

HISTORY OF KEDAH.

BY R. O. WINSTEDT.

An Arab voyager Ibn Khordadbeh (846 A.D.) wrote in his *Kitab al-masalik wa-l mamalik* of an island called "Kilah" which contained *tin mines* and bamboo forests. Another Arab voyager Sulaiman (851 A.D.), edited about 920 A.D. by one Abu Zaid of Siraf, wrote of "Kalah-bar," as "a dependency of Zabej," which is probably Srivijaya *i.e.* Palembang:—Chao Ju Kua in 1250 A.D. recorded that Langkasuka (*i.e.* Kedah), Trengganu, Pahang and Kelantan were all subject to Palembang. ("Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch-Indie" *sub* "Tochten," "Livres du Merveilles de l'Inde, Leyden 1883-6, pp. 255-264 and Reinaud's "Relations des voyages faits par les Arabes et les Persans," pp. LXII, LXXXV, 17, 93, 94.) Ibn Muhalhal, who flourished about 941 A.D. (but whose account is of doubtful authenticity), describes "Kalah" as the last place visited by ships going eastward, a great city with high walls and gardens and canals, "where are the mines of lead" or tin "called *kala'i*, which is found in no part of the world except Kalah;" a place famous for the best "swords" in India; its inhabitants were Buddhists. "Kilah" or "Kalah" is generally identified as Kedah: the mention of tin-mines places it certainly in the Malay Peninsula, as Bangka was discovered much later. And probably this "Kalah" is identical with "Kora" or "Kala" of the Chinese chronicles of the T'ang Dynasty (618-916):—pp. 241-3, Vol. 1, Series II, "Essays relating to Indo-China": "Kora" had a king whose family-name was Sri Pura and his personal name Misi Pura; "the dead were buried and their ashes put into a jar and sunk in the sea; the customs of the people were about the same as in Siam."

The history of the Liang dynasty (502-665 A.D.) (*ib.* pp. 135-7) gives an account of a country called Langgasu or Langga, whose people said that their country had been established 400 years earlier: its inhabitants were ardent Buddhists. This, it is sometimes said, is a reference to Langkasuka, the old name of Kedah recorded in the *Hikayat Marong Mahawangsa* and in popular folk-tales—"Fasciculi Malayenses," pt. II (a), pp. 25-6; Skeat's "Fables from an Eastern Forest," pp. 49-51 and 81) "Kedah may very well be the old native name of the country and Langkasuka its literary name. Many places in Further India and the Islands bear two names: thus, Pegu was styled Hamsawati, Tumasik was called Singapura: similarly Siak (in Sumatra) is known as Sëri Indrapura, and many other such instances could be given. All this merely illustrates the varnish of Indian culture, which spread over these regions during the first dozen centuries or so of our era."

(Blagden, J. R. A. S., July 1905). One may add to these instances Indrapura the old court name for Pahang. The term Langkasuka now survives only as the name of a small tributary to the upper reaches of the Perak river. The *Ht. Marong Mahawangsa* relates how Sri Mahawangsa, the third ruler of Kedah, removed (to Serokam) from Langkasuka, because it was too far from the sea. (J. R. A. S., S. B. 72, p. 64): "it lay near Gunong Jerai" (*ib.* No. 53, p. 148). The Javanese poem, the *Nagara-kretagama* composed in 1365 A.D., mentions both Kedah and Langkasuka among a list of Peninsular settlements tributary to Majapahit (*ib.* pp. 145-9). But though Langkasuka was an old name for Kedah, the Chinese Langa-ya-hsiu is more likely to have been Tenasserim.

Of the prevalence of the Buddhist religion evidence exists in certain inscriptions found in Kedah and Province Wellesley, going back according to Kern to 400 A.D. (*ib.* No. 49, pp. 95-101) and having a *Southern* Indian Sanskrit alphabet; and again in inscribed clay tablets found in Kedah in a cave, nine feet above the floor, written according to Kern in Nagari of the 10th century and therefore from *Northern* India. (*ib.* No. 39, p. 205 and cf. J. and P., A. S. Bengal, Vol. III, No. 7, July 1907, where Rakshaldas Banerji has identified five votive tablets from Trang as relics of Mahayana Buddhism belonging to the western group of the Northern Indian Nagari characters of the 11th century A.D., resembling the characters of the Benares grant of Karnadeva and the grants of the Rathors of Kanauj.) Chula (Coromandel) records claim that Kedah was conquered by a Chula king in the 11th century.

