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**MALAYA'S ANCIENT PAST**

BY

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## Malaya's Ancient Past

by

DATO SIR ROLAND BRADDELL.

*A Paper read before the Kuala Lumpur Rotary Club  
on 20th January, 1954.*

There are welcome signs of an awakening interest in the ancient past of Malaya and my present purpose is merely to stimulate that interest.

Prehistory was established as a science in Europe not quite a hundred years ago. At first it distinguished two main epochs from the type of stone implements used by men. Those which were shaped by fracturing were assigned to the Palaeolithic or Old Stone Age and those which were polished were assigned to the Neolithic or New Stone Age. Further discoveries in Europe made it necessary to add a Mesolithic or Middle Stone Age. The cultural sequences in the three Stone Ages of Western Europe have all been established, named and placed in relation to geological time sequences, and so much more is known about this region than the rest of the world that the largest part of any book on general prehistory is devoted to it and its terminology. But we do not live in Western Europe. Although the prehistory of Asia still remains in the exploratory stage, sufficient has emerged to make it appear that the classic sequences of Western Europe are absent from South and East Asia and that as early as Lower Palaeolithic times there was an independent complex of culture in these two regions. It is fallacious, therefore, to attempt to fit the Western sequences or their terminology into our part of the world. We ought to think and write about it as a purely Asian subject and use a special terminology for it.

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Hadiali

1954-5-14



Malaysia

It is certain that from a very remote time the Malay Peninsula was a highway for the passage of men and their cultures, but we do not know from how remote a time. Our soil is not conducive to the preservation of bones and finds of ancient skeletal remains have been few; but quantities of the objects used by men in prehistoric times have appeared. No modern scientific tests for dating have been applied to anything found in Malaya so far as I know.

Such of our stone implements as were shaped by fracturing only are taken to be Palaeolithic; and such as were shaped by grinding and polishing only are taken to be Neolithic. This is a division of type but not of time. The present theory is that the Neolithic phase in South-East Asia was introduced from outside; and this is the view with regard to Malaya. There does not appear to have been a Mesolithic phase such as that in Western Europe for which the term was invented. The stone implements which are described currently as 'Mesolithic type' belong really to a last phase of the Palaeolithic which had over-lapped into the Neolithic and was trying to adapt itself to the new technique.

The earliest type of stone implements yet discovered in Malaya were found in 1938 at Kota Tampan in gravels in the Perak River valley. They are truly Palaeolithic in type but the geological age of the gravels has not yet been determined. Other early types have been found in the lower levels of caves in the northern half of Malaya and in shell-heaps in Province Wellesley. These are not truly Palaeolithic but belong to its last over-lapping phase. The general contents of the lower cave levels show the people to have been primitive savages on a cultural par with the Tasmanian aborigines who were still living in the Old Stone Age when they became extinct in the seventies of last century. The Province Wellesley shell-heap people were more or less upon the same cultural level.

The Neolithic phase in Malaya persisted well into the Christian era, but we do not know when it began. It was accompanied throughout by the use of unglazed pottery and in its final phase by the use of metals. We can feel certain that during the first three centuries of the Christian era, if not earlier, there was a local manufacture of iron. This appears from the abundance of iron-ore in easily workable condition, from the large quantities of ancient wrought-iron mining and agricultural implements found so widely, and from the archaeological evidence found in conjunction with many of the iron implements. We cannot presume any similar manufacture of bronze because there is an absence of easily worked copper-ore and the finds of ancient bronze objects have been scattered and few. All of them belong to a specific form of bronze art which flourished in Indo-China and their presence here must be attributed to importation.

