Tiger Tales from Colonial Malaya

Sabri Zain

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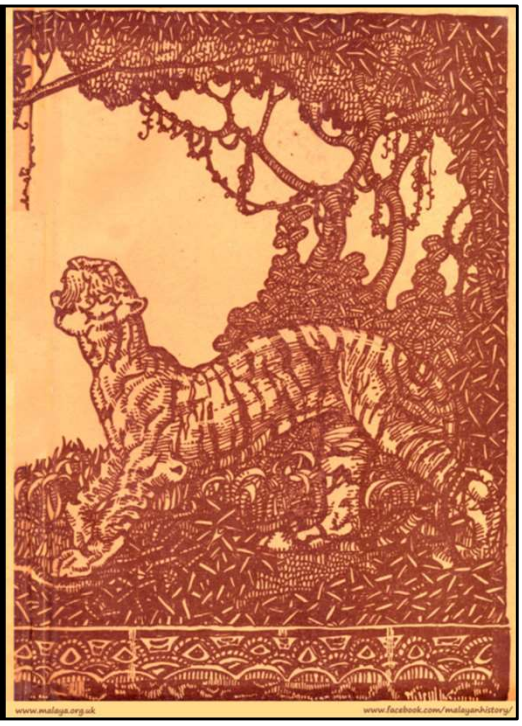

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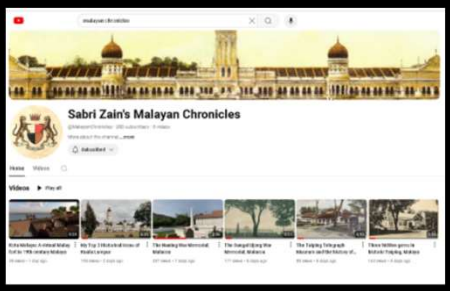

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TIGER TALES

3

Thank you all for being here today. In this presentation I hope to take you all on a journey to explore some enthralling accounts and stories of tigers and tiger myths from the colonial era in Malaya.

During the colonial period, tigers in Malaya were more than just majestic predators of the jungle; they were powerful symbols embedded in the local folklore and daily lives of the people. Tigers Have been both revered and feared, embodying both the awe-inspiring power of nature and the mystical elements of local beliefs.

I hope to show that these narratives are not just tales of the past; they are vibrant threads that have been woven into the very fabric of our nation's history and culture today. As we journey through these stories, I hope it becomes evident that tigers hold a significant place in not only our natural heritage but also that our history and culture. And that significance makes the conservation of tigers not just a matter of biodiversity concern but a social and cultural imperative as well.

JATA NEGARA

Federated Malay States

Federation of Malaya

Federation of Malaysia

4

For example, most of you will also be familiar with Jata Negara Malaysia, the national coat of arms comprising a shield with two tigers supporting it. The origins of the Malaysian coat of arms can be traced to the formation of the Federated Malay States (the FMS) in 1895 and the FMS coat of arms, like its modern successors, also highlights two tigers supporting the shield. The founding of the Federation of Malaya in 1948 led to a revision of the arms for a more complete representation the 11 states of the federation but, again, those two tiger sentinels are still a prominent part of it.

FLAGS OF MALAYA

Federated Malay States

Kedah

Kelantan

5

Not many people are aware that the flag of the Federated Malay States that was introduced in 1905 also featured a tiger in full leap and the this flag remained in use until 1950s.

Another Malayan flag to feature the tiger is the flag of Kedah that was used from 1821 – 1912. This was red flag with a pouncing tiger representing the Sultanate of Kedah.

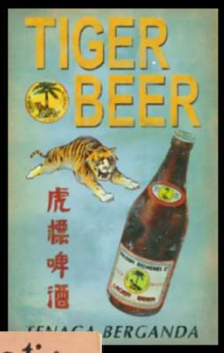
The historical flag of Kelantan that was in use from 1912-1923 also featured a tiger shaped in blue calligraphic script, on a white background. The main body of the tiger is taken from verse 13, Surah al-Saf of the Qur'an (And [you will obtain] another [favoor] that you love - victory from Allah and an imminent conquest; and give good tidings to the believers.)

