred Books.

The text of the Imperial Sanction reads as follows:

“On instruction of the Ministry of Interior, the Controller of the Buddhist Clergy, China, hereby informs Abbot Beow Lean of the Kek Lok Si of Penang that his application for Imperial sanction has been approved and that a gift of a complete set of the Imperial Edition of the Buddhist Sutras is also made to him for the purpose of propagating the Buddhist faith and doctrine to the Chinese and aliens. It is hereby commanded that sincere and special protection be accorded to the said Abbot Beow Lean by Liang Pi Ju, Chinese Consul for Penang (1901-1906), to prevent the Imperial Set of Buddhist sutras from being defiled. A complete set of the monk's purple robe, the mendicant's alms-bowl and the monk's staff are also issued by sanction of His Imperial Majesty to Abbot Beow Lean.

Dated this 9th Day of October, 1904.

Bibliography

A. General References

1. Appleton, Buddhism in Burma (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1943).
2. Bloefeld, John. *Mahayana Buddhism in South-east Asia* (Singapore: Donald Moore, 1971).
3. Bunagg, Jane. *Buddhist Monk, Buddhist Layman* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973).
4. Ch'en, Kenneth. *The Chinese Transformation of Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973).
5. Comber, Leon. *Chinese Temples in Singapore* (Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 1958).
6. de Bary, William. *The Buddhist Tradition* (New York: Vintage Books, 1972).
7. Dumoulin, Heinrich (et al.). *Buddhism in the Modern World* (New York: Collier Books, 1976).
8. Lester, Robert. *Theravada Buddhism in South-east Asia* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1973).
9. McDougall, Colin. *Buddhism in Malaya* (Singapore: Donald Moore, 1956).
10. Silananda, U. *Buddhist Ceremonies in the Pali Canon* (Penang: Dhammikarama Temple, 1972).
11. Teoh, Eng Soon. *Malayan Buddhism* (Singapore: Donald Moore, 1963).
12. UNISAINS BUDDHIST, Vol. 1, No. 1. (Penang: Universiti Sains Malaysia Buddhist Society, 1979).
13. Wells, Kenneth. *Thai Buddhism* (Bangkok: Suriyabun Publishers, 1975).
14. The WFB Penang Center 25th Anniversary Souvenir. (Penang: World Fellowship of Buddhists Penang Center, 1976).

B. Specific Bibliography

I. Theravada Buddhist Temples

- a. Wat Pin Bang Onn
 1. Sararaks, Nai Deng. *Biography of Phra Khru Sangharaks* (Penang: Wat Pin Bang Onn, n.d.).

2. *Wat Pin Bang Onn 80th Anniversary Souvenir* (Penang: Wat Pin Bang Buddhist Sunday School, 1969).
- b. Wat Chaiyamangalaram
1. *Notable Events of Chow Khun Vithethdhamma-Nad during His Tenure as Chief Monk of Wat Chaiya-mangalaram* (Penang: Wat Chaiya-mangalaram, 1978).
 2. Sararaks, Nai Deng. *History of Wat Chaiya-mangalaram* (Penang: Wat Chaiyamangalaram, 1948).
 3. Smarn, Maha. *History of the Reclining Buddha in Wat Chaiya-mangalaram* (Penang: Wat Chaiyamangalaram, 1972).
- c. Wat Buppharam
1. Daeng, Phra. *Short History of Wat Buppharam* (unpublished article in Thai).
- d. Wat Candaram
1. Yew, Sim Hong. *Testing Days at the MBMC* (unpublished article).
- e. Mahindarama Temple
1. Pematatana, S. V. Sri Pandit. *Brief History of the Mahindarama Buddhist Temple* (Penang: Mahindarama Sunday Pali School, 1979).
- f. Dhammikarama Temple
1. *Documents on Burmese Buddhist Temple* (personal file of Yeoh Phee Tin)

II. Mahayana Buddhist Temples and Associations

- a. Beow Hiang Lim Temple
1. *In memory of the 20th Anniversary of Ven. Hoay Chuan Souvenir Magazine* (Penang: Beow Hiang Lim Temple, 1966).
- b. Kek Lok Si
1. Poh, T. *Chinese Temples in Penang* (Penang: K. L. Teh, n.d.).
 2. Wong, C. S. *Kek Lok Si* (Singapore: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute, Ltd., 1-63).
- c. Penang Buddhist Association
1. *Arose the World Monthly* (Penang: Penang Buddhist Association, 1949).
 2. Francis, Michael. *A Historical Outline of the Penang Buddhist*

Association (School of Humanities, Universiti Sains Malaysia: Penang, 1974).

3. *Jayanti Souvenir* (Penang: Penang Buddhist Association Youth Circle 1956).

MALAY WORDS IN BABA HOKKIEN OF PENANG

by TEOH BOON SEONG and LIM BENG SOON
National University of Singapore

Originally published in *JMBRAS*, Vol. 72 Pt 1 (No. 276), June 1999

Introduction

THIS PAPER aims to document instances of lexical items in Penang Baba Hokkien (henceforth referred to as Baba Hokkien of Penang) which are of Malay origin. Although some research into Baba Malay (Peranakan Malay) has been conducted by Shellabear (1913), Vaughan (1879) and, more recently, Clammer (1980) and Khoo Joo Ee (1996), most work on Peranakan Chinese language (usually referred to as Baba Malay) has focused on the Malacca or Singapore varieties because of their similarity, albeit superficial, to Malay.

Baba Hokkien of Penang, in contrast, is, to all intents and purposes, a Chinese dialect. Nevertheless, it is a dialect which contains numerous Malay lexical items even though its syntax is basically Hokkien. A brief description offered by Khoo Joo Ee in differentiating Baba Hokkien of Penang from its cousins in Malacca and Singapore is illuminating: 'The baba Hokkien in Penang is closer to this Tang Min (a type of Min dialect) than is the type of Hokkien spoken by the Sinkhek (recently arrived immigrants) who use the Standard Amoy variety. Baba Hokkien of Penang is even less closely related to Standard Amoy because of the Malay words it has assimilated. It is different from other variations of Hokkien spoken on the Mainland or in Malacca and Singapore.'¹ The Malay words assimilated in Baba Hokkien of Penang take the form of embedding in the various linguistic units (morphemes, words, phrases and clauses). There is copious evidence of the assimilation of Malay in these linguistic units, for example, the prolific use of the Malay particles *lah* and *pun*. The assimilation at the level of the morpheme is, however, less evident, but nevertheless present, typically in the prolific use of *nya* in Baba Hokkien

of Penang, which is a contracted form of, and semantically similar to, the original Malay term *hanya*, meaning 'only'.

Historical Background

This paper does not purport to provide a definitive or authoritative historical overview of the Peranakan community in Penang. However, a short introduction to the origins of the community in Penang can provide insight. The genesis of the Peranakan community in Penang can be traced back to the establishment of Penang as a British colony in 1786. In the early years after it was made a British outpost, trade flourished and there was much commercial activity and regional trade with the northern Malay state of Kedah, as well as with Perak to the south, the Sumatran kingdoms and southern Thailand.

Penang as a focal point of commerce in this part of the Malay Archipelago attracted an influx of Chinese businessmen to the colony, particularly from southern Thailand and North Sumatra. The Peranakan Chinese in Penang were thought to have been 'descendants of Chinese males marrying or cohabiting with Malays or Siamese or Burmese; the last mentioned, however, appear to be rather rare'.² It must be stressed that the Peranakan of Penang still have extensive familial ties with these regions.

Baba Hokkien of Penang is spoken to a greater or lesser degree by many of Penang's Hokkien community, but the occurrence of Malay lexical items in Baba Hokkien of Penang is a characteristic of the speech of older members of the Straits Chinese community. Typically, this group of speakers are mostly above the age of 50 and many are English-educated. Although their speech is liberally peppered with lexical items of Malay origin, this does not predispose them to understanding standard Malay, which has gained currency among the younger generation. In fact, many Baba Hokkien of Penang speakers above the age of 50 have never had formal instruction in standard Malay; and hence they are unable to understand it even though bazaar Malay is easily comprehensible by all. Most of the respondents in this study were initially unaware that they used words of Malay origin in their everyday use of Baba Hokkien of Penang.

Procedure

This study was conducted through observation of naturally occurring speech in a Baba Hokkien of Penang family for a period of two months, from May to June 1998. Some samples have been transcribed for ease of presentation. Some taped conversations of spontaneous speech were also collected in the same Peranakan family.

The focus of this paper is an analysis of the features of Malay lexical items in Baba Hokkien of Penang to see, first, if they are loan words, secondly, if they exhibit phonological diversity, thirdly, if they are different from Malay lexically and semantically; and, finally, if there are loan translations above the level of individual lexicon. The writers are of the opinion that it is unnecessary to describe longer stretches of speech.

Framework of Analysis and Discussion of Findings

As an initial study of Baba Hokkien of Penang, the individual occurrences of Malay words in Baba Hokkien of Penang will be discussed. This paper also hopes to shed light on the patterns of code-switching that occur in Baba Hokkien of Penang which might, in turn, stimulate further investigation into why certain linguistic categories are codeswitched more often than others.

Despite the current paucity of studies undertaken on Baba Hokkien of Penang, studies done on other Peranakan Chinese communities in the region nevertheless provide a framework for relevant areas of investigation. Among the earliest studies into Baba Malay is that of W. G. Shellabear, who provides a description of Baba Malay in terms of its distinctive aspects compared to 'the spoken language of the pure Malays'.³ These aspects include a description of the evolution of Baba Malay, Baba Malay words of Chinese origin, Malay words which are unknown to the Babas, Malay words which are mispronounced by the Babas and, finally, the fact that the Baba idiom is Chinese rather than Malay.

The issue of language use and identity is particularly relevant to the Peranakan Chinese. This is due to their ability to express their solidarity

with both the indigenous community and the Chinese by emphasizing either the Malay or Chinese elements of their language. This was not only a feature of the Peranakan communities in Peninsular Malaysia but also of the Peranakan Chinese in Java and Sumatra. Tan Chee Beng has conducted extensive studies on the Babas of Malacca and has noticed that the relation between the Baba Malay language and ethnic identity was significant. The Babas could manipulate their use of Baba Malay to associate themselves with the Malays, or conversely emphasize the non-Malay elements of Baba Malay to stress their solidarity with the Chinese.⁴ Writing on the Peranakan Chinese in Kelantan, Teo Kok Seong extends the scope of borrowings from the Malays, not only in the domain of language but also other cultural borrowings (for example, attire) from the Malays by the Peranakan in Kelantan.⁵ Teo suggests that for the urban Peranakan, cultural borrowings of attire and cuisine remain backstage where their manifestation is restricted to the confines of the household. This would seem logical, as the Penang Peranakan who are wholly urbanized have similar tendencies. However, in the case of the rural Kelantan Peranakan Chinese, cultural borrowings are not only backstage but frontstage as well, a situation not encountered or obtainable in Penang.

In terms of a system of analysis, Tan Chee Beng has formulated a framework for the comparison of Baba Malay and Standard Malay. He maintains that there 'are five main patterns of diversity, namely, the use of loan-words (including loan-translations), phonological differences, lexical differences, semantic differences and syntactic differences'.⁶

Among the studies mentioned above, the observations of Shellabear and Tan will be discussed. It must be kept in mind that Baba Hokkien of Penang is different from Baba Malay in that it is essentially a Hokkien dialect with significant Malay lexical items in use. Some of Shellabear's observations merit attention. Writing in 1913, he mentions that the Baba Malay of the Straits Settlements used at that time was different from colloquial Malay in the following ways: first, words introduced tended to be of Chinese origin, the reverse of the Baba Hokkien of Penang situation where words introduced in the Hokkien dialect are Malay; secondly, the Babas were unacquainted with a large number of Malay words which were in common use among

the Malays, which also holds true for speakers of Baba Hokkien of Penang; thirdly, the Babas mispronounced or reconstructed phonologically many Malay words and, in some cases, altered the pronunciation so much that the words became almost unrecognizable, a situation which is particularly true of many of the Malay lexicalized items in Baba Hokkien of Penang; fourthly, to a great extent, the Peranakan used the Chinese idiom rather than the Malay in putting their sentences together. This resulted in the Babas producing Baba Malay at the sentential level which is quite different from the colloquial language of the Malays.

Although Shellabear's observations are noteworthy, the present writers believe that the framework of analysis provided by Tan is more relevant and productive for the analysis of their data. Hence, the four main patterns of diversity (the use of loan words (including loan translations), phonological differences, lexical differences and semantic differences) between the Malay lexicalized items found in Baba Hokkien of Penang will be discussed and contrasted here with their original functions and roles in standard Malay.⁷ This study, however, will exclude the analysis of syntactic differences between Malay in Baba Hokkien of Penang and standard Malay because Baba Hokkien of Penang is basically a Chinese dialect with superimposed Malay lexical items. Nevertheless, this will not preclude the potential analysis of code-mixing and code-switching of Malay in Baba Hokkien of Penang. Thus, in this paper the operational framework of Tan is used with adaptations to analyse the functions and roles of standard Malay in Baba Hokkien of Penang.

Loan Words

The Malay lexical items defined as loan words in Baba Hokkien of Penang are words that have been retained in their entirety in terms of semantic content, phonology (excepting the superimposition of tones to the words pronounced) and formal classes. Examples of these words generally include nouns, such as the names of certain flora and fauna (for example, *bunga melor*, *katak puru* and *pacat*). Some loan words are restricted in their functions as grammatical categories. For example, *tarik* in Baba Hokkien of Penang is used to describe

actions related to one afflicted with convulsions, which has the imagery of one's muscles pulling and jerking. Although this is also used by the Malays in a similar situation, it does not have the significance of the commonly used meaning of the Malays, which is 'pull', except in a limited sense of one inhaling cigarette smoke. This characteristic of loan words not functioning in the whole spectrum of classes as they would in the source language is common among creole languages. This tendency is not restricted to verbs and nouns alone, but is also common among other formal classes, such as adverbs and adjectives.

Sometimes loan words borrowed from Malay function in the whole spectrum of classes as they would in Malay, for example, the root word *buah*, which as a noun means 'fruit' but with proper affixation also functions as an adjective. This is the same in Baba 'fruit' while with proper affixation it also functions as an adjective. This is the same in Baba Hokkien of Penang, although the use of the correct affixes is dispensed with. Another word which undergoes the same class shifts without use of affixation is *kerabu*, which as a noun means 'salad' but as a verb means 'to make something into a salad'.

Tan included another category of loan words which he labelled loan translations. These are direct translations into Baba Malay from Chinese, for example, *hari satu* which corresponds to the Chinese 'Day One' instead of the Malay equivalent, *Isnin*.⁸ For this study, loan translations are Malay concepts directly translated into Baba Hokkien of Penang. The speech samples collected support the presence of loan translation from Malay into Hokkien. However, the writers were unable to produce a comprehensive elaboration of these manifestations, primarily because this study is not aimed solely at such an objective. Secondly, and more importantly, it is only through a comprehensive comparative study of Baba Hokkien of Penang with the other Min dialects that one can ascertain if loan translation from Malay has taken place.