An early trade into Malaya of objects from the West is evidenced by the recent find at a Neolithic site in Perlis of Greek pottery dateable in the fourth century B.C. and by the earlier finds up the Johore River of Western beads dateable several centuries B.C. and others dateable in the Graeco-Roman period of the Christian era. This trade was probably due to South Indian middle-men and merchant captains, though a direct trade in Western shipping cannot be precluded entirely. Malaya reached a high state of Neolithic culture and I would attribute this to prosperity from gold-mining. There is a chain of ancient gold-mining sites running along our main gold-belt from Pahang to Patani, and the archaeological evidence shows that they were contemporary with the final Neolithic phase. During the same period on the opposite shore of the Gulf of Siam in the region behind Rash Gia Bay there was a prosperous centre of cosmopolitan maritime trade with a highly developed industry in metals and particularly in gold. I think that our ancient gold-mining links with this industry. There was in any event good reason for the Graeco-Romans to give the name 'Golden Chersonese' to the Malay Peninsula.

We have to theorize about the ancient peopling of Malaya. No skeletal remains were found with the Kota Tampan implements, and nothing definite can be said about the remains of the early cave people which have been discovered. In 1860 a debris of skulls was found in shell-heaps ten miles from the mouth of the Sungei Muda in Province Wellesley and in 1934 a jaw-bone was found in a shell-heap at Guak Kephah in the same Province. In 1863 the skulls were pronounced by the great Professor Huxley to belong to the Australo-Melanesoid race and in 1940 an eminent Dutch scientist identified the jaw-bone as belonging to the Palae-Melanesian type still persisting in New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands. There would thus appear to have been early black-skinned populations like the Australian aborigines and the negroid Melanesians, and hybridisation. It looks as if the early peopling of Malaya proceeded upon lines similar to those established by French scientists for Indo-China. If so, there would appear to have been three black-skinned populations, Australoid, Melanesoid, and Negritic or pygmy Negro, and hybridisation. Fossil remains of all three with intermediate types have been found in Indo-China. In Malaya we have the fossil evidence from Province Wellesley, we have our living Negritos, and some scientists have detected Australoid and Melanesoid traits among Malaya's pagan tribes.

The French scientists consider that the Palaeolithic phase in Indo-China must be attributed to black-skinned peoples and that the Neolithic was introduced by new-comers of a light-skinned and long-headed physical type, to which they and many others give the name 'Indonesian'. There are living aboriginal tribes in the hill regions of Annam,

Cambodia and Laos who are almost purely of this 'Indonesian' type. The theory is that by inter-breeding with an early Mongolian stock the 'Indonesians' produced the Proto or First Malays, who by further inter-breeding with Mongolians produced the Deutero or Second Malays.

Actually there is no complete agreement as to what the term 'Indonesian' properly means or as to what physical groups it should be applied but all agree that the Malays are Southern or Oceanic Mongoloids and must be divided into Proto and Deutero according to the degree of Mongolisation. The Proto, having less, is presumed to approximate more closely to an assumed parent stock. The Malays are essentially of the same human variety as the basic populations of South China and Indo-China. A large proportion of the South Chinese are descended from one or other of the aboriginal non-Chinese tribes, whose living representatives occupy the hilly parts of Yunnan and Kweichow and show an obvious affinity to the populations south of the mountain-barrier. Opinion to-day, based upon both physical and cultural evidence, tends more and more to regard Southwest China, and particularly Yunnan, as the dispersal centre of the original Malays. Our Jakuns and Besisis are considered to be Proto Malay and all our civilized Malays to be Deutero.

It is believed that the Sakai entered Malaya after the Negritos but before the Proto Malays. The name Senoi, meaning Hill People, is preferred nowadays to Sakai, but the latter has been so well established in literature that an attempt to change it would lead to needless confusion. The racial and cultural affinities of the Sakai are amongst the most puzzling of our problems. The most widely accepted opinion has been and still is that the Sakai link with the Vedda of Ceylon, the Toala of Celebes and other peoples, as remnants of an ancient population which is presumed to have extended from India through Malaysia to Australia and which is called Veddoid, or more recently Indo-Australoid. There is a tendency nowadays to regard the Sakai as 'Indonesians' and as kinsmen to the Sumatran Bataks, the Bornean Dayaks and some of the Indo-Chinese hill tribes. The study by the late Mr. H. D. Noone of the Ple-Temiar Senoi seems to show that that tribe at least can be described as 'Indonesian'.