Accordingly we know of Kedah till the end of 14th century that it was famous as a mart for tin; its people were Buddhists, and the predominant influence was Indian. Besides this we know that first Palembang and the Chula kings and then the great Javanese kingdom of Majapahit claimed suzerainty over it.

The *Hikayat Marong Mahawangsa* or "Kedah Annals," as the work is termed, records seven pre-Muhammadan rulers of Kedah bearing the Sanskrit-Siamese titles of Marong Mahawangsa, Marong Mahapodisat, Sri Mahawangsa, Sri Indrawangsa, Maha Parita Baria (Raja Bèrsiong), Phra Ong Maha Podisat, and of Phra Ong Mahawangsa who became its first Muhammadan ruler under the style of Mudzaffal Shah. Some of these titles are not Indian but Indo-Chinese; 'Podisat' for example is 'Bodisat' and the change of sound from sonants to surds is neither Indian nor Malay but characteristically Indo-Chinese occurring in Mon, Khmer, Siamese and Burmese. This is evidence that Kedah fell, after the fall of Palembang and the decay of Majapahit, under the influence of its Northern neighbours, the Siamese.

An Achinese account gives 1474 A.D. as the date of the conversion of the first king of Kedah to Islam (Journal of the Indian Archipelago Vol. III, p. 480 and J. R. A. S., April 1909, p. 527).

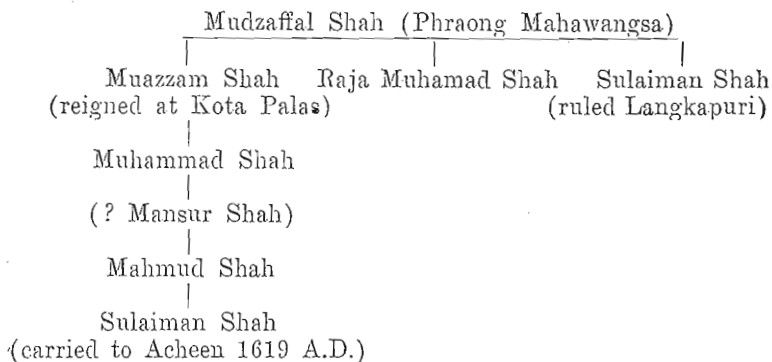
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And the likelihood of that date is confirmed by the story in the *Sĕjarah Mĕlayu* of a Raja of Kedah coming to Malacca to ask for the *nobat* (or royal insignia) from Sultan Mahmud Shah, the last Malay ruler of Malacca, who was driven out by the Portuguese conquest in 1511 A.D. and died in 1513 A.D. (Leyden's "Malay Annals," pp. 321-3). It is reasonable to suppose that the ruler of Kedah was then a Malay. Here, one may observe that in popular tales the Kedah dynasty begins with a tusked cannibal king, the son of an ogress; Blagden has shown that the legend is borrowed from India and is copied from the Buddhist Jataka tales (J. R. A. S., S. B. No. 79): it is possible, however, that the story was adapted to symbolize that the ancestry of the dynasty is not purely Malay.

The Portuguese Barbosa, whose manuscript is dated Lisbon 1516, describes Kedah "as a place of the kingdom of Siam:" to the port "an infinite number of ships resort, trading in all kinds of merchandise. Here come many Moorish ships from all quarters. Here, too, is grown much pepper, very good and fine which is conveyed to Malacca, and thence to China." ("Remusio," Vol. 1, p. 318). The influence of Siam cannot have been great to allow a Raja of Kedah to go to Malacca at the beginning of the 16th century to get regalia from a Malay suzerain! Nor was it great enough to save Kedah from attack by the Portuguese. In 1611 according to De Faria, Dioge de Medoca Furtado sailing down from Tenasserim to Malacca destroyed the towns of "Quedah and Parles" with fire and sword (Danvers' "Portuguese in India," Vol. 11, p. 164).