Possible candidates for loan translations would be culturally loaded terms describing actions that are common among the Malay that have been borrowed by the Peranakan in Penang. An example is the expression 'I'll stuff your mouth with chillies for uttering obscenities', which when used in Baba Hokkien of Penang includes the verb *cabai* which means 'to put or

stuff chillies into', a common form of punishment for Malay children who utter obscenities. It was found that there is use of Malay above the level of the lexicon which, the writers believe, represents some form of loan translation. A cursory discussion of this manifestation is given below, where the use of Malay above the level of individual lexicon is described. -

Phonological Diversity

In this paper, phonological diversity is defined as the different phonological manifestation of Malay words in Baba Hokkien of Penang. Generally, this phonological diversity involves the use of tones in Baba Hokkien of Penang, which is a common characteristic of the Chinese Min dialect. Thus, for example, the Malay borrowings *kawan*, meaning 'friend', and *kahwin*, meaning 'to marry', are rendered respectively as [ka/wàn] and [ka/wèn]. Here can be seen the superimposition of a Hi-Lo or falling tone onto the disyllabic loan words of Malay. Due to the influence of the Min dialect, which usually uses monosyllabic words, it can be seen that Malay, being an agglunative language, often has words that have more than three syllables. These words, when borrowed in Baba Hokkien of Penang, will often be truncated or clipped for ease of pronunciation. A case in point is the pronunciation of the word *barangkali*, a four syllable word, as [bangkali], a three-syllable word. Moreover, compound words like *buah guli* simplify to [bakguli]. The exception is the word *hormat*, a disyllabic word which is rendered as [horomat] in Baba Hokkien of Penang. An explanation for this seeming counter example would be that the contiguity of the alveolar trill and the bilabial nasal presents difficulty in pronouncing the word for Baba Hokkien of Penang speakers and it is thus reconstructed as [horomat], with an epenthetic vowel insertion to break up the consonant cluster.

It is understandable that Baba Hokkien of Penang, being a type of creole, often displays syllable reduction, such as *satu* > [sau] *hari* > [ari], *apa macam* > [amcam], *bawa pergi* > [buat pi], and *buat apa* > [buat pa].⁹ The examples from Baba Hokkien of Penang make this analysis even more exciting; not only do they conform to certain phonological constraints of Hokkien in

terms of tone and syllabic simplification, but because Baba Hokkien of Penang is spoken in the northern region of Peninsular Malaysia, it conforms to the phonological characteristic of the north-west Malay dialect of Penang and Kedah. In general, there is the rule of high vowel lowering in final closed syllables in Malay, and indeed this can be observed in [sireh], [abo?] etc. In the Penang and Kedah Malay dialects, there are the phonological rules of *l* > *ø* (*l* deletion), followed by diphthongization. Indeed, borrowings from Malay are then remoulded as such in conformity to the phonological structuring; for example, *bisul* rendered as [bisoɪ], *sanggul* as [sanggoɪ]. First there is a high vowel in final closed syllable lowered, then the diphthongization followed by the *l* deletion. It is also apparent that not all high vowels in final closed syllables lower, for example, *tumis* > [tumis], and indeed this is what Anne Pakir discovered in Peranakan Malay in Singapore.¹⁰ She went a step further in offering an explanation, namely, that the fricativeness of the final /s/ phoneme somewhat preempted the vowel lowering which applies across the board in other instances. Words with diphthongs which monothongize are also evident in the word *hairan*, which is pronounced as [heran] in Baba Hokkien of Penang. It is also clear that words like *binatang* are rendered as [manatang]. This is not surprising since the bilabial voiced stop is substituted with a nasal, but with the place of articulation retained in the Baba Hokkien of Penang form. Chinese speakers often display this negative transfer where Malay words like *banyak* are rendered as [manya?], with the palatal nasal presenting a problem because it is non-existent in Chinese.

Lexical and Semantic Diversity

Lexical and semantic diversity between Malay lexical items in Baba Hokkien of Penang and Standard Malay takes the form of the different meanings attached to the same lexical item in Baba Hokkien of Penang and Malay. For example, the word *hangat* in Baba Hokkien of Penang is used to describe anger or that one is angry, rather than the common Malay meaning that one is hot. The rather restricted meaning of words is common among creole speakers, and in fact most speakers of Baba Hokkien of Penang do not know

the other multifarious meanings of a Malay word. In other words, this relates to the broadening of semantic values in a lexical item. The lexical item *senduk* refers to a ladle in Malay, while spoons are known as *sudu*. However, for Baba Hokkien of Penang speakers, *senduk* refers to both spoon and ladle, and it is other factors, such as the situation and shared knowledge of the speakers, that distinguish different uses of *senduk* to the Baba Hokkien of Penang speakers. In fact, this issue was raised by Tan, who states that the Baba Malay speaker will use the adjectives 'big' or 'small' to indicate reference to a ladle or spoon.¹¹ Interestingly, here the Baba Hokkien of Penang speakers employ similar devices by using the Hokkien adjectives which are the equivalent of 'big' and 'small' to refer to a ladle in the former (*tua senduk*) and a spoon (*se senduk*) in the latter. Another example of semantic broadening in the Malay lexicon adopted in Baba Hokkien of Penang is the use of *longkang* for a drain, as in Malay. However, bigger drains are also referred to as *longkang*, with the Hokkien adjective 'big' modifying the word. The appropriate Malay term would be *parit*. However, this term does not exist in Baba Hokkien of Penang.

It is also apparent that lexical and semantic differences between Malay and Baba Hokkien of Penang can be found in the semantic narrowing of certain borrowed Malay lexical items in Baba Hokkien of Penang. It is true that some of the lexical items cited in this analysis might have had wider semantic significance in the past and might not be regarded as instances of semantic narrowing if a diachronic study of Baba Hokkien of Penang is undertaken. However, as this is a synchronic study of Baba Hokkien of Penang, the issue of semantic narrowing and other features of lexical and semantic narrowing will be considered in light of current Baba Hokkien of Penang usage. The occurrence of semantic narrowing is found in all classes of words and also in all the six categories in which the words were grouped. For example, the use of *balai* in Baba Hokkien of Penang means 'police station', as it does in Malay. However, there are no other uses of *balai* in Baba Hokkien of Penang, unlike in Malay which has terms such as *balai bomba* for 'fire station' or *balai rakyat* for 'community hall'. Likewise, the root word *amok* in Malay can function as both a noun and a verb, whereas in Baba Hokkien of Penang it only functions as a verb where 'to (a)mok a person' is to beat a person without restraint, characteristic of one running amok. In the same way, the

word *racun* is used to describe someone who is a bane or who disrupts other people's plans, and is not used to describe poisonous substances. Semantic narrowing also takes place in what can be classified as 'actions—verbal and physical'. For example, *bicala* is only used for 'a trial' and not in its other sense of 'to speak'. The adjective *haram* also undergoes semantic narrowing as it describes 'bearing a grudge against someone' or 'disliking someone'. It does not have the religious connotations of being 'forbidden' as it does in Malay. On the other hand, the word *asap* in Baba Hokkien of Penang carries a strong religious connotation of burning incense for religious practices, but does not function as an adjective as it does in Malay.

The speakers of Baba Hokkien of Penang have also expanded on the meaning of certain Malay words they have borrowed. For example, the use of the term *buta*, which means 'all for nothing', is unknown among the Malays. Similarly, the term *lumak* is used to describe a person as being flirtatious but is not used as such among the Malays.

Use of Malay above the Level of Individual Lexicon

Under this category, it was found that the use of Malay at the sentential level is also present in Baba Hokkien of Penang, although the use of Malay seems to be fossilized and its terms reduced to formulaic expressions. For example, the use of the expression *pasang kuat* means 'dressing to impress', while *pasang kaki* refers to the act of intentionally tripping someone up. Further examples of these are similar in use to colloquial Malay; for example, the term *gatal* [gatai] for 'itchy' or 'itch' is used in both Malay and Baba Hokkien of Penang as an adjective to describe an amorous person. Other formulaic expressions function as adjectives primarily for describing the negative nature of humans; examples are *kepala angin* for 'temperamental', *naik angin* for 'to lose one's temper', *tiga suku* for 'crazy', *ketam batu* for 'a stingy person', *kurang ajar* for 'ill-mannered' and *muka binci* for 'hateable face'. Anybody who talks too much is referred to as *cakap banyak* while those adjectives that describe the positive in humans are few and far between; for example, *muka sayang* for 'lovable face'.

At this level of language use, it appears that the speaker's creativity is shown and that there is more than just a borrowing of singular lexical items prompted by the lack of such concepts in the natal language of the speaker. It appears that some form of loan translation takes place when the Baba Hokkien of Penang speaker uses the sayings 'The Batak is masquerading as a Nonya' or 'You sit like the worm when it has struck ash.' The former has the Malay equivalent of *Batak menyamar Nonya* and the latter *cacing kena abu*. Here it can be seen that Baba Hokkien of Penang has also borrowed from Malay perspectives of the world on created sayings which are not found in the Malay language but are clearly based on a Malay worldview. This is because to the Malays the Bataks are very coarse people while the Nonyas are refined urban ladies. Hence, when a Batak masquerades as a Nonya it means that a coarse person is pretending to be refined, which is exactly the meaning in Baba Hokkien of Penang.

Another use of Malay above the level of individual lexicon involves sayings which are essentially Malay although their meanings may have been altered. For example, the saying that one is a *tali barut* in Baba Hokkien of Penang means 'to be insensitive to other people's desire for privacy'. However, in Malay the meaning is completely different—that one is a 'hated collaborator of the enemy'. The saying *naik jaki* (compared with the Malay *dengki*) means 'to get angry with someone'.

Conclusion

There is no evidence that the language of the Peranakan in Penang was not as heavily influenced by Malay as were the languages of the Malacca and Singapore Peranakan. In fact, the early Peranakan in Penang were described as speakers of Baba Malay, although they were also said to be more fluent in Hokkien than their southern cousins. Khoo Kay Kim states that the Penang Peranakan 'did not forget their native tongue (in general Hokkien) although all of them, like their Melaka counterparts, spoke Baba Malay'.¹² In fact, there are books printed in Baba Malay by Baba writers residing in Penang in the early twentieth century. However, there are today very few Baba Malay

speakers among the Penang Peranakan; instead, there is a predominance of Baba Hokkien of Penang speakers among the Penang Peranakan; and as proven by this study, Baba Hokkien of Penang is essentially a Hokkien dialect with some Malay elements.

It is the belief of the writers that there are two possible scenarios leading to the situation where Baba Hokkien of Penang could have gained currency among the Penang Peranakan to the extent that it supplanted Baba Malay, although certain key Malay lexical items were maintained and introduced into Baba Hokkien of Penang. This situation of language attrition (which in this case results in Baba Malay being subjected to the influences of Hokkien) was commented on by J. R. Clammer who, citing Freedman (1962), said that 'in 1870 it is estimated that only 20 per cent of the Malacca and Singapore Babas could speak Chinese. But by 1975 the number was approximately 42 per cent in Malacca *and higher in Penang*, and rising in both cases'¹³ (authors' italics). This presupposes that there are Penang Peranakan who speak Baba Malay and that their numbers are decreasing. Although it is difficult to speculate if there are Penang Peranakan who still speak Baba Malay it is highly probable that their numbers are negligible.

This situation could have resulted from the different situation in which the Penang Peranakan found themselves in contrast to their southern cousins. Clammer suggests that this difference (that is, the use of Hokkien by the Peranakan in Penang compared to the use of Baba Malay by the Peranakan in Singapore and Malacca) could be due to the fact that Penang had no significantly large native population before and therefore the Peranakan community was much less influenced by the Malays than by the influx of Chinese immigrants who came to or passed through Penang from the early nineteenth century.¹⁴ Clammer further suggests that Baba Malay evolved through the situation and circumstances of the early Chinese presence in Malacca since the late fourteenth century, and as Penang did not share many of the conditions prevailing in Malacca the Penang Peranakan developed differently from those in Malacca.

Conversely, it could be that Baba Malay, like the other components of Baba culture in Penang, might have absorbed increasingly significant Hokkien elements over time due to assimilation and integration into

mainstream Chinese culture after the Peranakan heyday. As Clammer observed and questioned: 'Are they [the Babas] in fact a perpetually marginal group because they are always being assimilated to someone else—the Malays, the mainstream Chinese culture, or anglicised Chinese culture?'¹⁵ This situation is highly possible as the Peranakan community in Penang shifts: from their initial association with the Malays in favour of the mainstream Chinese culture, as the initial predominance of the Malays in the former Straits Settlements was replaced by that of the Chinese. This shift towards the mainstream Chinese culture or Anglicized Chinese culture could have been further facilitated by the fact that the Babas tend to regard Chinese culture as their main tradition and one with which they can identify.¹⁶ This is further compounded by the increasing pressures of Westernization aggravated by the Babas' anglophilic persuasions. This would then account for the Baba Malay of Penang taking on more Chinese (Hokkien) and English lexicon, hence resulting in the birth and currency of present-day Baba Hokkien of Penang.

References

- Abdullah Hassan and Ainon Mohd, *Kamus Peribahasa Lengkap Utusan*, Utusan Publications and Distributers, Kuala Lumpur, 1993.
- Clammer, J. R., *Straits Chinese Society*, Singapore University Press, Singapore, 1980.
- Gwee Thiam Hock, William, *Mas Sepuloh: Baba Conversational Genres*, Armour Publications, Singapore, 1993.
- Khoo, Joo Ee, *The Straits Chinese*, Pepin Press, Amsterdam and Kuala Lumpur, 1996.
- Khoo Kay Kim, 'Malaysia: Immigration and the Growth of a Plural Society', *JMBRAS*, Vol. 71, Pt 1, 1998, pp. 1-25.
- Pakir, Anne, 'A Linguistic Investigation of Baba Malay', Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Hawaii, Hawaii, 1986.
- _____, "Linguistic Alternants and Code Selection in Baba Malay", *World Englishes*, Vol. 8, No. 3, 1989, pp. 378-88.

- Shellabear, W. G., 'Baba Malay: An Introduction to the Language of the Straits Born Chinese', *JSBRAS*, Vol. 65, 1913, pp. 49–63.
- Tan Chee Beng, 'Baba and Nonya: A study of the Ethnic Identity of the Chinese Peranakan in Malacca', Ph.D. Dissertation, Cornell University, Ithaca, 1979.
- _____, 'Baba Malay Dialect', *JMBRAS*, Vol. 53, Pt 1, 1980, pp. 150–65.
- _____, *Chinese Peranakan Heritage in Malaysia and Singapore*, Kuala Lumpur, Penerbit Fajar Bakti, 1993.
- Teo Kok Seong, "Masyarakat Cina Peranakan Kelantan: Satu Pengenalan Sociolinguistik", *Jurnal Dewan Bahasa*, Kuala Lumpur, April 1996, pp. 344–54.
- Vaughan, J. D., *The Manners and Customs of the Chinese in the Straits Settlements*, 1879; reprinted Oxford University Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1971.