In England, France and the United States of America the term 'anthropology' is used to cover all that bears on the study of mankind, physically and culturally. I do not think that we in Malaya can hope to emulate the great achievements of the Dutch in Indonesia, the French in Indo-China and the Americans in the Philippines unless we have a professionally staffed and financially equipped 'Department of Malayan Anthropology' to give a fresh appraisal to the results of past researches and to initiate, co-ordinate and control future ones. As long as we proceed with haphazard methods, mountains of theory will continue to be erected upon stray molehills of fact.

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## The Brunei Negotiations...



Neil Lawson, Q.C. Legal Adviser to the Brunei position.

*with little  
to suggest  
failure*



Tunku Abdul Rahman  
and Tun Abdul Razak  
send off the Sultan of  
Brunei after last round  
of talks in Malaya,  
March 1963. Everyone  
politely smiled.

On the Eve of Malaysia's formation,

Lee Kuan Yew influences Sabah and Sarawak politicians.

Lee talking to Sarawak politicians on his way to Sabah, August 1963. On Mr. Lee's right, Mr. Stephen Kalong Ningkan, Chief Minister Designate of Sarawak.



After Formation, Singapore-Kuala Lumpur relations deteriorate...

*But in 1964,  
there is still time to share a joke*

The Tunku with Lee Kuan Yew, Dr. Goh Keng Swee and Lim Kim San, August 1964.





*It is not to last for long ...*



Albar,  
one of those  
Lee called  
'Ultra'

*Smiles despite a tense situation*



Picket at UMNO General Assembly, May 1965, protesting against Lee Kuan Yew.

## The Tunku leaves for the fateful London Conference of Commonwealth Prime Ministers



The Tunku's press conference before leaving Kuala Lumpur, 11 June 1965.

Lee Kuan Yew  
sees the  
Tunku off  
at Singapore  
airport on  
the same  
day.



← ASSEMBLY HOUSE

FENG

*Super-Colossal!*

'LABOUR'S  
LOST LOVE'

NEVER AGAIN  
POSSIBLY

PROBABLY THE  
LAST PERFORMANCE

THE LAST SHOW  
MAY BE

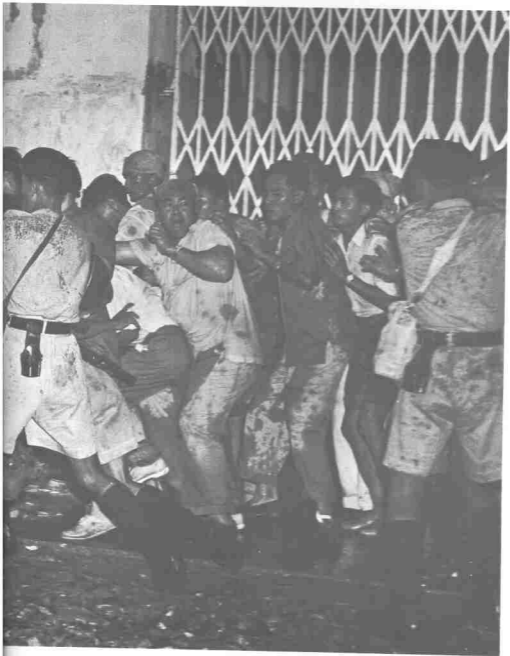
POSITIVELY  
THE LAST PERFORMANCE

NOT RETAINED BY  
POPULAR DEMAND



## The 1956 Singapore riots





*Cars outside the Ministry of  
Labour & Welfare ...*



*... and bayonets in the street.*



# Singapore at the crossroads: Merger or Chaos?



**MOMENT OF DECISION**



The Federation erects tariffs  
which threaten to drive Singapore  
against the wall