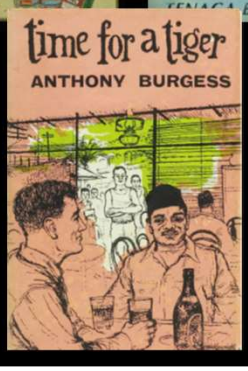
POSTAGE STAMPS

6

For the philatelists among you, some of the earliest postage stamps issues in the Malay Peninsula featured the tiger. In 1892, Perak issued stamps with the image of a leaping tiger, and this was followed by stamps featuring the image of a tiger's head from 1895–1899. Other States followed the same design soon after. In 1901, stamps of the Federated Malay States were issued showing a jumping tiger and continued to be used until 1934. With independence, states of the Federation of Malaya also used the tiger motif in another stamp design.

THE TIGER BRAND





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The tiger was also considered an iconic brand for various products, many of which are still household brands up to this modern day. These ranged from the pouncing tiger adorning Tiger balm ointments to the roaring tiger under the coconut palm of Tiger beer. That 'Time for a Tiger' advertising catch line used in colonial days, by the way, also happens to be the first book title of the famous Malayan Trilogy of books by celebrated author Anthony Burgess.

THE TIGER BRAND

8

One product in particular which features frequently features tigers in their packaging are matches. The red coloured tiger label on the right is reputed as the first ever locally manufactured match brand, produced in 1922 by the Malayan Matches Ltd of Selangor. Prior to this all matches in Malaya were imported by local traders, particularly from Sweden, Great Britain, Japan, China and others.

One of Malaya's most prolific and famous match manufacturers was the Kelantan Match Factory and they produced a number of brands featuring tigers in their packaging, including this Palm and Tiger brand matchbox. Another famous manufacturer was the Perak Match Factory in Teluk Anson, Perak, which began operations in 1936. Their early label designs (including their many tiger-themed labels) are quite similar to those of the Kelantan Match Factory established three years earlier - mainly because they shared common shareholders.

SANG KANCIL

9

The tiger is the protagonist in many Malayan myths, legends, fairy tales and fables, including the beloved tales of Sang Kancil the mousedeer. The tales all have a cheeky, rebellious streak about them, when the powerful Tiger, the King of the Beasts, is invariably outwitted by the cunning and wily mousedeer.

RAJA BERSIONG

'Raja Bersiong', Cathay-Keris Film, 1963

10

The Malay legend of the king who fed on human blood, Raja Bersiong ('The Fanged King'), is loosely based on the historical myth Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa, or KedahAnnals, that told about ancient pre-Islamic Kedah that once was once ruled by Raja OngMaha Perita Deria. According to the Kedah Annals, when fighting his enemies, aside from his titular fangs, Raja Bersiung could also transform himself into a 'harimau terung kasau' or white tiger - a tiger with a recessive gene that creates a pale coloration, making the stripes of the tiger very pale. The remains of an earth fort in Kampung Pinang Tunggal in Kuala Muda are said to be that of this king.

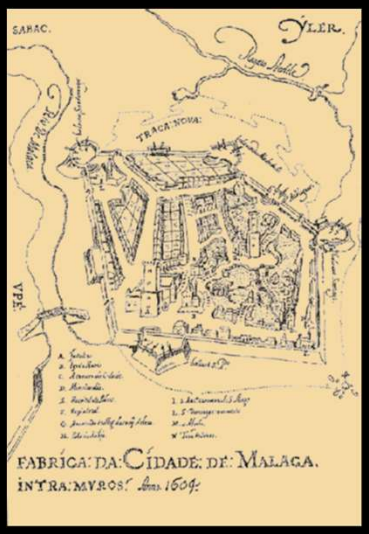
THE WERE-TIGERS OF MELAKA

Mao Kun map showing passage through the Strait of Melaka

11

Stories of such were-tigers or 'Harimau Jadi-jadian' were also prevalent in the history of the Melaka sultanate. One of the earliest references to were-tigers comes from an early 15th century Ming Chinese source, where there are accounts from Chinese travellers to Melaka stating that "in the town are tigers which turn into men. They enter the markets and walk about with people. But if they are recognized, they are captured and killed." (Mills, 1970, pg 113)