Appendix

Malay Words in Baba of Penang

1. Trinkets

anting—ear stud
 berlian—diamond
 bintang—a star; brooch
 cincin—ring
 gelang kaki—anklet
 gelang—bracelet
 gigi—holder of gems/things; teeth of keys
 intan—low-grade diamond
 kelip—sparkle
 kerosang—brooch, cf. kerongsang in Malay
 liante—chain, cf. rantai in Malay.
 satu—solitaire
 suasa—low-grade (9-carat) gold
 subang—earring
 tapak sireh—sireh box

2. Animals

babi—pig
 belalang—grasshopper
 buaya—crocodile
 burung kuku—pidgeon
 burung—bird
 cacing—worm
 cangkerik—cricket
 cicak—lizard
 katak puru—frog, cf. katak in Malay
 kongkiak—big red ant
 kutu—lice
 manatang—animal, cf. binatang in Malay
 mosang—bobcat, cf. musang in Malay.
 pacat—leech
 sipot—cockle
 sotong—octopus

3. Things

- (h)abok—dust
 abu—ash
 adek-alek—younger siblings
 bakuli (buah guli)—marble
 bangsa—race; ethnic origin
 bangsat—derogatory term for a disliked person
 balai—police station
 baleh—bench
 bangku—stool
 barang-barang—things
 batang—stem or stemlike thing
 batu—stone
 bayang-bayang—shadows
 bedak—powder
 bedak sujuk—rice powder
 bidan—midwife
 biji—seed
 botoi—bottle, cf. botol in Malay (a borrowing from the English bottle)
 buah—fruit
 buai-buai—swing, cf. buian in Malay
 bunga melor—jasmine flower
 butut—cork
 cawat—loin cloth
 curut—cigar
 gaji—pay; wages
 gambit—gambir
 geling rumpah—stone used to grind spices
 getah—sap of fruits; rubber band
 hamba—slave
 jamban—toilet
 kapok—cotton, cf. kapas in Malay
 kapok—lime
 kasut manek—beaded shoes
 kasut kodok—a type of beaded shoe
 kawan (noun/verb) kawan (where there is a superimposition of hi-lo or falling tone)
 ketam batu—stingy person
 kole—big steel mug
 lalang—wild grass
 lampeng—diapers, cf. lampin in Malay
 lili—spine of coconut palm leaf, cf. lidi in Malay
 longkang—drain
 mata—police, cf. mata-mata in Malay, where mata in its base form means 'eyes'
 mesegate—mosque, cf. mesjid in Malay
 orang gaji—servant; maid
 orang jaga—a maid who specializes in looking after mothers in confinement
 pagar—fence
 piring—plate; saucer
 puluk—bolster
 racun—a baneful person
 rokok (chau [Hokkien])—grass—tobacco
 sabun—soap
 sampah—rubbish
 sanggoi—hair bun, cf. sanggul in Malay
 sarong—sarong
 sepatu—shoes
 senduk—spoon; ladle
 sireh—betel nut leaf
 sulam—embroidery
 tali—string; rope
 tangkai—amulet
 tanjong—cape
 tembok—wall
 timba—pail
 tuala—towel

tumbuk—pestle

4. *Methods of Cooking/Food*

acat—chutney, cf. acar in Malay

air mawar—essence

apom bakuah—pancake with sauce, cf.

apom berkuah in Malay

apom balek—pancake

asam pedai—spicy dish, cf. asam

pedas in Malay

asam—tamarind

bangkuang—turnip, cf. mengkuang in
Malay

bawang—onion

bayam—spinach

belacan—shrimp cake

buah betai—type of bean, cf. buah
petai in Malay

buah kerai—candlenut, cf. buah keras
in Malay

bunga kantan—blue ginger

bunga telang—a type of flower

cabai—chili

cabai burung—small, hot chilli

cincalo—preserved shrimps

daun kaduk—a type of herb

goreng pisang—fried banana

goreng—to fry

gulai—curry

jambu air—guava (soft)

jintan manis—coriander

kacang botoi—four-angled bean

kacang nyenyak—ladies finger

kerabu—salad (this can also function
as a verb, i.e. to make something
into a salad)

kueh bengkah (bengkang)—a type of
cake

kueh kapek—a type of cake; love

letters

kueh koci—a type of cake

kueh kodok—a type of cake

kueh lapis—layered cake

kunyet—turmeric

lengkuas—a type of plant, cf. lengkuas
in Malay

lobak—white carrot

lumak—creamy

lumpa—ground spices, cf. rempah in
Malay

lun pandan—pandanus leaf, cf. daun
pandan in Malay

nasik kunyet—saffron flavoured rice

nasi ulam—cooked rice with diced
green vegetables

nona—custard apple

otak-otak—steamed fish wrapped in
banana leaf

panggan—to grill, cf. panggang in
Malay

pulut ikan—fish maw curry, cf. perut
ikan in Malay

pulut—glutinous rice

pulut inti—glutinous rice cake

roti—bread

roti jala—fishnet pancake

sago—sago

sambai belacan/udang—a type of chilli
paste, sambal udang in Malay

santan—coconut milk

timun—cucumber, cf. mentimun in
Malay

tumis; tumi—to saute, cf. tumis in
Malay

ubi-kayu—sweet potato

unde-unde—a type of cake

ulam—salad

5. Body Terms

bak ketiak—arm pit

batang—penis

bisoi—wart, cf. bisul in Malay

buah peliak—scrotum

daki—dirt

gigi—teeth

jantan—male

jari—finger

liba—lap

lutut—knee

mata sepek—squint-eyed

nanah—pus

paha—lap

pinggan—waist

puki—female genital

tetek—breasts

6. Actions: Verbal and Physical

agak—almost; to estimate

antak—to send, cf. hantar in Malay

asap—to light incense

batuk—to cough

bangkai—carcass or bad-smelling

bangkali; barangkali—possible

bantai—to thrash

bantang—superstition, cf. pantang in Malay

baru—new; just

belang-belang—stripes

bengkok—bent

betui-betui—really, cf. betul-betul in Malay

bicala—(noun) court proceedings, cf.

bicara in Malay

bilai; bilas—to rinse

bising—noisy

botak—bald

bukumbak—twins, cf. berkembar in

Malay

bukumang; berkembang—wearing the sarong at the armpits

bunting—pregnant

burok (adj.)—bad

busuk—foul smelling

buta—all for nothing

cabai—to punish one with the application of chilli

cakap banyak—talkative

campur—to mingle

celaka—a curse

cicit—great-grandchildren

comek—cute, cf. comel in Malay

comot—crumpled

cubit—to pinch

cucuk—to instigate

dan-dan—immediately

gaji—to employ

galek—scratch; lacerations

galoh—to quarrel, cf. gaduh in Malay

ganggu—to disturb

gasak—to deride

gatai—amorous, cf. gatal in Malay

gatai—itch

gayat—frightened

geram—feelings of hate (negative)/ feeling of fondness (positive)

gili—tickle, cf. geli in Malay

gomoi—wrestle, cf. gurnol in Malay

gugur—abortion

gulong—to roll up

had—limit

hangat—angry

haram—bear a grudge

harap—depend

hentam—to hit

heran—curiously, cf. hairan in Malay

hitam manis—dark and sweet

- horomat—respect, cf. hormat in Malay
 ikat—a bunch of fruit tied together
 jadi bo—successful; did it tum out right?; bo=a question particle in Hokkien
 jalan-jalan—to stroll
 janji—to promise
 jarang-jarang—sparse, but not much
 jelak—nauseated from overeating a type of food
 jijik—nauseating
 jilat—to lick
 juling—to stare
 kacau—to disturb
 kaku—awkward
 kangkang—astride
 karut—nonsense
 kawen—to marry, cf. kahwin in Malay
 kejam—tightness of sarong
 keliling (kiah=walk)—around
 kepala—supervisor
 kepala angin—temperamental
 kepala posing—headache
 kerakot—crooked
 kesian—pity, cf. kasihan in Malay
 kedukut—stingy
 ketak-ketak—frightened out of one's wits
 kilat—shiny
 kuat—strong
 kuasa—control; authority
 kunduri—a party held by the Malays, cf. kenduri in Malay
 kurang ajak—ill-mannered
 laju—withered
 laku—saleable
 lalai—forgetful
 lalu—appetite
 lama-lama—eventually
 langkah—stride over
 langsung—absolutely
 lapat—to obtain, cf. dapat in Malay
 lapek—to cushion
 latah—to curse uncontrollably
 lelong—to auction off
 lembek—flaccid
 lembut—soft spoken; petite
 lengan-lengan—to stroll
 letak—to put
 lumak—flirtatious
 lumpang—to hitch a ride, cf. tumpang in Malay
 luput—rot, cf. reput in Malay
 mabok—drunk; intoxicated
 macam-macam—all sorts
 makan gaji—wage earner
 mana—where
 manja—to pamper
 masak-masak—a child's game
 merepek—talk nonsense
 muka binci; muka penyala—hateable face
 muka sayang—loveable face
 (a)mok—to hit another without restraint (characteristic of running amok)
 naik angin—to lose one's temper
 naik jaki—to get angry with, cf. naik dengki in Malay
 naiya—to be victimized, cf. aniaya in Malay
 (ha)nya—only
 nyanyok—senile
 padan—serve
 pakat—to collaborate
 pandai—smart in a pejorative sense
 pasai—because, cf. pasal in Malay
 penyek—squashed; flat

pemeriksa—to examine
 puas—satisfied
 pun—also
 pula—also
 rajin—hardworking
 rasa—taste; feeling
 rindu—miss
 salah (adj.)—wrong
 sambai—until, cf. sampai in Malay
 sangkot—entangled
 satu macam—eccentric
 sayang—to love
 sayang—what a pity
 sedap—tasty
 sekali—one shot; at one go
 selongkah—to search, cf. selongkar in
 Malay
 semak—a mess
 sembang—to chit-chat
 sembunyi—to hide
 sendak—lean, cf. sandar in Malay
 sengek—crooked; lopsided
 senja—dusk
 senyom—to smile
 senyom manis—a sweet smile
 sepak—to slap
 silap—a mistake
 som-som—lukewarm, cf. suam-suam
 in Malay
 suka—to like
 suku—a quarter
 sunyi—quiet
 tabik—salute
 tahan—to withstand
 tak tentu—uncertain
 tali barut—to be insensitive to other
 people's need for privacy
 tambah—to add
 tapi—but, cf. tetapi or tapi in Malay

tapih—filter, cf. tapis in Malay
 tarik—convulsion
 tekejut—shocked
 te(r)keliat—sprained; twisted
 tenggelam—to sink
 tepelanting—to collapse from being
 slapped
 terbalik—to overturn; to make a U-turn
 tehrap—to lie on the stomach, cf.
 tiarap in Malay
 tiga suku—three-quarters; crazy
 tolong—to help
 ulu—being provincial
 ulut—massage, cf. urut in Malay

7. Interjections

adoi
 alah
 alamak
 amboi
 ceh
 cilaka
 lab

Notes

1. Khoo Joo Ee, *The Straits Chinese*, Pepin Press, Amsterdam and Kuala Lumpur, 1996, p. 112.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
3. W. G. Shellabear, 'Baba Malay: An Introduction to the Language of the Straits Born Chinese', *JSBRAS*, Vol. 65, 1913, p. 50.
4. Tan Chee Beng, 'Baba and Nonya: A Study of the Ethnic Identity of the Chinese Peranakan in Malacca', Ph.D. Dissertation, Cornell University, Ithaca, 1979.
5. Teo Kok Seong, 'Masyarakat Cina Peranakan Kelantan: Satu Pengenalan Sociolinguistik', *Jurnal Dewan Bahasa*, Kuala Lumpur, April 1966, pp. 344-54.
6. Tan, 'Baba and Nonya', p. 267.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 267.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 275.
9. William Gwee Thiam Hock, *Mas Sepuluh: Baba Conversational Genres*, Armour Publications, Singapore, 1993.
10. Anne Pakir, 'A Linguistic Investigation of Baba Malay', Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Hawaii, Hawaii, 1986.
11. Tan, 'Baba and Nonya', pp. 274-82.
12. Khoo Kay Kim, 'Malaysia: Immigration and the Growth of a Plural Society', *JMBRAS*, Vol 71, Pt 1, 1998, p. 6.
13. J. R. Clammer, *Straits Chinese Society*, Singapore University Press, Singapore, 1980, p. 134.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 130.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 132.

MALAYS AND THE RED AND WHITE FLAG SOCIETIES IN PENANG, 1830s–1920s¹

BY MAHANI MUSA
Universiti Sains Malaysia

Originally published in *JMBRAS*, Vol. 72 Pt 2 (No. 277), December 1999.

Introduction

The outbreak of the Penang Riots in 1867 was an eye-opener to the British Government in the Straits Settlements. The Penang Riots Commission Reports (*PRCR*), completed by the commissioners appointed under Act XXI of 1867 to enquire into the origins and causes of the riots, showed that the four secret societies involved (two Chinese and two Malay) appeared to be 'as complete as that of any disciplined Force of the Government'.² The most disturbing factor, and one which the commissioners believed could cause more lasting harm to public peace, was the collaboration of Muslims and Hindus with the Chinese despite the marked differences in their customs and religious beliefs. As the Chinese involvement in these riots and in secret societies has already been documented,³ this article will examine the involvement of Malays in such activities by looking at two Malay secret societies – the Red Flag and White Flag Societies – and how they managed to gain a foothold in the Malay Muslim community in Penang during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries,

The Emergence of the Red Flag and White Flag Societies in Penang

Apart from M. L. Wynne's study, *Triad and Tabut*, and W. Blythe's *The Impact of Chinese Secret Societies in Malaya*, very little has been written about Malay involvement in secret organizations. The earliest observations of Malay secret societies in Penang were made in 1920 by A. W. Hamilton, who drew a connection between the celebration of Muharram, the first

month of the Muslim calendar, and performances of the *boria*, with the fight that took place between the members of the Red and White Flag, which he believed were formed in imitation of and in conjunction with Chinese secret societies.⁴ Khoo Kay Kim's article on the involvement of Malays in secret societies, published in 1975/76, is useful in helping our understanding of the subject although some of the issues raised need re-examination. For example, neither the Red Flag or the White Flag had been completely suppressed by the end of the nineteenth century as claimed by Khoo despite several laws introduced by the government to outlaw such societies.⁵ Research on the Malays and secret societies is also hampered by the lack of primary sources. Furthermore, secret societies are usually associated with the Chinese, and it is very unusual to associate Malays with such organizations. However, in sharp contrast to what many people believe, secret conspiracies are not alien to the Malay culture. From the time of the earliest Malay sultanates up to the coming of the British, there is a great deal of evidence of political intrigues, including those involving women.⁶ But the formation of a well-organized underground movement was, in the past, altogether alien to the nature of the Malays who were not known to habitually organize secret societies, such activities generally being the preserve of the Chinese.

The Red Flag and White Flag Societies are the earliest known Malay secret organizations in Malaya. Details of their formation are lacking and the dates proposed so far need re-examination. According to the *PRCR*, the White Flag was established ten or twelve years before the outbreak of the Penang Riots (around 1855–7) while the Red Flag was established around 1859. The evidence given by a witness, Saiboo, during the enquiries into the riots, is enlightening: 'I belong to the White Flag Society. I don't belong to the Ghee Hin Society. The White Flag Society was established before I was born. I am 34 years of age. I cannot say why the White Flag was formed into a Kongsì. The Red Flag was formed into a Kongsì since the last 8 years.'⁷

This evidence offers a new perspective on the dates of the formation of both the Red and White Flag Societies. Looking at the evidence given by Saiboo and the *PRCR* in its entirety, it is highly probable that these Malay secret societies have been in existence since the 1830s but in a different

form, one based on religious objectives. The date given by the *PRCR* must be regarded as the date when these societies were transformed into a Chinese-type Kongsì. The *PRCR* also noted that the alliance between the White Flag and Ghee Hin took place in 1865 while the Red Flag allied with the Toh Peh Kong in 1863.

The other salient feature is that both the Red Flag and White Flag Societies were of local origin. Attempts by scholars to relate the emergence of these societies with extraneous factors such as the Kedah–Siam War, as discussed by Wynne, remain unsubstantiated. It is true, however, that because Penang was formerly a part of Kedah, business and family connections have long existed between areas. Whatever happened to one group would be known to the other who would perhaps become involved. But to say that both secret societies had their origins in the Kedah–Siam war is not tenable as both societies never gained a permanent foothold in Kedah. Their stronghold remained Penang. It is also possible that the Red Flag and White Flag of Singapore originated with Malay Muslims from Penang as a result of similar connections. All evidence points to the fact that the Red Flag and White Flag were formed by Penang Malays and were originally religious in orientation. They were probably not initially identified with a banner or flag, but were instead based on a *kawasan* or area, notably in the town itself. The two societies became very much influenced by the Chinese secret societies of the time, simply because the Chinese and the Malays were domiciled in the same area. Later, the religious orientation of the societies was abandoned and the Malays governed themselves according to the white and red flags used, respectively, by the Ghee Hin and the Toh Peh Kong two or three years before the outbreak of the Penang Riots. Some historians believe that the names Red Flag and White Flag derived from Chinese terms.⁸ The word ‘red’ means ‘righteousness’ while ‘white’ means ‘loyalty’, two key words relating to the old Gi Heng and Ho Seng Dangerous Societies. After the Ghee Hin–White Flag and Toh Peh Kong–Red Flag alliance took place, between 1863 and 1865, both Malay secret societies were treated as branches of the Chinese secret societies although they were never registered by the government. Both the Chinese secret societies and their Malay allies fought for territorial control of Georgetown, and it

was these struggles which led to the outbreak of the Penang Riots in 1867.

