LOST COUSINS

The Malays of Sri Lanka

B. A. HUSSAINMIYA

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by

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L O S T COUSINS

The Malays of Sri Lanka

To the memory of my late

Grandmother

Nenek Indran Cuncheer

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PREFACE

"Tak'kan Melayu hilang di dunia."

Hang Tuah.

"I cannot but consider the Melayu nation as one people, speaking one language, though spread over so wide a space and preserving their character and customs."

Sir Stamford Raffles.

Who are the Sri Lankan Malays? Where did they come from? When did they migrate to Sri Lanka? Why should they be called Malays? Since I began research on the community more than a decade ago, I have been confronted with these questions by people, especially Malays in the Peninsula, many of whom hardly knew the existence of such community. I have tried to answer these questions in a number of seminars held in Malaysia, and also through articles published in various journals. This publication brings together a collection of six of my recent papers* on various topics connected with the Sri Lankan Malays.

The first paper on ethnic consciousness among Malays is a study on the definition of 'Malay' in the Sri Lankan context. It seeks to describe the issues of ethnicity in an historical perspective. The second paper on early Malay contacts with Sri Lanka probes the connections between the present-day Malay community with the arrival of Malays in the pre-European period of the Island's history. The real beginnings of the community and how it evolved as a self-identifiable group throughout the period of the Dutch and British colonial rule are the themes dealt with in the third paper. The fourth paper is a descriptive account of the literature of the Sri Lankan Malays, while the fifth paper magnifies one specific contribution to this literature by a locally-born Malay who wrote a traditional Malay syair, the Syair Kisahnya Khabar Orang Wolenter Benggali. The last paper explains some aspects of the creole Malay currently spoken in the island.

Despite the wide-ranging nature of subjects covered in this work, there is also an underlying theme that connects these papers. It shows above everything else, how the Malay community in Sri Lanka came into existence out of a

multitude of ethnic groups introduced from all over South-east Asia by the colonial powers, and that this community ever since had clung to this 'Malay' ethnic-consciousness. It is through this ethnic pride that the community had managed to preserve its own identity for so long despite separation from the centres of the Malay world both in space and time.

The papers included in this volume are in the nature of exploratory articles, designed to encourage other concerned scholars to undertake more intensive research on various aspects of history, culture and language of the Sri Lankan Malays, (who have been enveloped in academic obscurity for too long). Perhaps one may see here a contrast with the Malays of South Africa who have been a subject of serious scholarly interest as may be seen in countless number of books, monographs and also articles published in scholarly journals. It may be of some interest to observe that as late as 1970, when Ian Goonetilake compiled a first comprehensive Bibliography on Ceylon, only 9 articles could be listed under the subject of Ceylon Malays.

I am grateful to the Institute of Malay Language, Literature and Culture (IBKKM) of the National University of Malaysia where I have been attached as a visiting lecturer during the last fourteen months, for taking this first step of sponsoring a monograph-length publication on the Sri Lankan Malays. This is in keeping with the growing awareness among Malay people everywhere that the Malay world binds together nearly 150 million people living not only in the Malay peninsula and Indonesian archipelago, but also spread in far away places like South Africa, Madagascar, and Sri Lanka. In that sense this volume should interest a wide range of readers who are interested in the concept of greater Malay civilization, (Tamaddun Melayu) and how some small Malay communities in the fringe areas have shared it.

I am forever indebted to late Professor Cyril Skinner, Chairman of the Indonesian and Malay department of the Monash University, Australia for having encouraged and guided me to pursue my interest on Sri Lankan Malays. I wish to thank many individuals who have helped me to publish this occasional paper. I am grateful to Prof. Madya Dr. Ismail Hamid, the Director of IBKKM who first mooted the idea. It is a pleasure to acknowledge help received from Prof. Datuk Ismail Hussein, Prof. Farid M. Onn, Prof. Madya Dr. Wan Hashim bin Wan Teh, Dr. Harun Mat Piah, Prof. Madya Dr. M. Kamlin, Prof. Madya Siti Hawa Salleh, Encik Inon Shaharuddin

bin Abdul Rahman, Encik Syed Othman Syed Omar, Encik Abdul Kadir Din, Encik Mohd. Yamin dan Encik Mohd. Salleh and Encik Salihuddin Mustafa. I appreciate the help of Prof. Ronald Provencher, (the Director of South-East Asian Centre of Northern Illinois University who is currently attached to the institute as a Fullbright Visiting Scholar) for his assistance to neutralise some of my idiosyncratic expressions in English. This is not the kind of monograph I would like to have seen as my first major publication, but as the Malay proverb says - **daripada cempedak baik nangka**. -