THE WERE-TIGERS OF MELAKA



Godinho de Eredia and a map from his 1613 'Description of Malacca'

12

The were-tiger problems appears to have persisted after Melaka's capture by the Portuguese. Godinho de Eredia, in his 1613 'Description of Malacca' said that "Dom Georges de Santa Lucia, the first Bishop of Malacca, tried to put a stop to the evil done by tigers who came by night to Malacca to kill unresisting women and children. Thinking them to be forest dwellers from the interior who could change themselves from men into tigers, the Bishop wished to excommunicate them and offered up public prayers in the Cathedral Church. After the High Mass and the procession of the Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady of the Fortress, he solemnly excommunicated these tigers. Since that time they have never entered the villages, nor killed men, women, or children, and the Christians thank God for it. Many natives Moros, struck by this miracle, were converted in the year 1560."

TIGER ROCK

13

A short distance from the Dindings fort on Pulau Pangkor is the Batu Bersurat (‘Inscribed Rock’). On this large granite boulder, there is an engraving of what appears to be a tiger mauling what was believed to be a child It has the inscription '1743' and the initials ‘VOC’ (the initials of the Dutch East India Company). Local folklore has it that the child of a Dutch dignitary, who played by the rock, disappeared with no trace one day and it was presumed that a tiger had taken the child. Another myth says that it wasn’t the tiger that had taken the boy, but more probably angry Malays,who wanted to rid Pangkor of the Dutch. The Dutch could have chiseled this incident on the stone depicting the Malays as the tiger.

In actual fact, the inscription is probably the coat-of-arms of the Dutch Republic. After the Republic of the Seven United Provinces was established in 1584, it used as its arms a lion armed in one paw with a sword and in the other paw seven arrows bound together (representing the seven provinces of the Dutch Republic). Looking at the 'tiger rock' inscription, the blade of the sword is clearly evident and the three of four lines inscribed on the other paw certainly look more like arrows than some unfortunate 'child' being carried away. It is confusing that whoever carved the crest added, for somemysterious reason, three stripes on the back of the lion - which must have led to the assumption that it indeed represented a tiger. It could well have been an attempt by the bored Dutch contingent there to localise their Republic's coat of arms!

THE BRITISH RESIDENT'S HAT

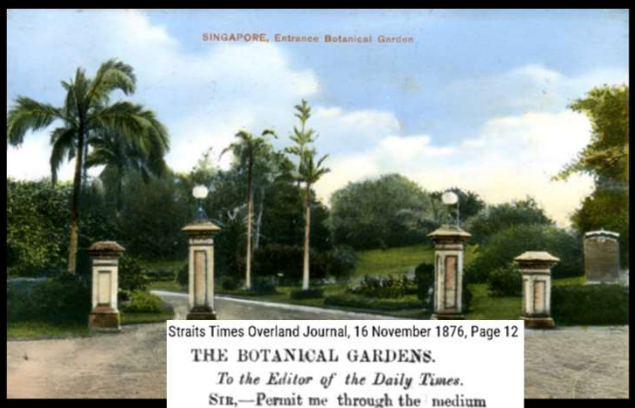
William Farquhar, British Resident of Malacca

14

Hikayat Abdullah was the major literary work of Munshi Abdullah, one of the Malay world's literary giants. It was first published in 1849 and, unlike typical classical Malay literary works that contain fantasies and legendary stories, Abdullah's work was a realistic chronicling of the times. Abdullah noted that "at the time there were not yet many English in the town of Melaka, and to see an Englishman was like seeing a tiger because they were so mischievous and violent".