The two Malay secret societies were originally formed by the Jawi Peranakan and Indian Muslim communities for religious purposes and for mutual benefit, but also to safeguard their own social needs. Francis Light's free trade policy had transformed Penang from 'the ancient burial places'⁹ with only 100 Malay inhabitants in 1786 to a port-city with a population of 33,959 in 1830. By 1860, it was reported that Penang had a population of 59,959 composed of different races with the Chinese outnumbering the Malays in that year. The statistics also showed that only 3,792 Malays lived in Georgetown compared to 16,928 Chinese and 7,310 Indians.¹⁰ Nevertheless, the Indian Muslim and Arab communities and their descendants were said to be 'town people' while the rural Malays, who inhabited areas such as Balik Pulau, Batu Uban and Bayan Lepas, were known as 'rural people'. The 'town people' mingled and competed with the other races. Many of them appeared to be successful traders and owned many business premises in the town. The intermarriage of the Arabs and the Indians with local women led to the emergence of new communities (Jawi Pekan), while the Baba community emerged from the intermarriage of Chinese males and Malay women. The emergence of multiracial communities and intermarriages subsequently led to greater cultural openness. Although the Chinese were known to be very loyal to their culture, the Indians were more flexible about theirs. In the 1830s, it was normal for a Hindu to celebrate Muharram, the first month of the Muslim calendar, while an Indian Muslim celebrated Duserrah, a Hindu festival.

Although the local government encouraged population expansion, it also feared an explosion of criminal activities. By the second half of the nineteenth century, the number of criminal cases reported to the police was on the increase. For the years 1856-7, 1,765 cases were reported. This figure subsequently increased to 3,447 for both Penang and Province Wellesley for 1860-1.¹¹ Blythe believed that this situation emerged as a result of the rapid increase of the immigrant Chinese population which, in turn, led to an increase in the membership of triad societies and their activities.¹² In Penang, the Toh Peh Kong and the Ghee Hin were the two leading secret societies, and they had been antagonistic towards each other from the time they were formed.

Indian Muslims, Jawi Pekan and Muharram

How did the Malay Muslims safeguard their interests? It is quite possible that as a result of intermingling, the Malay Muslims sought help from Chinese towkays or businessmen who were usually members or leaders of the Chinese secret societies. They also sought help from wealthy Muslims who happened to be on good terms with the Chinese towkays. As a result, the Malay Muslims formed their own organization or *jumaah*, which was based on a Chinese model so as to safeguard communal and other interests. However, the initial religious intentions later receded into the background as Muslims began to be confronted with new social values in an increasingly cosmopolitan Georgetown.

The Indian population in the Straits Settlements, predominantly of South Indian origin, was divided by social class and dialect. In terms of religion, they were either Muslim or Hindu. During the nineteenth century, there were four groups of Indians in Penang. They comprised traders, labourers, regiments of sepoy posted from India, and convicts. The sepoy were usually attached to the Madras Native Infantry, which included both Muslims and Hindus. Occasionally, there were also regiments from either Bombay or Bengal resident in Penang. The Indian convicts formed a significant group. As a result of the handing over of Bencoolen (in Sumatra), an important penal station for convicts from India, to the Dutch in 1825, the Bencoolen convicts were dispersed to Penang, Singapore and Malacca. The Straits Settlement thus became a penal station for India until 1860 and for Ceylon until 1867. Most of these convicts were under life imprisonment for serious criminal offences while others were shorter periods for lesser crimes. In May 1856, there were 1,357 transported convicts stationed at the Penang jail; by the following year, this number had increased to 1,527.¹³ To most of the inhabitants of the Straits Settlements, the transportation of convicts from India was unwelcome and considered prejudicial to the community, especially when, after the 1857 Indian Mutiny, criminals were sent to the Straits Settlements. A group of traders from the Straits Settlements sent a protest note to the government in India insisting on an immediate stoppage of the transportation of convicts in order to safeguard public life and property.¹⁴

The arrival of convicts caused much concern. Not only could the existing jail not accommodate the increased number, but the government was unable to provide proper security due to the lack of police and military personnel.¹⁵ As a result of the protest, the number of convicts transported to Penang decreased after 1850.¹⁶ From 1860, the Andaman Islands, Arakan and Tenasserim, besides the Bombay Presidency, began to replace the Straits Settlements as penal stations for convicts from India. In 1867, the control of the Straits Settlements administration was transferred from India to the Colonial Office in London. Uncertain as to what to do with the convicts in the Straits, the government in India agreed to pardon some of them. On the expiry of their sentences, many stayed behind and were subsequently absorbed into the Indian population. Some of them later married local Malay women and became known as Jawi Pekan. Their offspring, as were the Indian Muslims born in Malaya of Indian parents, were known as Jawi Peranakan. After 1857, the emergence of the Jawi Pekan community became more conspicuous when the 'ticket of leave' policy was introduced. Under this policy, convicts with a record of good behaviour were allowed to leave the convict line to work for British officers and other members of the European community. In 1873, the last batch of Indian and Ceylonese convicts was transferred to the Andaman Islands and the periodic additions of their criminal population ceased. As noted by Helen Fujimoto, throughout the 1860s and 1870s, and with the growth of the second and third generations, the term Jawi Peranakan, which referred to the local born and those of Malay blood, began to replace the term Jawi Pekan in common usage.¹⁷

According to Blythe, there can be little doubt that the growth of a resident criminal community of Indians and those of mixed Indian-Malay descent was an important factor in the degeneration of the Muharram festivals in the Straits Settlements which led to the formation of Indian-type secret societies.¹⁸ In 1846, it was believed that there were Indian secret society leaders in the Penang jail.¹⁹ In order to maintain a harmonious political relationship with India, the Straits Government adopted a tolerant attitude towards religious festivals by allowing sepoys and the Indian convicts to celebrate their own religious festivals.

On the Muslim side, the Shiite influence from India was brought to the Straits Settlements through two separate channels. First, the Shiite

religious influence was transmitted by Indian traders and members of the India Native Regiment. The Shiite teaching, however, never gained a permanent footing in Malaya. In fact, the Muharram festival and *ta'zieh*, which is a form of theatre accompanied by music and song performed by the Shiites in lamentation of the death of Hussein in the Karbala tragedy, underwent a dramatic change in the middle of the nineteenth century. This corresponds to Vaughan's description of the Muharram celebration during that period, which was usually accompanied by dancing, clowning and acts of buffoonery. This situation led to the second channel of Shiite criminal influence – the transportation of Thugs and other criminals from India.²⁰ Wynne is probably correct in asserting that festivals played an important role in the background of the Thuggist cult in Malaya and in fostering spread of the Red Flag and White Flag Societies. Holy festivals of the Hindus in India reappeared in Malaya in a minor way in which dancing, clowning and hooliganism played a part, while in Madras the Muharram, which was also known as the Dera Panja, was celebrated by both Muslims and Hindus who later took part in unruly behaviour without any specific cause, be it religious or criminal. This may explain why the original religious orientation faded from the Muharram festival as we begin to find references in the records to the 'rival parties' of Hasan and Hussein. As for the *boria*, which was believed to be the channel for the expansion of the Thuggist influence in Penang, its origin is uncertain. Houghton's theory that the *boria* was introduced to Penang in 1845 by the sepoy of the 21st Bengal Infantry from Madras is widely accepted today although its Persian roots are unmistakable.²¹ In India, Muslim sepoy were given ten days leave to enable them to celebrate *Muharram* and take part in *boria* festivities.

The *boria* performance usually takes place during the first ten days of Muharram, the first month of the Muslim calendar. It had its origin in lamentations following the defeat of Hussein at the hands of Yazid at the battle of Karbala. The Shiites regard his death as a time of mourning. In 1845, the celebration was still conducted in a serious manner, but from the mid-1850s *boria* underwent a significant transformation due to changes in the composition of Malay Muslim society. Although the Jawi Pekan had been in existence since the 1850s, by the 1870s more and more of them were being

absorbed into Malay society. As a result, the *boria* lost its original intentions and began to assume a new form in line with the changing demographic pattern of Malay society and, consequently, its cultural preferences.

From the 1850s onwards, the Madras sepoy, who were also associated with problems of indiscipline, were coming increasingly under the influence of Wahabeism, which had its origins in the Arab Peninsula. Although there is no evidence to show that similar problems had affected the Indian Muslims in Penang, it was at this time that the Muharram and *boria* celebrations began to be accompanied by acts of hooliganism. Vaughan, the Penang Superintendent of Police from 1851 to 1856, recalled the manner in which the Jawi Pekan impersonated tigers, just as the Chinese did in their game of Tigers, during the Muharram festival:

In the Mohorum [sic] feast several of these men go about with their bodies painted like tigers, a tail stuck on behind, and a chain round the waist which is held by others who are supposed to be their keepers. They are generally muscular, clean made fellows and imitate the movements of a wild beast admirably. They carry the resemblance so far and work themselves up to such a pitch of excitement, that if a live kid is thrown to them they will seize it, tear the poor creature to pieces and suck the blood. There are families that bear the sobriquet of tigers. The child is taught to impersonate the animal by the father as soon as the former is strong enough to bear the fatigue. On going around the town and country they collect a great deal of money and are allowed to seize any articles of food that may be exposed for sale on the road side. I have seen a tiger in passing down a very short street, collect a great number of coconuts, sugar cane, cakes and sweatmeats.²²

According to Vaughan, the Jawi Pekan joined 'heart and soul' in all amusements of the Muharram and Duserrah and would perform every type of buffoonery for the purpose of obtaining money. Apart from impersonating tigers, they also disguised themselves in a variety of ways. Some dressed as beggars while others dressed as birds. Some even dressed in European attire.

Their performances attracted various ethnic groups, including Europeans and Portuguese, who rewarded them with money. According to Vaughan, the Jawi Pekan also formed roaming bands and attacked those who were devoutly parading the *tabut*.²³ An attack might begin in fun but usually ended in bloodshed. Up until this time, the Malays were not involved in such activities and generally avoided visiting the town during the Muharram celebrations.²⁴

Muharram celebrations, the *tabut* procession – which usually took place on the tenth day of Muharram – and the *boria* performance were not at this time controlled by the police surveillance but they nevertheless caused anxiety to the local inhabitants. For instance, in 1857 many people were alarmed by a rumour that the convicts were planning to cause trouble during the Muharram festival, including murdering Europeans and plundering the town. The police issued a statement that the rumour was baseless but the public were unconvinced.²⁵ It was at this time that the Malay religious *jumaah* transformed itself into a secret organization, based on the Chinese model of providing protection to their countrymen.

From Religious to Secret Organization: Problems of the Muslim Community

Prior to the outbreak of the Penang Riots in 1867, Malay secret societies had not been mentioned in British official reports. These reports show, however, that the government was aware of the existence of the 'Kling [Indian Muslim] Societies', and these were kept under constant police surveillance as a result of their suspicious activities and the trouble caused by gang fights during Muharram celebrations between two rival Malay factions prior to the outbreak of the Penang Riots. However, there was never any mention of the Red Flag and the White Flag. It is possible that Malay secret societies were already in existence at this time but were camouflaged as religious organizations. Since these were never seen as a threat to the government, the local police never took any interest in them.

At the same time, the Muslim community was slowly being affected by parochial interests which were eventually to divide the community. Unlike

most Indian Muslims, who were Shiites, the Malays, who were Sunnis, set up their own separate mosques. In the absence of rule by traditional chiefs, the welfare of the Muslim community lay with the British government which, in turn, appointed a *kadhi* as the religious head of the Muslims in a particular state. It is unclear when the post of *kadhi* actually came into being, although in the first half of the nineteenth century there was a *kadhi* in Province Wellesley.²⁶ Within the Malay Muslim community, each mosque had its own method of governing independent of other mosques. Muslims were given the right to state their preference on the appointment of an *imam* (religious teacher); the popularly elected candidate was then issued with a letter of appointment by the government. As the religious head of the Muslims, the *kadhi*, who was responsible for the whole state, then sought to appoint mosque officials of his choice who were given written orders to carry out official religious duties at the village level. The Malays were also aware that neither the *kadhi* nor the *imam* had the power to prosecute under British law; at other times, the *imam* fell out of favour with the villagers. In such cases, the villagers were left with little choice but to establish their own religio-social organization or *jumaah*. Leaders of *jumaah* were usually men of deeply religious background, in possession of considerable wealth and imbued with a charismatic nature. Later, some of these organizations began to transform themselves into secret organizations. Another possible avenue for the Malay Muslims was to join Chinese secret societies. Vaughan mentions a Malay *haji* and a *penghulu* (village headman) who had joined Chinese secret societies in 1840, the latter bringing along villagers under his charge.²⁷

The Jumaah versus the Tariqat

As mentioned earlier, the Indian Muslim Peranakan community had already formed their own religious faction or *jumaah* as early as the 1830s for the purpose of protecting themselves, their womenfolk and their property as well as to conduct religious ceremonies. Its members comprised Javanese, Acehnese, Malays, Arabs and Jawi Peranakan as well as Indian Muslims. Their aim was also for mutual benefit. Significantly, they only accepted as

members 'men of good character'. They took part peacefully in religious festivals such as Muharram, the *tabut* procession and *boria* performances. At this stage, there was no involvement of bad characters or bullies. However, the religious intention was later abandoned when they came in league with the rival Chinese secret societies, a situation brought about by the bad characters within the society itself.

The growing influence of convicts and Jawi Pekan and the emergence of Muslim secret societies coincided with a period of tension within the Malay Sunni sect in Penang and Province Wellesley. Since 1786, Penang had been open to various Islamic activities. In 1806, Sufi education was brought to the island by Hamid bin Bahman, a famous Sufi teacher from Hadrahmaut. Madrasatul Suluk Kampong Melayu, set up by Hamid, was well known as an educational institution as well as a sanctuary for Kedah Sufists who had fled the state after it fell to Siam in 1821.²⁸ Between the 1830s and 1850s there were a few Sunni *jumaah* led by well-known leaders. In the 1830s, the *kadhi* of Telok Ayer Tawar in Province Wellesley was very influential among the mainland Muslim community. But he was opposed by a group of *haji* who had formed another *jumaah*. Another popular religious teacher was Haji Macawi of Batu Uban, who originally came from Mecca. It was believed that Haji Macawi enjoyed a good relationship with British officers, European merchants and planters. He was also very sympathetic towards the Kedah Malays who were led by Tunku Mohamad Saad in the fight against Siamese rule since 1839.²⁹ Wynne believed that Haji Macawi was a leader of a *jumaah* which was later transformed into a secret organization aligned with the Tokong Chinese secret society from the island. The Tokong, too, was very sympathetic towards the Kedah Malays. Later this *jumaah* came to be known as the Red Flag. Thus, the Red Flag society, Wynne believed, had its origins as a Malay organization in the 1830s during the Kedah Wars. To date there is no evidence to link Haji Macawi with the Chinese secret societies and the Red Flag on the island. As pointed out by Fujimoto, the linkage between the Malays of Penang and Kedah had already been in place since 1786 or earlier.³⁰ Moreover, many Kedah Malays had fled to Province Wellesley and Penang in 1821 in the wake of the Siamese invasion. It was believed that approximately 6,000 of these refugees had settled in Penang, mainly in the rural areas. They also built their own

mosques and *surau*. Kongsu Mosque (in Balik Pulau), Pondok Upeh Mosque, Titi Teras Mosque, Telok Bahang Mosque, Sungai Batu Mosque and Permatang Damar Laut Mosque were all built by the Kedah Malays.³¹

Another prominent religious teacher in Penang in the nineteenth century was Abdul Ghani who was from Madura and also of Arab descent. When a whole village of Malay peasants were drawn into Chinese secret societies in the 1850s, Abdul Ghani went on a 'crusade' to break the connection. On this Vaughan wrote:

To regain the thousands that have in a manner forsaken their church, Abdul Gunny [sic] has formed a league and many have joined them. They bind themselves by an oath to obey implicitly the teaching of the koran, and on no account to neglect the ancient usages of Mohamedans, they also promise to keep aloof from those that do not join them, or those that do and subsequently forsake them, they are not to attend feasts held by those that are not in the league, and above all they are not to attend the funerals of those that do not join them. The last provision induces more to join than any other rule, as there is nothing a Mohamedan dreads more than being treated with disrespect after death...