Again Siamese influence did not baulk Acheen. In 1619 Sultan Iskandar Muda, or Mahkota Alam as he was styled, led the rulers of Kedah and Perak into captivity. The Kedah prince was Sultan Sulaiman Shah (J. R. A. S., S. B. 72, p. 122). Achinese influence lasted some years. (J. I. A. III, p. 480). The "Kedah Annals" have a curious jumbled story that on the conversion of Sultan Mudzaffal Shah to Islam, the king of Acheen and one Shaikh Nuru'd-din sent him two religious treatises the *Siratu'l-mustakim* and the *Babu'n-Nikah*. Now the *Siratu'l-mustakim* was done into Malay by the said Shaikh Nurud-din Muhammad Jilani ibn Ali ibn Hasanyi ibn Muhammad Hamid a'r-Raniri in the year 1634 A.D. (Juynboll's "Catalogue of Malay MSS. in Leiden University Library," p. 257). That detail helps us to fix a date for the composition (or more probably a late recension) of the *Ht. Marong Mahawangsa*. But considering not only that the Achinese annals and the *Sĕjarah Mĕlayu* point to the close of the XVth century as the time of Kedah's conversion to Islam but also that Sultan Mudzaffal Shah the first convert is always regarded as the great-great-great-grandfather of Sultan Sulaiman Shah who was taken to Acheen in 1619 A.D., it is a detail which discredits entirely the chronology of the "Kedah Annals." From the confusion of rulers it must have been interpolated long after 1634.

The list of the early Muhammadan kings given in those "Annals" is as follows:—



It was in the reign of Sultan Muazzam Shah, the second Muhammadan ruler of Kedah, that the "Kedah Annals" profess in their preface to have been composed (J. R. A. S., S. B. 72, p. 37). If that statement is true at any rate of the nucleus of the book, it would be for Malay histories of a very respectable age indeed. But that there have been many recensions is clear not only from the incident of Shaikh Nuru'd-din's *Siratu'l-mustakim*, but also, as we shall see, from the completion of the list of rulers down to very recent times (*ib.* p. 122). Another anachronism may be the mention of Kuala Changgong, if that name means Rangoon, which latter name dates from 1755 A.D. only.

Just as Siamese influence had not saved Kedah from the Portuguese and the Achinese, so too it did not save it from the Dutch. Having trade routes not only from Singapore but from Patani it was a very important centre. "On the 11th July 1642, the king of Kedah, whom Matelief had visited in 1606, agreed with the (Dutch East India) Compagnie to let her have half of the tin-production of his country at a fixed price and not to admit ships without the Compagnie's permit. An attempt was made to obtain a similar contract from Perak which was richest in tin. But that country refused, giving as a reason its vassalage to Acheen. On Kedah a tight hold was kept. The instructions to 'break up the office there' (1686) also contained orders 'for the blockade of its port.' This command was repeated three years later: the Governor was told to 'blockade the river of Kedah as closely as possible;' in 1663 the 'Dagregister' mentions that 'the river of Queda is still being blockaded' and in 1664 the Netherlands Indian Government resolves, in spite of the king's wish for peace, 'to continue the blockade of Queda on the old footing.' Kedah did not bear this meekly; in 1676 Governor Bort writes to Batavia that 'the Compagnie's cruising sloops had been assailed many times about Pera and Queda by Malay pirates.' And shortly afterwards he reports that 'about Dinghdingh another sloop with a crew of six had been rushed by the Quedaze pirates owing to the crew's own

carelessness. All of the crew were severely wounded and the scoundrels could not be overtaken.' Gold came from Kedah and elephants. In the first quarter of the 18th century Valentijn writes that 'several offices, to wit Peirah, Kedah, Ujang Salang and Indragiri are subordinate to the Government of Malacca' (J. R. A. S., S. B. 67, pp. 57-84).

In spite of having done nothing to ward off the aggression of Portuguese, Achinese and Dutch, Siam still claimed suzerainty over Kedah. "Reference might" be "had to the works of Abbe Choisy in 1686 and to M. de la Loubere's History of Siam in 1678; by both of whom Kedah is described as being, at least, tributary to Siam. It rebelled according to these authors in 1720 (!)—a fact implying subjection—but was speedily reduced by Siam to obedience" (J. I. A. III, p. 601, Col. Low).