However, he has an interesting story of how the British resident of Melaka very narrowly escaped death from a tiger attack. "Col. Farquhar's habit was to go out riding after his mid-day meal, going round the Bukit Melaka, and as far as the villages near Malacca. One day he was riding his horse as far as the hill called Bukit Serindit. Apparently a tiger was waiting by the side of the road in the under-growth and when the Resident's horse came near, it smelt the tiger, and snorted and would not go on, but the Resident urged it on with his whip, and the horse sprang forward. When it came to the place where the tiger was, the tiger sprang out to seize the Resident, but as the horse was running very quickly, it only caught the Resident's hat, and ran away with it. The Resident arrived in safety at Malacca without his hat. Then all the people of Malacca said, "Our Resident is certainly a lucky man: he has been killed and came to life again. He will certainly be a great man."

A NEAR ESCAPE



Straits Times Overland Journal, 16 November 1876, Page 12

THE BOTANICAL GARDENS.

To the Editor of the Daily Times.

SIR,—Permit me through the medium of your paper to bring to the notice of visitors to the Botanic Gardens, and also to those living in their vicinity, the danger to which they are being exposed from the possible—if not probable—escape of the wild animals kept there.

A few days ago some miscreant forced the locks from off the cages in which the Tiger and Leopards are confined, and also bent some of the iron bars of the cages, with the intention—the only one he could have had—of letting these animals loose; and it is impossible to foresee the dreadful consequences had he succeeded in his diabolical purpose.

15

Abdullah also wrote about a tiger that Farquhar's had kept in a cage in his house after it was captured. He unfortunately had to shoot it after the a workman was tasked with repairing the cage and had an eye and half his face torn off for his trouble.

British colonial officers had this obsession keeping tigers in captivity, much to the dismay of other citizens. A letter to the editor of the Straits Times on November 16th 1876 warned of the danger to which people are being exposed exposed from the escape of the wild animals being kept at the Singapore Botanic Gardens. This was when some "miscreant" forced the locks from off the cages in which the Tiger and Leopards were confined, and also bent some of the iron bars of the cages, no doubt with the intention of granting these animals their freedom. The perpetrator of this diabolical deed is unknown, so it is left to conjecture whether this was a the act of a drunken sailor, the subject of a childish dare or prank or a valiant rescue by a misguided animal lover.

But our concerned citizen ends his letter saying that the well-stocked aviary of rare and beautiful birds at the gardens are more than sufficient wildlife to appeal to visitors.

SOULS OF THE DEAD

16

The Brits aside, the locals had their own unique and peculiar beliefs about the animal. Denys's 'Dictionary of British Malaya' in 1894 noted that the Malays, when in the forest, never refer to the animal by its real name, they having a superstitious belief that the animal understands speech. Locke writes that Malays would prefer to use fancy names such as Tok Belang (the striped prince), Tuan Hutan (Lord of the Jungle) or Si-pudong (old hairy face). They would even avoided mentioning the tiger directly by name at all and just refer to it as 'Si Dia'.

According to the Victorian traveller Isabella Bird, the Malays also believed that souls of dead humans would enter the bodies of tigers, and the killing of a tiger therefore is seldom attempted for fear of killing a departed relative or friend. The exception was if the tiger had committed the first aggression by carrying of a man, woman or child.

Similarly, John Adolphus McNair in 1899 writes that the Chinese believed that when a person is killed by a tiger, he becomes a spirit, known as Ch'ang Kwei, who leads the tiger to other victims, protects him from danger and encourages him to commit new murders. His "hantu," or ghost, becomes the slave of the beast and helps the tiger find his prey ; and so thoroughly subservient does the ghost become to his tigerish master, that he would bring the tiger to the presence of his wife and family, and calmly sees them devoured before his ghostly face.