Abdul Ghani has an immense number of followers who hold him in the greatest reverence and to them his word is law; fortunately he appears an inoffensive man but such influence exerted by a bad man might lead to the most serious results. To counteract Abdul Gunny's league, a very powerful party exists of men who may be called Freethinkers; educated enough to see the folly of blindly yielding to the will of others, and courageous enough to treat Abdul Gunny's threats with contempt. The leaders of the radical party are the wealthiest men in the place; and are much respected by their countrymen though regarded in the light of indifferent Mahomedans.

Vaughan's description of Abdul Ghani demonstrates what a fanatical Muslim he was and 'if persevered it will do much ruin to the Mohamedan

religion' and perhaps very closely corresponds with the prevailing Western views regarding local Muslim characters. Abdul Ghani, however, was merely trying to safeguard the purity of the faith.

The Naqsyandiah Sect (*tariqat*) was another type of *jumaah* which was very influential during the nineteenth century. It was led by Sheikh Omar Basheer, an *imam* at the Acheen Street Mosque. His activities seemed harmless enough as he laid stress on *suluk*, Muslim brotherhood and mutual assistance. This *tariqat* managed to attract not only those in Penang and Province Wellesley but also members from neighbouring Kedah and as far away as Sumatra. Sheikh Omar enjoyed an amicable relationship with the British officials and it was not surprising that his activities never attracted the attention of the police. In fact, he was often given the responsibility of solving various issues faced by the Muslims in mid-nineteenth century Penang.

From the above, it is clear that the Malay community was facing serious internal divisions during this period. To compound matters, there were no rules regarding the qualifications needed to hold the highest post in the mosque hierarchy other than the fact that one had to have already performed the Haj. Any person of a certain social background, and with good morals, could aspire to the position. Che Long, for instance, was the head of his own *jumaah* in Acheen Street; at the same time, he was also the leader of the Red Flag. However, a contemporary witness's account considered him 'a man of desperate character' and capable of inflicting injury to others or to order his followers to do so.³² Che Long, who was of Arab descent, possessed considerable wealth and influence in the area where he lived, which was referred to as Kampong Che Long (Che Long's village).³³

Even though Abdul Ghani managed to sever the link between the Malays and the Chinese secret societies, the problem was never completely resolved. Until 1860, despite the predominantly Indian character of both the Red Flag and White Flag Societies, the Malays in Penang and Province Wellesley were closely linked with the other Muslims, especially the Indian Muslim and Jawi Peranakan. Until the mid-nineteenth century, the 'pure' Malays³⁴ were the least influenced religiously by the other Muslims. It is quite possible that they might have joined one of the *jumaah* but they did not take part in the *tabut* processions during the Muharram celebrations. The Malays also observed very few holidays,

notably only Hari Raya Puasa, Mandi Safar and Hari Raya Haji. As for cultural influences, they were not entirely immune to vices. For instance, they quickly picked up the habits of gambling and opium smoking from the Chinese and other Muslims, and it was through these vices that they were later dragged into other amoral activities and secret societies. Vaughan was convinced of the consequences of gambling; he believed this would lead the Malays to beggary, theft and eventually to burglary and gang robbery. He wrote:

To each gaming house an illicit opium shop is attached, so that the prosecution of one vice leads to the indulgence of the other; all Malay gamblers are opium smokers and to obtain the drug they will hazard their lives; it is a common practice for Chinese to destroy themselves if unable to purchase opium, not so the Malay, he appears too philosophical to sacrifice himself when the means of gratifying his taste are so easy, he takes to robbing instead of suicide and with a number of others in the same predicament attacks opium shops and plunders them of all the opium and preparations thereof he can find. Nearly all the gang robberies in Province Wellesley from 1851 to 1856 were committed in opium shops and in many instances, although there was much valuable property in the shops, it remained untouched, while every grain of opium and chandoo was taken.³⁵

Apart from gambling and opium smoking, the Malays also became religiously corrupted as a result of fraternization with the natives of India.³⁶ In Penang, for instance, there were several *keramat* (shrines) to which the Malays, Bengalis (natives of Bengal) and Indians contributed regular offerings. Muhammad Ibrahim Munshi witnessed such incidents in the early 1870s when he saw Malays performing *nazar* (a religious ceremony related to the fulfilment of a vow) at Keramat Tok Koya in Hutton Lane.³⁷ It was this process of racial intermingling that gradually drew the Malays into the Red and White Flags by the 1860s.

It is also interesting to note that some of the Arab Peranakan who were involved in such *jumaah* were appointed *imam* of the various mosques

built by the Indian Muslim community. Capitan Kling Mosque, for instance, although founded by the Indian Muslims, was headed by Arab Peranakan throughout its existence.³⁸ Quite often business partnerships resulted in closer family ties between Malay Muslims and others. It was known that some of the Arabs took Chinese wives and this also led to their involvement in secret organizations. Syed Alatas, who headed the Red Flag after Che Long, for instance, married the daughter of Khoo Poh, a wealthy businessman who monopolized pepper trading. He was also a leader of the Toh Peh Kong. As a result of this marriage, the affiliation between the Red flag and the Toh Peh Kong in the early twentieth century was further strengthened.³⁹

The Penang Riots of 1867: The Malay Side of the Story

The riots had their origin in a trifling quarrel between the Red and White Flag Societies during the Muharram festival in 1867. Later on, it was actively abetted by the two rival Chinese secret societies, each in alliance with the other Malay society.⁴⁰ The former took part in the subsequent riots under the instigation and direction of their respective headmen, who supplied them with firearms as well as financial rewards, such as gratuities and compensation for the wounded and the families of those killed during the fighting.

The actual riots began on 3 August with reinforcements for the contesting parties coming from Province Wellesley and as far as Phuket (although this was denied by Chinese witnesses in the *PRCR*). The Ghee Hin had their stronghold in Chulia Street while the Toh Peh Kong had theirs about 100 yards away in Beach Street. The main focus of the flare-ups within Georgetown were the Beach Street-Chulia Street junction, Ujong Pasir, Prangin Road, Acheen Street and Armenian Street where the Ghee Hin, Toh Peh Kong, Red Flag and White Flag had their headquarters. Eyewitnesses described the riots as a horrible scene of slaughter and violence. Like their Chinese allies, Muslims were involved in the fighting, looting and house burning while mosques were used as headquarters by both the Malay societies. In the *PRCR*, a witness is mentioned who informed the

investigating commission that he heard cannon shot being fired from the minaret of a mosque in Acheen Street which served as a stronghold for the Red Flag.⁴¹ During those few days, Penang was in a tense, warlike situation with armed men going up and down the streets. Every conceivable kind of weapon, from sticks and stones to muskets and cannon, was used in the fighting, while bullets and cannonballs flew in all directions killing scores of secret society members. We have no information as to whether town people unrelated to these societies were among the casualties. The combined forces of the Red Flag (1,000 men) and the Toh Peh Kong (3,000 men) seemed to be a numerical mismatch for the combined forces of the White Flag and the Ghee Hin (25,000 men). However, the Toh Peh Kong possessed superior arms which were supplied by members who comprised wealthy merchants, shopkeepers and those involved in the manufacture and selling of firearms and ammunition. Even their Malay friends were recipients of such arms.

Meanwhile, the Lieutenant-Governor of Penang, Archibald E. A. H. Anson, who had arrived in Penang only the previous June, directed his men to erect barricades from carts, timber and any other available material in order to contain the street fighting. Penang was short of police and military personnel to deal with the riots effectively. Before its deployment to the Nicobars, the Penang force numbered a paltry 500 riflemen and 40 gunners: after the deployment, only 170 were left. This forced Anson to withdraw all police and military garrisons from the outlying areas as well as to establish a small battalion composed of European and Eurasian residents to guard the streets. The riots stretched for ten days and affected various parts of Georgetown as well as outlying areas such as Jelutong, Tanjong Tokong, Balik Pulau, Sungai Nibong and Batu Lancang. Assistance was also obtained from Province Wellesley. The riots came to an end after Anson negotiated a peace agreement with the contending parties. As part of the peace deal, all the societies involved agreed to surrender their arms and to pay compensation to the government.⁴²

Significantly, the leading members of the Red and White Flag Societies involved in the Riots were mostly Jawi Peranakan and Indian Muslims. The White Flag included leading citizens such as Tuan Chee @ Sheikh Omar @ Omar Abdul Rasul, Mohamed Kader Houssain @ Pah Etam, Shamoo, Saiboo

(a school master), Che Abdul Karim, Tunku Mat (a collector of assessment), Mohamed Amin from Ayer Itam, Hadjee Daoud, Che Omar and Mohamed Ibrahim. These leaders were ably assisted by the White Flag district leaders from Chulia Street, Simpang Ampat, Hutton Lane, Macalister Road, Jalan Bahru, Pulau Tikus, Klawei and Tanjong Tokong.

The leading members of Red Flag comprised Che Long @ Hadjee Mahomed Noor, Tuan Mohamed, Vapoo Merican Noordin, Abdul Kader Merican, Che Awang Pet, Said Mohamed Atas, Said Houssain Ideed, Che Aboo, Talib, Che Amboo, Wan Man, Madarsah Merican (according to the *PRCR*, a 'superintendent' and a leader of the riot party), Che Deen, Pawan Nerepoo and Nadar (a police peon). In this instance, the headmen of fifteen localities, namely Titih Papan, Datu Kramat, Kampong Lama, Ayer Itam, Sungai Pinang, Batu Uban (where Che Oodin was the head), Bayan Lepas, Penang Road, Batu Man, Dhobie Ghaut, Kampong Bharu, Telok Jelutong, Sungai Gelugor, Sungai Nibong, Telok Coomba, assisted the Red Flag.⁴³

From the Penang Riots records we can determine that there were three main types of Muslim involvement in secret organizations. First, there were Muslims who were involved solely in the White and Red Flag Societies and were not involved in any of the Chinese secret societies. In the case of the Penang Riots, some Red Flag and White Flag district heads claimed that they only provided assistance and at no time were members of Chinese secret societies. Secondly, there were Muslims who were involved in Chinese secret societies but who did not join either the White or Red Flags. In doing so, they were merely following the example of their village heads. Thirdly, there were Muslims who were simultaneously members of both the Malay and Chinese secret societies. Che Long and Tuan Chee were examples. There were also those Malays who claimed to be *de facto* members of Chinese secret societies although they did not undergo the necessary admission rites. It seems that this claim was based on the fact that the heads of the Muslim societies to which they belonged had joined the Chinese secret societies. There were also those who were involved as a result of the social environment at that particular time. Shamoo, for instance, joined the Ghee Hin because he was living in the midst of the Ghee Hin community and was forced to join.⁴⁴

The Rules of the Malay Societies

At the time of their establishment, the main objective of the Malay societies was religious in nature, and their rules contained nothing that was bad or injurious to the public. Members attended and assisted whenever fellow members held ceremonies such as marriages, funerals and circumcisions, and they were particularly active during the month of Muharram.⁴⁵ By the early 1860s, however, religious matters were being pushed to the periphery, and an observer described them as organizations in which 'all manner of evil was done, mischief plotted, and combinations made, to help members out of trouble, instead of having recourse to the authorities'. Mohamed Kader Houssain @ Pah Etam, an agent for Indian Muslim shipping in Penang, described the simple admission rites and rules of the White Flag as follows:

Mohamedans do not an take oath, they sign their names to an Agreement, that is enough.... If a man died, his neighbours must attend his funeral, and if the deceased was a poor man, the Society defrayed his funeral expenses. All must attend when circumcision was performed upon a member's son. Should a member not attend on this occasion, he would be mulcted [sic] in twice the amount of the share of expenses. Should the fine not be paid, the refractory member would be turned out of the Society, and notice given to all the members of the fact so that they might not attend any Feast given by the offender, on occasion of either Birth, Marriage, or Funeral. Should a member do anything against the Laws of the country, the Society was not to interfere or assist him. If, in the opinion of the Society, a member had got into trouble through no faults of his own, the Society was bound to assist him, and were he wrongfully convicted the Society would provide for his family.⁴⁶

The entrance fee for the Red Flag Society was fixed at \$1.16, of which six cents was paid to the Doorkeeper, ten cents to the Instructor of the secret sign and the remainder to the Society. All members would be given a piece of red cloth as a distinguishing 'badge' to be used during any disturbances.⁴⁷

According to witness No. 39 at the enquiry, a Roll Book of members in Penang was kept and it was obligatory for every member to sign his name in it. For Province Wellesley, the society kept a similar Roll of members.⁴⁸

If a Muslim wished to join the Ghee Hin, he would have to go through an admission rite which was undertaken by the Ghee Hin Secretary at the Kongsu House. Upon registering his name, he would have to pay the entrance fee; Chinese paid \$3.60 while Malays and Indians paid \$1.60. Then he had to pass through four successive doors and at each door certain questions were asked with the answers already taught beforehand. After that a man would prick his finger with a sharp object and all new members would be asked to drink a bit of the ritual water which had been mixed with the blood from the man's finger.⁴⁹

Because of the cosmopolitan nature of the port-city, which was extremely tolerant of the various problems of a mixed population, the original intention of the Muslim society underwent radical changes. The primary instigators of these changes were the less savoury characters within the society who were often in a position to 'turn the Society into a fighting Society'. In the case of a member being assaulted or aggrieved, he would go to the society's 'bad' members, who would then take matters into their own hands and attack members of the opposite party without prior consultation with the headmen.⁵⁰ Members of the Chinese kongsu who were running gambling houses and other places of ill repute would make these Muslims assist them and induct them as members of their society.⁵¹ In fact, the Chinese found the Muslims most useful as branch assistants. The Malays were also engaged in carrying out certain tasks which the Chinese society members were reluctant to get involved in, such as dealing with the police, a job made easier by the fact that many police personnel were also members of the Flag Societies.⁵² In this way, both the Red Flag and the White Flag Societies were inadvertently dragged in as part of the political aims of the Chinese secret societies.