**THE FIRST BRICK**

# Marshall courts the Tunku on Merger



**CHAP GOM MEH**

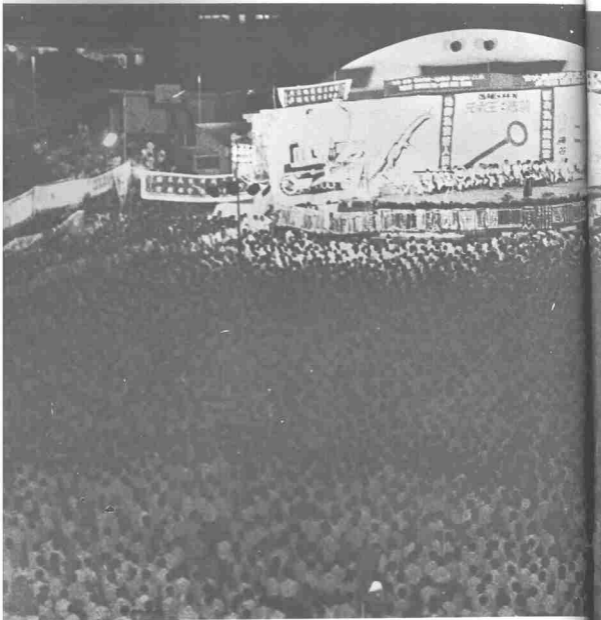
The rise of Singapore  
as a security threat and  
the move towards Malaysia...

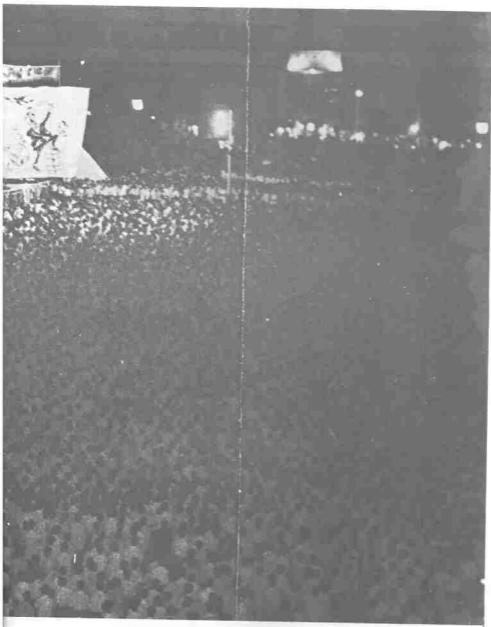
*The Hong Lim by-election, March 1961.*



Lee Kuan Yew speaks at PAP rally in Upper Nankin Street.

*The Ong Eng Guan challenge.*





# The 1962 Brunei Revolt...



the disorganized rebels

*and prisoners.*

the better organized,  
in Brunei Town.



The return after seven weeks...



Singapore's Lim Kim San greets the Tunku.



*No signs of  
impending  
separation.*

arrival in  
Kuala Lumpur,  
5 August 1965.  
Tunku Abdul Rahman  
appears his usual  
jovial self.

## The day of Separation.



The Tunku  
leaving  
Parliament  
House  
after announcing  
separation.





The Tunku's  
hastily written  
letter to  
Toh Chin Chye

My dear Chin Chye

I am writing to tell you that I have given the matter of our break with Singapore my utmost consideration and I find that in the interest of our friendship and the security and peace of Malaya as a whole there is absolutely no other way out.

If I were strong enough and able to exercise complete control of the situation I might perhaps have delayed action, but I am not, and so while I am able to counsel reticence and patience I think the amicable settlement of our differences in this way is the only possible way out.

I request you most earnestly to agree.

Kind regards

Yrs sincerely  
Tunku

## Lee explains to Singapore