PUTERI GUNUNG LEDANG

'Puteri Gunung Ledang', Cathay-Keris Film, 1961

17

Many of you may be familiar with the story of the Puteri Gunung Ledang in the Malay Annals, the mythical fairy princess who lived on the mountain and was courted, unsuccessfully, by the Sultan of Melaka. In 1613, the Portuguese writer Godinho de Eredia described that forest surrounding Gunong Ledang as being occupied by tigers who guard the princess residing there. He goes further by saying that "'orang benua' or Orang Asli learn their magic arts in a cavern at Gunong Ledang and use these arts to transform themselves from human form into tigers". RO Winstedt's study of the occult in his book "The Malay Magician" also mentions a were-tiger that guards the fairy princess of Gunung Ledang, saying that local Melaka tradition says the Princess sometimes takes the form of an old woman with a cat. She is said to be able to transform that cat into a ferocious tiger if people attempt to molest her.

THE BEROLAK OF KINTA

18

A. Hale in his paper 'On Mines And Miners In Kinta, Pêrak' in 1885 also wrote about a tiger of enormous size called the Berolak which was said to haunt Kinta. The legend about him says that a long time ago, a man caught a tiger cub and took it home ; it grew up quite tame and lived with the man until he died, when it returned to the jungle and grew to an enormous size, nine 'hasta' long, it is still there, though nobody ever sees it; it does no harm, but sometimes very large tracks are seen and men hear its roar, which is so loud that it can be heard from Chemor to Batu Gajah ; when heard in the dry season, it is a sure omen of rain in fifteen days' time. He wrote that a cat in that part of Perak is referred to as 'berolak dapor', instead of 'kucing', and cats are not allowed on mines, nor may the name be mentioned.

TIGER DREAMS

19

Winstedt also recorded some Malay beliefs about what dreams of tigers were an omen of and what would befall the dreamer. For example:

The dreamer kills a tiger
... He will hurt his worst enemy.

The dreamer eats tiger's flesh
... He will receive riches and honour.

If the tiger climbs on to the dreamer's back
... The dreamer will be in trouble with Government or with his enemies.

A tiger enters the dreamer's room
... A rogue will come to the house.

The dreamer is ill when he meets a tiger
... The dreamer will recover from an illness.

If he dreams of sleeping with a tiger, but is not afraid
... He will be safe from all his enemies.

He fights with a tiger but fails to kill it
... He will fall ill of an incurable fever which will hold him like a prison.

The dreamer befriends a tiger...
.. He will marry an unsatisfactory wife.

RIMAU KERAMAT

20

There are various kramat or sacred places associated with Tigers. According to Locke, at Tg Karang near the mouth of the river Selangor, is a Malay grave at the foot of a fig tree where pilgrimages are made by the Malays and Chinese and offerings made. It is said that a certain Raja Abdullah fell in love with a maiden named Miriam, who disappeared and was supposed to have been taken by the spirits. Raja Abdullah died and was buried at the foot of the fig-tree. It is said that if you chance to meet a very large tiger walking along the nearby beach, let him pass unharmed. It is only Raja Abdullah's ghost, and in proof thereof, you will see the tiger leaves no footmarks on the sand.

In Langat, there is the shrine of Tok Kamarong which is supposedly guarded by a white tiger, which was said to be his pet during his during his lifetime. This Ghost-tiger was said to have one paw substantially smaller than the other. There had been many who said they had witnessed this tiger, including the then District Engineer Mr. Spearing who said that he saw this tiger's
tracks, and can vouch for the fact that one footprint was smaller than the rest. This curious feature is thought by the local Malays to be one of the specially distinctive marks of a ‘rimau kramat’, or Ghost-tiger.