The Fatwa (Religious Ruling)

The resultant injuries and considerable loss of life and property caused by the Penang Riots led the government to make serious efforts to suppress secret

society activities which were perceived as a danger to the public. However, Ordinance XIX of 1869 for the Suppression of Dangerous Societies, which was the first ordinance passed by the government, was never meant to entirely suppress these societies but instead to control them through registration. All societies with ten or more members were required to register with the Commissioner of Police. However, it was not until 1882 that there was any direct mention of the Red and White Flags in the ordinances passed by the government in relation to unlawful societies. Because of the increasing threat from these two Malay secret societies in Malacca and Penang, the new provision of the Dangerous Societies Suppression Ordinance came into force in March 1882. Among other things, it outlawed the Red and White Flag Societies and imposed fines on those who acted as managers or as members of them.⁵³ Official reports, however, failed to provide any picture on the seriousness of Malay involvement in secret societies. On the other hand, reports in local newspapers, the *fatwa* (religious ruling) issued by religious leaders, as well as a book on a related subject written by a concerned Malay have provided details of the influence which these two Malay secret societies had on the Muslim community in Penang throughout the nineteenth century and until first quarter of the twentieth century.

The eventual suppression of the Muslim secret societies was achieved by local religious leaders. After the Riots were brought under control, the government appointed four religious leaders – Tuan Haji Sheikh Omar Basheer, Tuan Haji Mohd Sirat, Khatib Abdul Kadir and Khatib Mohd Hanifah – to advise the Muslim community on the evils of secret societies. Sheikh Omar Basheer, the most distinguished and respected of the four, not only among fellow Muslims but also among government officials and other Penang inhabitants,⁵⁴ was directed to issue a *fatwa* preventing Muslims from joining any secret society. This *fatwa* ruled that Muslims who had joined Chinese secret societies were being disloyal to their faith for several reasons, and were deemed no longer Muslims. First, these men were willing to leave and forsake their parents and relatives because of their loyalty to the secret society. Secondly, they undertook swearing by drinking blood mixed with wine. Thirdly, due to their blind loyalty to the secret society, they were prepared to give up everything they had, including their lives, for the victory and glory

of the society. The *fatwa* stressed that all of these were against the tenets of Islam. The *fatwa* also added that 'an unfaithful Muslim who did not repent would not be buried amongst fellow Muslims when he died. Neither would the last rites be administered to him as required by Islam. As for his property, this could only be returned to him when he once again became a faithful Muslim. While he was still alive, other Muslims could not go to the feasts he held, and when he died others could not visit his house, not even when he fell ill. He was also not allowed to join the mosque congregation until he had repented.'⁵⁵

The *fatwa* caused considerable concern among the Muslim community. Many Muslims came to take an oath before Sheikh Omar swearing that they had never been a member of any secret society or, if they had been, insisting that they had repented. It was believed that nearly 7,000 Muslims took the oath as well as surrendered their arms.⁵⁶ In his diary, Sheikh Omar wrote down the names of those who took the oath before him although he does not differentiate between an individual who was never a member of any secret society and one who was once a member but now wanted to leave the Society. Those who took the oath came from varying backgrounds, such as *penghulu* (head of the village), *imam*, *siak*, *lebai*, *haji* (different levels of mosque official) and police personnel. They came from various districts in Penang and Province Wellesley. Those who had taken the oath before Sheikh Omar were subsequently issued a *surat akuan* (certificate). In his diary, Sheikh Omar wrote down the names of the people who were not to be issued with *surat akuan* because they were still members of secret societies. He wrote that these men were apostates and would be ostracized by their fellow Muslims. Most of them came from outlying areas like Batu Uban, Relau, Sungai Dua and Sungai Nibong.⁵⁷ At the same time, in order to prevent the Naqsyandiah Sect members from being influenced by secret society members, Sheikh Omar issued a separate *fatwa* that required every member of the sect to undertake an oath before him that they were never involved in and would stay aloof from any secret organization.⁵⁸

The first *fatwa*, however, was not a complete success. There were, of course, a few Malays who obeyed the *fatwa* and left the secret societies for good. There were also a few who initially obeyed the directive because they needed the *surat akuan* to enable them to carry on their lives and who also

did not want to be forsaken by their Muslim friends, but who later resumed their secret society activities. News items appearing in the local newspaper showed that secret societies, regardless of their Chinese or Malay origin, were still active, albeit in a very secret way, despite the legislation to suppress them. Only when the Chinese secret societies ceased to exist did both the Red and White Flags also cease. However, it is possible that the Malay societies continued to exist in a different form, a more dignified one, and often under the guise of the supposedly defunct Red and White Flags.

The Red and White Flag Societies up to the 1920s

According to a great many people, there is reason to believe that secret societies still exist in our midst. The people are either ignorant of it or, what is more probably the case, powerless to act in the matter, in as much as they cannot at any time obtain sufficient evidence for the purpose of prosecution, owing to the great secrecy which is maintained with respect to all the kongsi proceedings. The red, white and black flag societies⁵⁹ are those stated in existence, in which Malays as well as Chinese form the members.

(PGSC, 13 October 1891)

In the 1870s, crimes and various other offences reported to the police in Penang were found to be slightly higher than in Singapore because of the failure of the Dangerous Societies Suppression Ordinance XIX of 1869 to control secret societies. The Chinese secret societies were still in existence and so were their Malay counterparts. Despite the introduction of Ordinance IV of 1882, the Societies Ordinance of 1889 and the Banishment Ordinance of 1888, which led the government to believe that such societies had diminished substantially by the end of 1890, the Chinese and Malay secret societies were still active in Georgetown and Province Wellesley until at least the first quarter of the twentieth century. This period also saw a few attempts to re-establish societies along the same lines as the Flag societies. However, the police could not act on them as there was insufficient evidence.⁶⁰

The *boria* festival played a crucial role in perpetuating the Red and White Flag activities, or at least in keeping the traditions of these societies alive among the local Malays despite government efforts to control theatrical performances by introducing the 1856 Police Act and Conservancy Act.⁶¹ This was followed by the banning of *boria* in 1877. However, the 1856 Act proved ineffective as the police continued to have difficulties in conveying the new regulations to the public, especially in relation to the *boria*.⁶² Under the guise of religion and culture, the *boria* was still widely performed during the Muharram festivals by groups of people from different *mukim* or districts. The PGSC of 25 May 1899 reported that a group of *boria* players who performed in Dato Kramat and Larut Road were fined for failing to get a permit from the police. There was also the issue of categorizing the *boria*. In one case, which took place in 1906, when a Malay was prosecuted for organizing a *boria* performance without a permit from the Chief Police Officer, the lawyer, on behalf of the defendant, argued that the word 'boria' had not been included in the section of the Ordinance referring to 'wayang' and other performances. The lawyer contended that it had been intentionally left out. In another case, a woman (Siti), who occupied a premise in Northam Road where *boria* was performed, insisted she did not assist or take part in the performance; she also stressed that *boria* had never been a theatrical performance.⁶³

Besides *boria*, the other performances which were celebrated from the first to the tenth day of Muharram were *kolli kallen*, which meant 'fowl thief' in Tamil, the main language of the Indian Muslims in Penang, and *ronggeng* or dancing. The people who took part in *kolli kallen* usually dressed up as beggars, with their faces covered with handkerchiefs. They went from one house to house soliciting money, only leaving the premise after the owner had given them something. Another group of young males preferred to dress in women's clothes and dance in the streets. The police sought to apply the Police Act and Conservancy Act, despite the fact that street dancing was outside the Act's purview, in order to control the nuisance caused by the Muharram processions and performances. For instance, on 24 July 1893 and 10 June 1897, a few *boria* performers

were taken to court for publicly donning outrageous costumes without a police permit.⁶⁴

It is undisputed that *boria* performances caused considerable annoyance to the public. Apart from suffering from sleepless nights, the public was also concerned with the way the police handled the matter. Although the compound where the *boria* was performed was usually enclosed by a hedge or fence, the performances usually attracted big crowds, at times as many as 400 people. In 1906, a European resident wrote to the PGSC expressing regret that the police had given permission for a performance in which the players covered their faces with handkerchiefs. The same writer also expressed his dismay over the failure of the police to prevent their own personnel from taking part in the performances.⁶⁵

On the tenth of Muharram, the Indian Muslims also performed *nazar* (a ceremony held upon the fulfilment of a vow) and the *tabut* procession. The procession involved the carrying of the *tabut* from a mosque in the town⁶⁶ around various streets in Georgetown. This caused a great deal of inconvenience to the residents, particularly when the streets were to purify the soul of all sins committed during the past year or so. For this purpose they converged on the streams and rivers of the town and environs and even on Chinese owned fruit orchards. There was much merry making associated with these activities, including music and dancing (*ronggeng*), as well as unlimited consumption of alcohol. Quite often the festivities would end in fights as the *boria* players from another *mukim* (perhaps from a former rival flag society) would throng the same locality, resulting in abusive verbal exchanges and brawls. The lyrics of *boria* songs were often used to throw an open challenge to others from a different district, which also aroused emotions. The same phenomenon occurred before the outbreak of the 1867 Penang Riots, although in this case the *mukim's* name was used to disguise possible flag affiliation.

One study has shown that until 1920 there were between forty and fifty *boria* troupes in Penang.⁶⁷ As shown below, these troupes still identified themselves according to Red and White Flag traditions.

The Red Flag Society

1. Boria Mukim Jelutong
2. Boria Kampong Pinang
3. Boria Bagan Jennal
4. Boria Jalan Bahru
5. Boria Jalan Hatim
6. Boria Sungai Gelugor
7. Boria Kampong Rawana
8. Boria Kelawai
9. Boria Gedung Rumput (now King Street)
10. Boria Kampong Ambun (now Penang Road – Northam Road)
11. Boria Ujung Pancur (now Transfer Road – Northam Road)
12. Boria Argyll Road

The White Flag Society

1. Boria Titi Papan (now Penang Road – Chowrasta Market)
2. Boria Padang Garam (now Camavon Street – Kimberley Street)
3. Boria Tanjong Tokong
4. Boria Air Itam
5. Boria Kampong Jawa
6. Boria Kampong Dodol
7. Boria Kebun Lama
8. Boria Kampong Makam
9. Boria Kampong Kolang
10. Boria Jalan Sampah (now Acheen Street)
11. Boria Lorong Takian (now Ah Quee Street)
12. Boria Kampong Lada (now Armenian Street)
13. Boria Pintal Tali (now Rope Walk)
14. Boria Bakar Bata (now Brickiln Road).⁶⁸

Boria performances not only attracted the attention of the Muslim community but also the Chinese and Europeans. They were also popular in

Perak. Wealthy Muslims would allow their houses or compounds to be used by the *boria* players, often providing them with pocket money. In return for this patronage, the house owners received a great deal of praise through the songs sung by the troupes. The audience, too, seemed to enjoy these performances, and would look forward to each new *boria* season. There were also Chinese towkays who sponsored *boria* troupes besides allowing the use of their orchards for picnicking and for the *mandi karbala*.

The prevalence of gangsterism in Malay society largely confirmed the existence of the flag societies in the post-Penang Riots period. The many cases of hooliganism and gangsterism have been linked to the disbandment of the Red and White Flag Societies. From the 1890s onwards, even though the police reported no serious disturbances in Penang, there were attempts to revive the old Red and White Flag as evident by the many cases of assault that took place among the Malays. There was also considerable illfeeling between rival Malay groups, besides incidents of 'rowdyism'.⁶⁹ In a case related to the brutal assault of a Malay by an undisclosed number of other Malays in the Acheen Street Mosque compound in September 1890, the police believed it was connected with the flag societies. The victim alleged he was assaulted because of his refusal to join the Red Flag.⁷⁰ The PGSC of 27 June 1890 also reported the ongoing feud between two factions of Malays from different *mukim* caused by an altercation at the Dato Kramat burial ground. This feud apparently created such anxiety that some of the employees of nearby merchants asked to be allowed to be let off early so that they could reach home before dark. Although the police had taken the precaution of doubling the number of personnel on duty in Macalister Road and Data Kramat, it is ironic that some of these policemen were Malays and former leaders of the Red and White Flag Societies.

During this period, a number of Georgetown streets became centres of Muslim gangster activities. Chulia Street, Hutton Lane, Macalister Road, Dato Kramat, Malay Street, Argyll Road, Burma Road, Abu Sittee Lane, Kimberley Street, Queen Street, Campbell Street and Pinang Road all earned notorious reputations for such activities, which included blackmail, harassing petty traders, extorting money from hawkers and rickshaw pullers and attacking those seen to be trespassing on their area. The bullies were not afraid of the

police; they even committed murder, such as along Argyll Road in April 1897 when a Malay was fatally attacked by five bullies. In September 1891, two Chinese Babas were brutally attacked by five Malays; ill feeling was said to be the motive.⁷¹ Later, some of the bullies, such as the Queen Street bullies, changed their activities. They terrorized and blackmailed local residents, threw stones at passersby and committed petty theft.⁷² By the first decade of the twentieth century, Penang Road and Burma Road had become the focal points for Malay gangsterism with dealers in alcohol becoming targets of their harassment. The police came under increasing criticism for being unable to control what was happening.⁷³

The feud between the different *mukim*, the boycott of mosques, and the burial ground confrontations, which occurred more frequently towards the end of the nineteenth century, were all very much related to the Red and White Flag Societies. In most cases, ill-feeling was the cause of the feuds. With the *mukim* spirit stronger than the association spirit, this quite often led to feuds between members of the same society. By this time their unmistakable trade marks were coloured caps and walking sticks.⁷⁴ Whenever their activities were brought to the attention of the police, they would lie low and put on a show of friendliness. In 1891, for instance, the White Flag group of Hutton Lane and Argyll Road held a *kenduri* (feast) attended by people of both streets to mark the end of their feud. But this was just a gimmick to avoid police attention for news of fights and assaults between the residents of these two streets still appeared in subsequent *PGSC*.⁷⁵ These district feuds sometimes extended to burial grounds and mosques. The area from the junction of Jalan Bahru (Macalister Road) to Anson Road and up to Kramat Road was always regarded as the Jalan Bahru White Flag's territory, while the area from the junction of Anson Road to Kramat Road up to the Perak Road burial ground was considered the Datuk Kramat White Flag territory. Those who wished to get to the burial grounds had to first obtain permission from the residents of the respective *mukim*. Quite often fights would occur when visiting groups failed to follow the rules of the *mukim*, such as that which occurred in October 1890 when Malays from Jelutong and the Tanjung town area had a fight at the Datuk Kramat burial ground.⁷⁶ The *PGSC* of 21 February 1894 reported the trial of two Malays for inciting their followers to break the peace over a funeral. In

this particular trial, the court was crowded with the followers of both factions, yet both accused got away with a mere caution by the presiding judge. Quite often Malay funerals ended in a fight. In fact, prior to these funerals many of the men would be already in a drunken stupor and ready to create mischief. The *PGSC* of 24 July 1908 reported that ten Indian Muslims were charged in court for disturbing the peace along Dato Kramat Road on their way home from a funeral. These ten were drunk while attending the funeral. It seems that funerals were eagerly awaited by members of both the Red and White Flag as an opportunity to 'test' one another's strength.

During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, mosques were also under the influence of the Red and White Flag Societies. Masjid Bahru Sungai Pinang, which was built in the 1880s, for instance, was very much associated with the ongoing feud between the Red and White Flags after the Penang Riots.⁷⁷ On 23 December 1893, the *PGSC* reported a fight in Tanjong Tokong involving two groups of Malays, one under the influence of the new mosque and the other under the influence of the old mosque.

Up until the early twentieth century, Carnavon Street, Macalister Road and Tanjong Tokong were still under the influence of the flag societies. The *PGSC* also reported Malay attempts to revive the old flag societies or to establish unlawful societies. For instance, the *PGSC* of 14 October 1903 reported a fight involving a group of Boyanese, while on 30 November of the same year, thirteen Javanese were charged in court for being members of unlawful societies. A police report of 1906 indicates that a number of Malay villages in Penang and Province Wellesley were still under the influence of both the Red and White Flag Societies. However, we have no hard evidence of their existence. Yet, when trouble broke out, local Malays took sides so as to continue the faction fights in the manner of the flag societies of the old days.⁷⁸ Contemporary observers believed that the Red and White Flag were still active in Relau and Balik Pulau until 1921.⁷⁹ This is not surprising; as the town area came increasingly under police surveillance, the rural areas became their new stronghold.