Trouble of a milder kind was impending from another quarter. Thomas Bowrey says that there was a British factory in Kedah from 1669 till 1675 but that it was a complete failure.

In 1770 affliction came from yet another side. The Bugis, having established themselves in Selangor, attacked Kedah and burnt the town. Is the invasion of Kedah by *Kēlana Hitam* (J. R. A. S., S. B. 72, p. 82) an interpolation in the *Hit. Marong Mahawangsa* perhaps reminiscent of this attack?

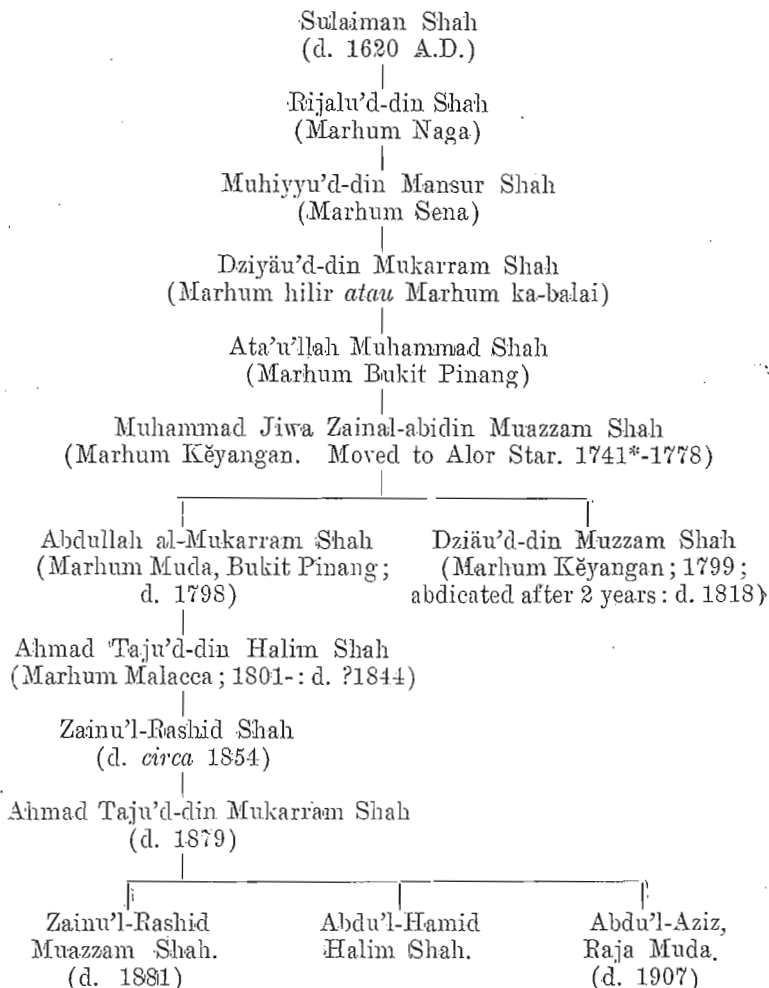
Accounts of the events leading up to and consequent on the acquisition of Penang and Province Wellesley by the British appear in J. R. A. S., S. B. No. 67 pp. 76-7, and in Swettenham's "British Malaya," pp. 42-53. A version more favourable to the British and more closely based on the treaties and correspondence ("Treaties and engagements entered into or effecting the Native States of the Peninsula:" Singapore 1889, pp. 61-71) may be read in Wright and Reid's "The Malay Peninsula," pp. 49-87.

Just before the Siamese invasion, Kedah acting on instructions from Siam had attacked Perak and in 1819 claimed to have conquered it.