THE KERINCI WERE-TIGERS

21

Both Frank Swettenham and Hugh Clifford wrute about the almost universal belief is that the people of a small State in Sumatra called Kerinchi have the power of assuming at will the form of a tiger, and in that disguise they wreak vengeance on those they wish to injure. Not every Kerinchi man can do this, but still the gift of this strange power of metamorphosis seemed to be pretty well confined to the Kerinchi people. At night when respectable members of society should be in bed, the Kerinchi men were said to slips out of their, and, assuming the form of a tiger, go about seeking fowl, livestock or peoplet to devour." Swettenham writes about four Korinchi men arriving in a district of Perak, and that night a number of fowls were taken by a tiger. The strangers left the next day and went further up country, and shortly after only three of them returned and stated that a tiger had just been killed, and they begged the local headman to bury it!

It is only fair to say that the Kerinchi people strenuously deny they have the powers ascribed to them, but insist that it only the inhabitants of a district in the deep interior of Kerinchi called Chendâku who have this ability. Even there, however, it is only those who are practised in the ‘ilmu sihir’, the occult arts who are capable of transforming themselves into tigers, and the Kerinchi people themselves afraid to enter the district of the ‘Orang Chendaku’.

THE SAYONG WERE-TIGER

22

Clifford also writes about a certain Haji Abdullah in Sayong, Perak, A native of Kerinchi, was caught stark naked in a tiger-trap by villagers, and only purchased his liberty at the price of the buffaloes he had allegedly slain while he marauded in the likeness of a tiger. On another occasion some Kerinchi men appeared and sought hospitality in a Malay house, and there also the fowls disappeared in the night, and there were unmistakable traces of the visit of a tiger, but the next day one of the visitors fell sick, and shortly after vomited chicken-feathers!

THE SLIM RIVER WERE-TIGER

23

Clifford also writes about the Slim River were-tiger. His tale starts with a girl who shockingly discovered that she married a were-tiger, Haji Ali. The unfortunate bride woke up one morning at first light to see him climbing the stairs into their house possessing his human head but having the body of a tiger. As the horrified girl watched, the body gradually turned into that of a man, the process finally ending with the disappearance of the tail. Rather naturally, the girl ran away and nothing would persuade her to return to her husband. Some weeks later, the headman of this village, following the pugs of a tiger which he had shot at and lamed in a front leg, found that the tracks took him to the steps of Haji Ali's house and Haji Ali missing. Much later a traveller brought to the headman news that Haji Ali had settled down in another neighbourhood. He had apparently suffered some form of accident, since his right leg was gnarled and twisted, and he walked with a limp, as though the bones had been shattered by a gunshot wound.

WRONG PLACE, WRONG TIME ….

24

Of course, one can also say that these suspected so-called were-wolves could well have been just innocent victims who just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. Which was probably the case with this story in Betty Lumsden Milne's book Damit and other stories. A stranger went to live in a Malay village, on the outskirts of which he soon built himself a small house. Not long afterwards livestock belonging to the villagers began to be killed by a tiger and the animal later even killed and devoured a number of Malays as well. Suspicion fell on the newcomer, who had been noticed leaving his house at dusk to go off into the jungle, not returning until dawn the next day. The villagers built a tiger trap, baiting it with a live goat and one evening the unlucky newcomer was returning to his home through the jungle when he became aware that a tiger was stalking him. There were no suitable trees into which he could climb and seeing the new trap he ran to it and the great door came crashing down, trapping him inside but at least keeping the tiger safely outside. Not long after dawn the following morning the man's shouts attracted the people from the village. They gathered round the trap. He explained to them what had happened. Instead of releasing him, however, they maintained that his presence inside the trap was proof that he was a were-tiger, now back in human form. Without further ado they took up their spears and stabbed him to death.

THE BUKIT PUTUS WERE-TIGERS

25

Locke writes that in Negri Sembilan, there is a settlement of were-tigers on Gunuung Angsi who, in human form, study, undertake farming and live as normal human beings by day. They were led by a tiger king called Dato Paroi. There is a place bearing his name on the road between Seremban and Kuala Pilah called Keramat Tok Paroi and is considered by Malays, Chinese and Indians to be well worth visiting to offer up prayers and to make small offerings. There is another tiger kings who is said to occupy Gunung Ledang in Johore, Tok Gunong Ledang. He and his tiger warriors are reputed to have once had a battle with Dato' Paroi, who defeated them all although fighting single-handed. However, Dato' Paroi lost his tail in this skirmish and subsequently the hill where they was dubbed Bukit Putus (Broken Tail Hill). Bukit Putus, by the way, is also the site of a major battle in 1875 when British Gurkhas captured a strong Malay stockade, earning their commander Captain George Channer a Victoria Cross, the first to be won in Malaya.