With the banning of secret societies, the Malays found new ways, in the 1920s, to avoid police attention. One way was through the formation of recreation clubs, such as football clubs. The Darul Makmur Football Club (1920), the Muslim Jelutong Football Club (1926) and the Darul Aishan

Football Club (1921) were widely believed to be connected with both the Red and the White Flags as all were established by former leaders of these societies. The activities of these clubs extended beyond Penang. By 1927, for instance, the Darul Makmur Football Club had 1,300 members. However, all three football clubs did not last long as they were suspected of involvement in blackmail and other crimes. In 1928, the Darul Makmur Football Club was banned by the government, and in 1936 the Muslim Jelutong Football Club faced the same fate.⁸⁰ By 1929, Penang was declared free of any disturbances created by unlawful societies, including Malay secret societies.⁸¹

A major problem faced by the government in dissolving the unlawful societies was the shortage of police personnel as well as disciplinary problems within the police force itself. Residents attributed the prevalence of rowdiness and gangsterism in their areas to the shortage of police constables. The high cost of living also led police personnel in the lower ranks into vice: in 1879, one out of every four or five police constables was alleged to have accepted bribes. Others were guilty of truancy, stealing, gambling (including cock fighting), breach of trust, street fighting, gangsterism, blackmail, involvement in secret societies (mainly the Red and White Flags) and even murder.⁸²

The Anti-*boria* Campaign

In the period 1917–20, there was a concerted effort by religious leaders to outlaw *boria* performances. In 1920, Sheikh Zakaria bin Omar Basheer (a *mufti*), Tuan Haji Daud bin Tamim and Tuan Haji Mustapha bin Ismail (a *kadhi*) issued a *fatwa* entitled 'Surat Kuning' [Yellow Letter] which declared a prohibition on *boria*. The *fatwa* was posted in three strategic mosques in the Georgetown area. It was later simplified and 500 copies distributed to the Muslim community in Penang. In addition, these *ulama* and other religiously respected Malays made efforts to advise the Muslims on the evils of *boria*. The *fatwa* and the efforts by these *ulama* combined to considerably reduce the number of *boria* performances that year. Whole villages began to reject *boria*, such as Kampong Kolam and Kampong Jawa, after being advised by Tuan Haji Abdul Kadir and Tuan Haji Daud.⁸³

Equally significant were the efforts of Mohd Yusoff Sultan Maidin, a Jawi Peranakan and Chief Clerk at the Education Office, who published a book entitled *Boria dan Benchananya* [*Boria and Its Evils*] in 1922. Mohd Yusoff sought to highlight the social and religious evils of the *boria*, apparently under the influence of Syed Sheikh Al Hadi, one of the leaders of the reformist movement in the Straits Settlements. The publication of *Boria dan Benchananya* aroused bitter controversy and Mohd Yusoff was roundly criticized by his fellow Malays. Even his personal safety was under threat. His efforts were received with much cynicism due to his attitude: he only befriended those who were English-educated. The Young Muslim Union Club, in which he once served as Vice President, included mainly Jawi Peranakan as members. It was not surprising that to many others at that time Mohd Yusoff's main objective in writing the book on *boria* was to defend the good name of the Jawi Peranakan who had played a large part in establishing and adapting the *boria*.⁸⁴

The anti-*boria* campaign also received support from parents and those who were concerned with the negative impacts of the *boria* on Malay society. Social problems, such as truancy, running away from home, theft, the pawning of valuables, and the neglect of families all escalated during the *boria* season. But the anti-*boria* campaign led to a new awareness of the evils of *boria*. As a result, the police began to regulate more strictly *boria* performances, stipulating that every *mukim* must register its troupe at the police station in Penang Road. *Boria* performers were also prohibited from colouring their faces while their followers were not allowed to carry sticks or any other weapons. More importantly, the hours of a performance were limited to certain times. Perhaps the most dramatic gesture took place in 1931 when the leader of the Jalan Bahru Sungai Pinang troupe, Syed Degek (Syed Mohammad al-Attas), who was also a leader of the local White Flag, burned the white and the red flags during a *boria* performance. He continued to do this at various *boria* performances, thus symbolizing his desire to eradicate practices that were of dubious value to the Malays. In place of the red and white flags, a flag bearing a crescent was hoisted to symbolize the newfound unity among Muslims. Following this gesture, a meeting was held at the Baharu Alam Football Club in Sungei Pinang to bury past animosities.

At this meeting, it was also agreed to change the term *boria* to *ria*, but this never proved a popular move and the issue died a natural death.⁸⁵ The local press was also instrumental in providing an avenue for the public to voice their opinion and curiosity regarding the *boria*.⁸⁶

Why this focus on *boria*? As discussed earlier, *boria* troupes usually represented a single village and *mukim*. They also caused division and rivalry among the Malays. As mentioned by Mohd Yusoff, every *mukim*, in order to avoid humiliation and ridicule, would set up its own *boria* troupe. Each troupe would move from house to house (or club) and from village to village. *Boria* also preserved the Indian tradition of 'battle', with the performance later degenerating into open fighting, quite often due to some triviality, such as a disagreement over the order and length of a performance, or the intentional delay of a performance in order to keep a rival troupe waiting to perform. The *boria* was also believed by observers to be a channel for recruiting new members into the Red Flag and the White Flag Societies.⁸⁷ Despite various efforts to eradicate it, *boria* was still celebrated annually by the Penang Malay community although its style and form was very much changed. In line with the changes in *boria*, news items relating to the Red and the White Flag became less and less frequent, and both societies are believed to have disappeared by the time of the Japanese invasion.

The changes in the Malay public's perceptions of the *boria* and the waning influence of both the Red and the White Flag Societies was due largely to the changes that took place within the Muslim community itself, fostered mainly by developments in Malay education. Malays became increasingly more interested in vernacular education. By the 1920s, 200 students were enrolled in the Malay school system, while there was a commensurate increase in Malay enrolment in English schools despite the dominance of the Jawi Peranakan. By the late 1920s, there began to emerge an urban Muslim group which was to play an important role in voicing the need to improve the economic and social position of the Malays.⁸⁸ Penang became the centre of this reformist movement.

The reformist movement actively discussed the economic, educational and social backwardness of the Malays in their own publications. Among the notable periodicals published in Penang were *Idaran Zaman* (1925) and *Saudara* (1928). *Saudara*, for instance, stressed the need for the Malays to

compete with the other races who by then were becoming more and more entrenched socially and economically. These publications had a profound effect on their Malay readers and on the Muslim community as a whole. Apart from newspapers and magazines, the founding of the new style *madrrasah* was to have a considerable influence on the reformist movement. Although previously founded by Arabs, these new *madrrasah* were financially supported by the Indian Muslim and Jawi Peranakan merchant community. The early twentieth century also began to witness the emergence of various associations, such as the Young Muslim Union (1911), the Penang Malay Association (1927) and the Seberang Perai Malay Association (1930), which offered alternatives to the Malays in term of organizations. The issues no longer concerned *mukim* rivalry; instead, the focus was on economic development of the Malays and Malay political awareness. In short, 'Malay issues' became preeminent for an increasingly mature Malay society.

Conclusion

We have seen that there were at least three stages in the development of the White Flag and Red Flag Secret Societies in Penang. First, these societies were established by Indian Muslim and Jawi Peranakan both for religious purposes and for safeguarding the welfare of the Muslim community itself. However, by the middle of the nineteenth century, societies came to be associated with the Chinese Toh Peh Kong and Ghee Hin, becoming very much involved in the political and territorial struggles of these two societies. The third stage, resulting from the government ban on all secret society activities after the Penang Riots of 1867, led to the demise of the Red Flag and White Flag Secret Societies which, as a result, re-emerged in another form throughout the first quarter of the twentieth century – one which focused on criminal activities.

Looking at the Red and White Flag Societies in terms of the long-term development of Malay political and social history, it can be seen that they basically represented Malay attempts at setting up associations and organizations. They were local in character despite the existence of the *boria* and Muharram which were of Indianized Shiite origin. Interestingly, Shiite

influence never managed to gain a foothold in the Malay States, including Penang. The way in which the *boria* and the Red and White Flag Societies originated and developed is closely related to the problems faced by Malay Muslims in an increasingly cosmopolitan society. Compared to the other Malay States, and in the absence of the traditional Malay hierarchy, it was the leaders of these associations who exerted considerable influence on the Malay Muslim society in Penang. Ordinary Malays attached great importance to these leaders; because of their influence, the British, too, became very concerned with the activities of these leaders and undertook various measures to circumscribe their influence on the local population. Only with increasing political maturity of the Malay intelligentsia, brought about by the colonial education system, did the reformist movement emerge, along with a new political consciousness. Secret societies then lost their appeal to the Malays, and the subsequent Japanese Occupation effectively saw the end of them.

References

Manuscripts

- Colonial Office correspondence (CO) 275, Annual Departmental Reports of the Straits Settlements for the Years 1921 and 1929.
- CO 273/518, The Malayan Bulletin of Political Intelligence, 25 November 1922.
- CO 275, Report of the Administration of the Straits Settlements during the Years 1856–57, 1857–58, 1858–59, 1860–61, 1861–62, 1862–63, 1863–64.
- CO 275, Statement of Crimes and Offences in the Settlements of Penang and Province Wellesley, Singapore and Malacca from 1st May 1860 to 30th April 1861.
- CO 275, Statement of Crimes Reported to the Police at the Several Stations in the Straits Settlements during the Year 1856–57.
- CO 275, Straits Settlements Annual Departmental Reports for the Year 1890 and 1891.
- PGSC, 2 September 1890, 12 September 1891, 24 July 1893, 27 April 1897, 31 May 1897, 10 June 1897, 28 March 1906.
- Straits Settlements Records (SSR), Governor's Letters to Bengal: R. 32, No. 167; R. 32, No. 201; Governor's Letters from Bengal: S. 25, item 354, No. 2078, No. 216.

Books and Articles

- Anson, E. A. H., *About Others and Myself, 1745-1920*, London: John Murray, 1920.
- Blythe, W., *The Impact of the Chinese Secret Societies in Malaya*, London: Oxford University Press, 1969.
- 'The Boria in Perak', *The Malayan Police Magazine*, 8(1), 1935.
- Braddell, T., *Statistics of the British Possessions in the Straits of Malacca*, Pinang: Pinang Gazette Office, 1861.
- Cheah Boon Kheng, 'Power behind Malay History', *JMBRAS*, 66(1), 1993.
- Fujimoto, Helen, *The South Indian-Muslim Community and the Evolution of the Jawi Peranakan in Penang up to 1948*, Tokyo: ILCAA/Tokyo, Gaikokugo Daigaku, 1989.
- Hamilton, A. W., 'Boria', *JSBRAS*, 82, 1920. *Historical Survey of the Mosques and Kramats on Penang Island*, Penang: Penang Teachers College, 1974.
- Houghton, G. T., 'Boriah', *JSBRAS*, 30, 1897.
- Jawi Peranakan*, 6 October 1890.
- Khoo Kay Kim, 'Keterlibatan Orang-orang Melayu dalam Persatuan-persatuan Sulit', *Jurnal Sejarah*, 1975/76.
- Khoo Su Nin, *Streets of George Town Penang*, Penang: Janus Print and Resources, 1993.
- Mahani bt Musa, 'Buku Catatan Peribadi Sheikh Omar Basheer Dengan Rujukan Terhadap Rusuhan Di Pulau Pinang pada tahun 1867: Satu Dokumen Sejarah Pulau Pinang Abad ke-19', in Abu Talib Ahmad and Cheah Boon Kheng (eds.), *Isu-isu Pensejarahan (Esei Penghargaan Kepada Dr R. Suntharalingam)*, Pulau Pinang: Penerbit Universiti Sains Malaysia, 1995.
- _____, 'Pakatan Sulit Melayu di Negeri-negeri Utara Pantai Barat Semenanjung Tanah Melayu, 1821-1930-an', MA Thesis, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 1991.
- Mahd Ishak Abdul Aziz, 'Sejarah Boria', Kuala Lumpur: Kementerian Kebudayaan Belia dan Sukan Malaysia, 1979.
- McNair, J. F. A., *Prisoners Their Own Warders: A Record of Convict Prison at Singapore in the Straits Settlements Established 1825, discontinued 1873, together with a Cursory History of the Convict Establishments at Bencoolen, Penang and Malacca from the year 1797*, London: Archibald Constable, 1899.
- Mohd Yusoff Sultan Maidin, *Boria dan Benchananya*, Penang, 1922.
- Muhammad Hassan bin To' Kerani Arshad, *Al-Tarikh Salasilah Negeri Kedah*,

- Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1968.
- Muhammad Ibrahim Munsyi, *Kisah Pelayaran Muhammad Ibrahim Munsyi* (with an introduction and annotation by Mohd Fadzil Othman), Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1980.
- Newbold, T. J., *British Settlements in the Straits of Malacca*, 2 vols., Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1971; first published as *Political and Statistical Account of the British Settlements ... with a History of the Malayan States of the Peninsula in the Straits of Malacca*, 2 vols., London: John Murray, 1839.
- Omar Farouk Shaeik Ahmad, 'The Arabs in Penang', *Malaysia in History*, 21(2), 1978.
- The *Penang Riots Reports 1867: Report of the Commissioners Appointed Under Act XXI of 1867, to Enquire into The Penang Riots [PRCR]*, Argus Press, 1868.
- Saudara*, 8 April 1936.
- The Star*, 6 October 1993.
- Stirling, W. G., 'The Red and White Flag Societies', *JMBRAS*, 1(1), 1925.
- Straits Times*, 28 January 1935.
- Thomson, J. T., *Some Glimpses into Life in the Far East*, London: Richardson, 1864; reissued as *Glimpses into Life in Malayan Lands*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1984.
- Turnbull, C. M., *The Straits Settlements 1826-1867: Indian Presidency to Crown Colony*, London: Athlone Press, 1972.
- Vaughan, J. D., 'Notes on the Chinese of Pinang', *JIA*, 8, 1854.
- _____, 'Notes on the Malays of Pinang and Province Wellesley', *JIA*, 2, 1857.
- Wynne, M. L., *Triad and Tabut: A Study of the Origin and Diffusion of Chinese and Mohamedan Secret Societies in the Malay Peninsular AD 1800-1935*, Singapore: Government Printing Office, 1941.
- Zainol Jusoh, 'Pulau Pinang dan Seberang Perai 1890-1940: Satu Kajian Mengenai Penglibatan Orang-orang Melayu dalam Pakatan Sulit Bendera Putih dan Bendera Merah', BA Academic Exercise, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 1982.