Treated in 1786 as an independent state, Kedah was recognized by England in 1826 as tributary to Siam. There were two reasons for this recognition. The immediate object was to prevent the Siamese from co-operating with the Burmese during the first Burmese war; and there was the further object of defining the position of Siam in the north of the Malay Peninsula. The Treaty recognized Penang and Province Wellesley as English countries. It laid down that Perak was independent and should not be attacked: the Raja could send the gold and silver flowers to Siam if he liked. The Siamese were to remain in Kedah; and the English were not to allow the exiled Raja of Kedah to settle in Penang, Province Wellesley, Perak, Selangor or Burma. (Aitchison's "Treaties, Engagements and Sanads," vol. II, pp. 351, 369-71).

The MSS. of the *Hit. Marong Mahawangsa*, that used by Low (J. I. A. Vol. III), that in the Maxwell collection at the Library of the Royal Asiatic Society (London), Wilkinson's edition re-

printed in J. R. A. S., S. B. 72, and von de Wall's MS. now in the library of the Batavia Society (van Ronkel's "Catalogus," Verhandelingen van het Bataviaasch Genootschap Deel LVII, pp. 290-294) all give the same list of the Muhammadan rulers of Kedah down to Ahmad Tajū'd-din who ascended in 1820 A.D. After Sulaiman Shah, who died at Acheen the list continues:—



Newbold gives the dates for Muhammad Jiwa Zainal-abidin and Abdullah but seems to have got the family relationships wrong. For the names and dates after Ahmad Tajū'd-din, who died about 1844 A.D., I am indebted to a list compiled for Mr. E. A. G. Stuart

* There is a coin of this ruler dated 1154 A.H. = 1741-2 (Millies' 'Recherches sur les Monnaies des Indigènes de l'Archipel Indien et de la Péninsule Malaise' (1871), p. 133 and plate. Cf. J. R. A. S., S. B., No. 27, p. 132).

by Wan Yahaya Haji and also to the account in the "Straits Directory." Ahmad Taju'd-din Halim Shah began his reign at Kuala Kedah. In 1821 the Siamese invaded Kedah and he fled to Province Wellesley and Klawai. The Siamese ruled Kedah for 23 years, dividing it into four parts: (1) Kedah, (2) Setul ruled by Tunku Bisun, (3) Perlis ruled by Sayid Husain Jamalud-din, (4) Kubang Pasu ruled by Tunku Anum. In six years the population was reduced from 180,000 to 6,000. In 1831 Sultan Ahmad Taju'd-din was removed to Malacca; in 1836 having got permission to leave Malacca for a visit to Deli he went to Bruas and prepared to attack Kedah, when a British gun-boat captured and took him to Penang. In 1843 Kedah, the division, was restored to him under Siamese protection and he returned to reign at Kota Kuala Muda, as Alor Star was overgrown with forest. He was buried at Langgar. Later Kubang Rusa was restored to Kedah, but Perlis remains independent and Setul is still a part of Siamese territory.

In 1909 suzerainty over Kedah and Perlis was transferred by Siam to Great Britain.

There are two interesting points in the "Kedah Annals" which deserve remark. Allusion is made to the fact that Gunong Geriang, Gunong Jerai and Gunong Jambul were once islands (J. R. A. S., S. B. 72, p. 69). Now geologists tell us this is true, but it was thousands of years ago, too far back for tradition to have come down; so that presumably Malays must have observed the evidence of sea-shells inland and drawn haphazard the correct conclusion.

Again, the "Annals" record a Kedah legend (which I shall show in the next Journal to be of foreign origin) as to the founding of Perak (*ib.*, p. 62 and No. 9, pp. 85-86 and J. R. A. S., April 1905) and say that the palace of the Kedah Raja who became the first ruler of Perak was erected at Pulau Indra Sakti. But according to Perak history recorded in the *Misa Melayu*, an XVIIIth century history of that state, Sultan Iskandar who came to the throne in 1765 A.D. was the first ruler of Perak to build a palace on an island down the Perak River, called Chempaka Sari, till he changed its name into Indra Sakti. The legend of the "Annals" is a late interpolation. But does it refer to an earlier Pulau Indra Sakti? Did Kedah ever hold continuous sway over the northern part of Perak, before the present Perak dynasty was founded? On these points there is no evidence.

I am indebted to Mr. C. O. Blagden for much valuable information towards the preparation of this paper: and in connection with it should be read his article in this number of the Journal on "The Empire of the Maharaja."