TIGER SHAMANS

Malay shaman, from 'The Malay Magician', R O Winstedt, 1951

26

Winstedt's study of bomohs or shamans revealed a strong link with tigers, whom he said was the Malay shaman's first intermediary between the normal and the supernatural worlds. In Perak and Selangor, shamans at a séance will, like a tiger, growl and sniff and crawl under mats and lick the bodies of a patient. A shaman in Kelantan even refuses to hold séances in a town because the tiger the event would summon might be shot. Dogs and cats were also forbidden at séances for fear the shaman seize and devour it while in his tiger state. During the séances of a particular shaman in Kelantan, witnesses have testified a tiger appears at least once in almost each one of them.

THE JUNGLE PRINCESS

27

'The Jungle Princess', Paramount Pictures, 1936

The phenomenon of Malayan were-tigers seems to have been a global sensation in the 1930s, as it had apparently inspired a Hollywood blockbuster. A quirky movie for your weekend viewing - Hollywood star Dorothy Lamour as 'Ulah', with her companion tiger 'Limo', in the 1936 adventure film 'The Jungle Princess'. Set in the Pahang jungle in Malaya, the movie is about a young girl whose father is killed and has to grow up by herself in the jungle, looked after by a guardian tiger. Ulah rescues an American hunter lost in the jungle and they eventually return to his camp, but the local villagers are suspicious of Ulah, who they think is a were-tiger, leading to a lot of trouble. The movie does an incredible job of re-creating the Malayan jungle and even the dozens of extras seem to look Malay and even speak Malay. This includes the lead star Dorothy Lamour herself, who speaks Malay almost throughout the movie and even sings a love song in Malay ('Bulan di malam'). 'The Jungle Princess' was a major hit and launched Lamour's career as one of the leading stars of the era. She was later often cast, sarong-clad, in similar jungle adventure romances, which led to her being nicknamed the "Sarong Queen".

TIGER ATTACKS

28

While one may not necessarily believe there were such beasts as were-tigers, tigers were most definitely real and people in colonial times certainly were just as terrified of them. You can see the terror in this engraving depicting an actual incident in which G.D. Coleman, the Straits Settlements Superintendent of Public Works, and a group of Indian convict labourers were attacked by a tiger in the process of constructing a new road through the jungle in 1835. Fortunately, the tiger crashed into Coleman's surveying equipment and ran away, leaving everyone unscathed.

Much of the inhabited areas of Malaya were still forest and swampland in the 19th century, and tigers posed a significant danger to the population. Tiger-hunting was a popular activity then as the government offered lucrative monetary rewards for each tiger killed – aside from the profits that could be gained from selling their parts.

BUFFALO DEFENDERS

29

Now if such a tiger attack were to occur to you, what do you think you would like close at hand to offer maximum protection? Surprisingly, it would be a buffalo! Locke recounts a story in Trengganu about a Buffalo being led back from work by its master when the pair of them stumbled on a tiger lying up in the long grass through which the man and buffalo were passing. The tiger immediately sprang at the man and had him in the grip of his claws when it was promptly attacked and driven off by the buffalo. The man attempted to run, but was overtaken and attacked again by the tiger. Once more the buffalo drove off his assailant. A third attack by the tigress followed, the buffalo again coming to the rescue. When he finally reached the main road, the man met some other Malays, who placed him in a trishaw and sent him off to hospital, so that his wounds might be cleansed and dressed. The buffalo was determined not to leave his master, however, and trotted heavily along behind the trishaw until they reached the township. This was certainly not a one-off as I've encountered numerous stories of buffalos coming to the aid of humans being attacked by tigers - though none with as much persistance and tenacity as in this story.