Notes

1. I am very grateful to Dr Cheah Boon Kheng for numerous comments on an earlier draft.
2. *The Penang Riots Reports 1867: Report of the Commissioners Appointed Under Act XXI of 1867, to Enquire into The Penang Riots [PRCR]*, Argus Press, 1868.
3. See M. L. Wynne, *Triad and Tabut: A Study of the Origin and Diffusion of Chinese and Mohamedan Secret Societies in the Malay Peninsula AD 1800-1935*, Singapore: Government Printing Office, 1941, and W. Blythe, *The Impact of the Chinese Secret Societies in Malaya*, London: Oxford University Press, 1969.
4. A. W. Hamilton, 'Boria', *JSBRAS*, 82, 1920, p. 141.
5. Khoo Kay Kim, 'Keterlibatan Orang-orang Melayu dalam Persatuan-persatuan Sulit', *Jurnal Sejarah*, 1975/76, pp. 63-9. See also, Zainol Jusoh, 'Pulau Pinang dan Seberang Perai 1890-1940: Satu Kajian Mengenai Penglibatan Orang-orang Melayu dalam Pakatan Sulit Bendera Putih dan Bendera Merah', BA Academic Exercise, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 1982; Mahani bt Musa, 'Pakatan Sulit Melayu di Negeri-negeri Utara Pantai Barat Semenanjung Tanah Melayu, 1821-1930-an', MA Thesis, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 1991.
6. As discussed by Cheah Boon Kheng, the *Sejarah Melayu*, for instance, described incidents of political intrigues instigated by court women. See Cheah Boon Kheng, 'Power behind the Throne: The Role of Queens and Court Ladies in Malay History', *JMBRAS*, 66(1), 1993, pp. 1-21. In nineteenth-century Kedah, Tunku Anum, a member of the Kedah royalty, in his bid to win back the Kedah throne after the Siamese attack in 1821, arranged a secret meeting with the Kedah nobles which took place in a cave at Bukit Kaplu in Kubang Pasu district. In this secret meeting, he directed the nobles to carry out a non-stop attack on Phya Sina Nuchit, the son of Raja Ligor, who was appointed the Governor in Kedah. All those who attended the secret meeting then swore on the Qur'an. In fact, the whole affair of getting back the throne was conducted in a most secret way which caused embarrassment to the British. See Muhammad Hassan bin To' Kerani Arshad, *Al-Tarikh Salasilah Negeri Kedah*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1968, pp. 152-5.
7. *PRCR*, p. 205.
8. Khoo Kay Kim, *Keterlibatan Orang-orang Melayu*, p. 63. Stirling adopted the same theory when he referred to the Red and White Flag activities in Perak in the early twentieth century. See, W. G. Stirling, 'The Red and White Flag Societies', *JMBRAS*, 1(1), 1925, pp. 57-61.
9. T. J. Newbold, *Political and Statistical Account of the British Settlements in the Straits of Malacca*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, Vol. 1, p. 54; first published as *Political and Statistical Account of the British Settlements ... with a History of the Malayan States of the Straits of Malacca*, 2 vols., London: John Murray, 1839.
10. Gazette Office, 1861. This contains census returns of the various stations of Prince of Wales Island, Singapore and Malacca showing the progressive increase in the population from the earliest periods they were obtained. The rapid population increase in Province Wellesley after the 1820 census was attributed to the large influx of Malays from Kedah following the Siamese attacks in 1821. In 1830, the number of Malays was 11,943 and the Chinese 8,963 while the Indians numbered 8,858. The rest comprised other Asiatics and Europeans as well as their descendants. In 1860, the Chinese numbered 28,018 while the Malays numbered 18,887 and the Indians 10,618.
11. CO 275, Statement of Crimes Reported to the Police at the Several Stations in the Strait Settlements during the year 1856-57. CO 275, Statement of Crimes and Offences in the Settlements of Penang and Province Wellesley, Singapore and Malacca from 1st May 1860 to 30th April 1861.
12. Blythe, *Impact of the Chinese Secret Societies*, p. 63.
13. CO 275, Report on the Administration of the Straits Settlements during the Year 1856-57 and 1857-58.
14. Straits Settlements Records (SSR), R. 32, Governor's Letters to Bengal, No. 216, Letter of E. A. Blundell, Governor of the Straits Settlements to the State Secretary of India with a copy of a letter from the Resident Councillor of Penang which confirmed the arrival of convicts from Bombay to Penang which were mostly involved in the Indian Mutiny in 1857. See also SSR, R. 32, No. 167, pp. 92-4; SSR, R. 32, No. 201, pp. 197-205.
15. SSR, S. 25, Governor's Letters from Bengal, item 354, No. 2078. See also SSR, R.32, No. 167, p. 93, which confirmed that the jail in Penang could accommodate not more than 60 convicts compared to 300 in Singapore. For details regarding the convict community in the Straits Settlements, see, J. F. A. McNair, *Prisoners Their Own Warders: A Record of Convict Prison at Singapore in the Straits Settlements Established 1825, discontinued 1873, together with a Cursory History of the Convict Establishments at Bencoolen, Penang and Malacca from the year 1797*, London: Archibald Constable, 1899.
16. See CO 275, Report of the Administration of the Straits Settlements during, the Year 1858-59; 1860-61; 1861-62; 1862-63; 1863-64. Between 1858 and 1859 there were 1,476 convicts at Penang jail; 1860-61, 1,174; 1861-62, 1,089; 1862-63, 1,008; 1863-64, 935; and this number kept decreasing over the years.
17. Helen Fujimoto, *The South Indian-Muslim Community and the Evolution of the Jawi Peranakan in Penang up to 1948*, Tokyo: ILCAA/Tokyo, Gaikokugo Daigaku, 1989, p. 42.
18. Blythe, *Impact of the Chinese Secret Societies*, p. 130. See also C. M. Turnbull, *The Straits Settlements 1826-67: Indian Presidency to Crown Colony*, London: Athlone Press, 1972, p. 104.
19. Turnbull, *The Straits Settlements*, p. 104.

GLIMPSES OF PENANG'S PAST

20. Wynne, *Triad and Tabut*, p. 185.
21. G. T. Houghton, 'Boria', *JSBRAS*, 30, 1897, pp. 312-13.
22. J. D. Vaughan, 'Notes on the Chinese of Pinang', *JIA*, 8, 1854, pp. 13-14.
23. *Tabut* is an edifice usually carried around by Shiite followers to commemorate the death of Hussein.
24. J. D. Vaughan, 'Notes on the Malays of Pinang and Province Wellesley', *JIA*, 2, 1857, p. 139.
25. CO 275, Report of the Administration of the Straits Settlements during the Year 1857-58, p. 4.
26. The Kadhi of Telok Ayer Tawar was mentioned by Vaughan as a prominent religious leader in Province Wellesley in the 1830s. See Vaughan, 'Notes on the Malays', p. 152-3.
27. Vaughan, 'Notes on the Chinese', pp. 17-20.
28. Omar Farouk Shaeik Ahmad, 'The Arabs in Penang', *Malaysia in History*, 21(2), 1978, pp. 6-7.
29. J. T. Thomson, *Some Glimpses into Life in the Far East*, London: Richardson, 1864, Ch. 10; reissued as *Glimpses into Life in Malayan Lands*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1984.
30. Fujimoto, *The South Indian-Muslim Community*, Ch. 2.
31. *Historical Survey of the Mosques and Kramats on Penang Island*, Penang: Penang Teachers College, 1974.
32. *PRCR*, Witness No. 39, Vapoo Merican Noordin, a merchant in Chulia Street who resided in Acheen Street.
33. This information was collected during an interview with the late Tuan Haji Fathil bin Sheikh Omar Basheer Basheer, a prominent Penang Muslim leader during the first half of the twentieth century and the grandson of Sheikh Omar Basheer, a prominent Muslim leader during the nineteenth century. Naming a district or village after a prominent personality was a very common practice among Penang Muslims. In addition to Kampong Che Long, there was also Kampong Tuan Guru, after Sheikh Abdul Ghani, the religious leader in the nineteenth century discussed earlier. See Khoo Su Nin, *Streets of George Town Penang*, Penang: Janus Print and Resources, 1993, pp. 25-35.
34. Pure Malays or 'Melayu Jati' refer to indigenous Malays and exclude Arabs and Indian Muslims and their descendants.
35. Vaughan, 'Notes on the Malays', p. 163.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 164.
37. Muhammad Ibrahim Munsyi, *Kisah Pelayaran Muhammad Ibrahim Munsyi* (with an introduction and annotation by Mohd Fadzil Othman), Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1980, p. 112.
38. Masjid Baru Klawei and Masjid Lama in Burma Lane were among the mosques having Arabs as *imam*. See Omar Farouk, 'The Arabs in Penang', pp. 6-7. Among the Muslims, the Indian Muslims built more mosques than any other group; they built at least twenty-two mosques in Penang. See *Historical Survey*.
39. *The Star*, 6 October 1993. Syed Alatas lived in a big house on the same street as Khoo Poh, at the junction of Acheen and Carnavon Streets. The house shows how rich and powerful Alatas was among the Muslims. It also became the focus of Muslim festivities and *boria* performances during the Muharram celebration.
40. *PRCR* noted that the cause of the riots was initially a feud between the Red and White Flag Societies during the Muharram festival (May 1867) which led to the murder of a Malay (possibly of Arab or Jawi Pekan origin) in Armenian Street, the Toh Peh Kong territory, by the Red Flag members. This led the Toh Peh Kong leader, Khoo Thean Tek, to attack his rivals, the Ghee Hins. On 1 July, a Chinese member of the Toh Peh Kong was insulted by a Malay member of the White Flag, and thus followed a series of confrontations by the members of these societies.
41. *PRCR*, Witness No. 39, Vapoo Merican Noordin.
42. The government utilized the money paid by the secret societies to build four police stations in the town area. See E. A. H. Anson, *About Others and Myself, 1745-1920*, London: John Murray, 1920, p. 283.
43. They lived in the same area as their Chinese friend.
44. *PRCR*, Witness No. 36, Shamoo, said he was confronted by two White Flag members who were also members of the Ghee Hin. The men asked him, 'Why do you go to the Police [to complain about an attack on him by five Malays at Kampong Bahru - all Kampong Bahru people were members of Red Flag], it is better to join a Kongsee, and if you do so, we the kongsi men, will all of us assist you if you don't join you will come to grief.'
45. *PRCR*, Witness No. 67, Vapoo Merican Noordin.
46. *PRCR*, Witness No. 37, Mohamed Kader Houssain@ Pah Etam.
47. *PRCR*, Witness No. 37.
48. *PRCR*, Witness No. 39, Vapoo Merican Noordin.
49. *PRCR*, Witness No. 36, Shamoo.
50. *Ibid.*
51. *PRCR*, Witness No. 15, Oh Wee Kee.
52. CO 273/518, The Malayan Bulletin of Political Intelligence, 25 November 1922.
53. Blythe, *Impact of the Chinese Secret Societies*, p. 213.
54. For more details on this religious teacher see Mahani bt Musa, 'Buku Catatan Peribadi Sheikh Omar Basheer Dengan Rujukan Terhadap Rusuhan Di Pulau Pinang pada tahun 1867: Satu Dokumen Sejarah Pulau Pinang Abad ke-19', in Abu Talib Ahmad and Cheah Boon Kheng (eds.), *Isu-isu Pensejarahan (Esei Penghargaan Kepada Dr R. Suntharalingam)*, Pulau Pinang: Penerbit Universiti Sains Malaysia, 1995, pp. 116-39.

GLIMPSES OF PENANG'S PAST

55. *Ibid.*, p. 128.
56. *Historical Survey*, Appendix 4.
57. Mahani Musa, 'Buku Catatan', p. 130. This diary is now available in the Universiti Sains Malaysia Library.
58. See Fig. 6.
59. So far I have not been able to shed any light on this Black Flag Society or what it was.
60. PGSC, 13 January 1891. One Tuan Sheikh of Acheen Street, a foreigner, was initially recommended for deportation from the colony for attempting to establish a society along the same lines as the Red Flag Society. He escaped deportation as there was a lack of evidence. See also PGSC, 17 September 1900, which reported that eleven Malays were arrested for conducting an illegal assembly at Sungai Nibong in response to the Malays of the neighbourhood who had been organizing a secret society.
61. In 1856, when the *tabut* processions caused much inconvenience to the public, the police in Singapore and Penang decided to limit the period of the festival from ten to five days and this was accepted without incident. The Police Act and the Conservancy Act were introduced in June 1856 and went into effect on 1 November of that year. The two Acts contained rules for the conduct of assemblies and processions, the prevention of obstruction to streets, roads and other public places, the licensing of music in the streets, and the regulation of markets.
62. Under the Police Act and Conservancy Act 1856, all theatrical performances had to get a licence from the police while the hours of performance were shortened.
63. PGSC, 28 March 1906. The court, however, rejected her argument and the accused was convicted and fined \$25.
64. PGSC, 24 July 1893 and 10 June 1897.
65. PGSC, 28 March 1906.
66. Masjid Pintal Tali was one of the mosques used by the Indian Muslims and Jawi Pekan in the middle of the nineteenth century for their *tabut* procession. See also Muhammad Ibrahim Munsyi. *Kisah Pelayaran*, pp. 110–12. During his short visit to Penang, he witnessed a *maulud cara keling* in Hutton Lane during which the *nazar* was performed at Keramat Tok Koya; and on the night of the tenth of Muharram, they carried the *tabut* in the shape of a horse.
67. Hamilton, 'Boria', p. 141.
68. Mahd Ishak Abdul Aziz, 'Sejarah Boria', Kuala Lumpur: Kementerian Kebudayaan Belia dan Sukan Malaysia, 1979, Appendix A.
69. CO 275, Straits Settlements Annual Departmental Reports for the Year 1890 and 1891.
70. PGSC, 2 September 1890.
71. PGSC, 12 September 1891, 27 April 1897 and 31 May 1897. The PGSC provides detailed information on bullies and gangster activities which involved the Penang Muslims. See, for instance, PGSC, 27 August 1894, 15 March 1896, 4 August 1896, 5 August 1896, 29 August 1896, 19 October 1899, 18 November 1896, 15 March 1897, 7 June 1899 and July 1899. PGSC, 24 August 1899, reported a court case involving a respectable Malay/Jawi Peranakan who was prosecuted in connection with the Hutton Lane assault and robbery the previous July. For the 1890s see, for instance, PGSC, 12 September 1891, 27 April 1897 and 31 May 1897.
72. PGSC, 8 August 1899.
73. PGSC, 19 November 1910.
74. This new trade marks involved five Muslim members of an unlawful society. See PGSC, 21 September 1892.
75. Other incidents which involved people of the same Malay secret society reported by the PGSC were the feuds between residents of Kampong Jawa and Kebun Lama (Red Flag) and the long feud between the White Flag people of Tanjong Tokong and Klawei. See PGSC, 11, 18 and 19 January 1893 and 8 August 1893.
76. See *Jawi Peranakan*, 6 October 1890, which reported on the fight at the burial ground in Datuk Kramat between Jelutong and Tanjong Malays who were believed to be White Flag members.
77. *Historical Survey*, especially 'Masjid Bahru Sungai Pinang, Jelutong Road'.
78. PGSC, 11 June 1907.
79. See PGSC, 14 October 1903, 28 June 1909, 17 October 1909, 22 October 1910. See also CO 275, Annual Departmental Reports of the Straits Settlements for the Year 1921.
80. Wynne, *Triad and Tabut*, pp. 463–540.
81. CO 275, Annual Departmental Reports of the Straits Settlements for the Years 1921 and 1929.
82. The welfare of police personnel was regularly discussed in official meetings. See PGSC, June 1890, 13 April 1892, 19 March 1892, 5 and 28 November 1892, 16 January 1893, 23 August 1904, 31 October 1892, 22 August 1893, 10 May 1894, 20 September 1899, 18 November 1890, 17 November 1896, 31 December 1892.
83. Mohd Yusoff Sultan Maidin, *Boria dan Benchananya*, Penang, 1922.
84. Zainol Jusoh, Pulau Pinang, p. 104. See also Helen Fujimoto, *The South Indian-Muslim Community*, p. 177.
85. Mahd Ishak Abdul Aziz, 'Sejarah Boria', p. 12.
86. See, for instance, *Straits Times*, 28 January 1935, and *Saudara*, 8 April 1936.
87. 'The Boria in Perak', *The Malayan Police Magazine*, 8(1), 1935, pp. 26–7.
88. Helen Fujimoto, *The South Indian-Muslim Community*, Ch. 5.