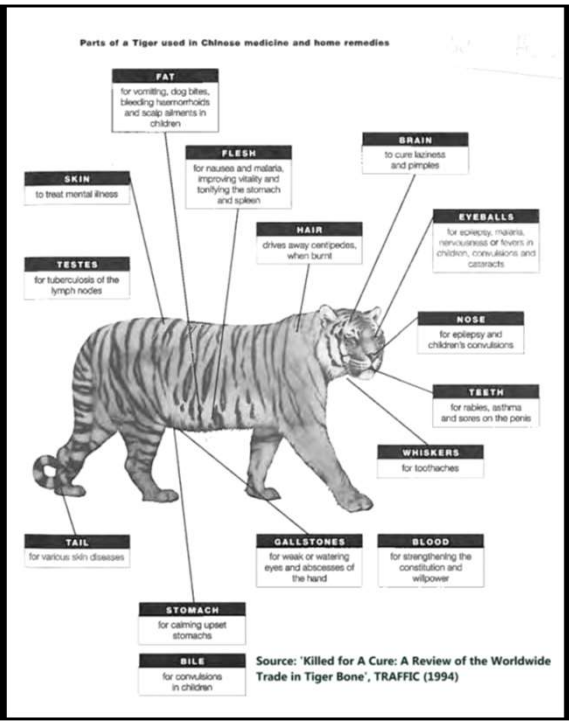
TIGER BOUNTIES

30

McNair writes that in the mid-1800s, Singapore was infested with tigers and not a day passed without someone being killed by wild animals. He notes that as many as 200 deaths were notified to the police in one year, and the number was probably a great deal more, due to cases not being brought to notice by plantation owners, because of the difficulty of obtaining coolies to work in the jungle as a result. Cash rewards of fifty dollars was offered by Government for every tiger brought to a police station, whether alive or dead; This sum was subsequently increased to one hundred and fifty dollars by the end of the century.

Tiger attacks, though much less frequent, did continue well into the 20th century. Locke in Tigers of Trengganu, for example, said that one particular man-eater in Kemasik near Kemaman in Trengganu was responsible for 13 attacks on humans from September 1949 until july 1951. Only one of those 13 survived the attack.

TIGER PARTS



31

The government bounty for the killing or capture of a tiger varied between $50 and $150 over the period of the 19th century in Malaya. According to the 'Denys's Dictionary of British Malaya', in 1894, a fixed reward of $50 was paid by the Government for each tiger killed but, in addition, the hunter could dispose of the tiger for a handsome sum. A tiger was usually sold for five-and-twenty or thirty dollars. He writes that Chinese are the usual purchasers.

John McNair in 1899 wrote that "The whiskers are supposed by some to endow their possessor with unlimited power over the opposite sex. Tiger bones are are ground to a fine powder and used as medicine in various diseases, or to form an ingredient in certain invigorating jellies. The flesh of the tiger is eaten in the belief that by eating it, they acquire the courage and sagacity of the animal. Tigers' claws are used as charms, amulets brooches and earrings are also made from tigers' claws mounted in gold.

I work for TRAFFIC, an international organisation that monitors wildlife trade globally and I'm sad to report that, unfortunately, the spectre of illegal killing of tigers for their parts and derivatives still remains a major threat to tigers up to this day. Today, as we face the challenges of habitat loss, illegal trade and dwindling tiger populations, it is more important than ever to remember and honour these stories. By protecting tigers, we are preserving an integral part of our history and culture for future generations.

I hope our journey together this evening, exploring the rich tapestry of tiger tales from colonial Malaya of the past, has helped you understand why these incredible animals are a valuable heritage worth safeguarding today and for generations in future.

Thank you.

Thank you

THE TIGER AND THE TIGRESS.