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*

Paper one on Malay ethnicity is a revised version of a talk given at a one day Seminar on the Literature and Culture of Sri Lankan Malays (Seminar Sehari Sastera dan Budaya Sri Lanka) held on 6th October 1986 under the auspices of (IBKKM) the Institute of Malay Language and Literature and Culture of the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. An earlier draft of papers two and three were first read at an International Seminar/Workshop on The Muslim Minorities of Sri Lanka and South and South East Asia held from 5th to 11th January, 1984 at Beruwela, Sri Lanka, held under the aegis of the Naleemiah Institute of Islamic Research and International Centre for Ethnic Studies, Sri Lanka; and was later published in Muslims of Sri Lanka; Avenues to Antiquity (Shukri M.A.M. ed.) 1986, Beruwela/Colombo, pp. 279-310. A condensed version of this paper was also delivered at Seminar Bahasa, Sastera dan Budaya Malaysia-Indonesia held at the Gajah Mada University in Yogyakarta, Indonesia from 16th to 18th November 1986. Paper four on the Malay Literature in Sri Lanka is a revised version of a paper read at International Symposium on the Traditional Malay Literature held at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia from 4th to 12th November, 1982; and later published in Occasional paper series No. 1, by the IBKKM, 1986, pp. 109-139. Paper five an edition of a Sri Lankan Malay Syair is due to appear in a forthcoming (May 1987) issue of SARI, Journal of the IBKKM. Paper six was originally read at the Second Malay World Symposium held in Colombo, Sri Lanka from 4th to 11th August 1985 and a revised version at the Pertemuan Sasterawan Nusantara IV held in Bandar Seri Begawan, Negara Brunei Darussalam from 9th to 12th December, 1986 under the auspices of Brunei's Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka. It was later published in SARI, 4(1) Januari 1986 pp. 19-30.

A NOTE ON ETHNIC CONSCIOUSNESS AMONG THE SRI LANKAN MALAYS[1]

> "What is important is not from where they (the Sri Lankan Malays) came but where you are going. That is important for all of us. I do not mean it in the sense of physical migration any longer, but what is your aim - politically, culturally and socially".[2]

So said His Excellency Junius Richard Jayawardena, the President of the Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, when as the Chief Guest he addressed participants during the opening ceremony of the 2nd Malay World Symposium held in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 4th of August 1985. In a way his speech was a reaction to a somewhat overwhelming emphasis laid by some earlier speakers (during the same occasion) on the great, past heritage of the Sri Lankan Malay community. President Jayawardena's point was loud and clear; the self-identity of a small minority community does not necessarily cling on to a consciousness of the past alone, but more importantly, such identity continues to last only when such a community is prepared to develop its ethnicity throughout the process of its existence.

The fact is, however, that not all communities can or could survive as separate entities when placed among dominant communities. They may have to shed some or most of their traditional cultural attributes during the process of absorption or assimilation with the major communal groups. At times, these are forced on them from above; for example as what is taking place in Bulgaria right now. The members of the Muslim minority are not even permitted to retain their Muslim personal names. In the case of Burma, this process has almost been completed as the Muslims have had to use Burmese names in order to escape discrimination. There may be a multitude of other ways by which forced absorption is exercised on smaller national groups in order to make them fall in line with the majority groups.

In other instances, due to evolutionary process, smaller groups find it difficult to survive as separate entities. Their continued isolation from parental communities both in time and space may result in the loss of

many of the original cultural traits, and force them to adopt the culture and life-style of majority communities.

This study is concerned with one such minority community, namely the Malays of Sri Lanka, who as many outsiders have observed is a distinctly identifiable racial group, and has managed to retain its separate ethnic identity against severe odds throughout its more than three and half-centuries of existence(3).

This paper is an attempt to look into the process of ethnicity formation among the Sri Lankan Malays. It is in fact a field well-nigh a prerogative of sociologists and cultural anthropologists whose usage of such cultural anthropological terminology as ethnicity, ethnic identity, and ethnic consciousness in relation to a study of this nature reflects care and even scientific precision. This exercise cannot lay claim to such strict methodological enquiry or conceptualization when discussing Sri Lankan Malay 'ethnicity'. The aim here is to track down the main stages by which the local Malay community rallied itself to assert its unique ethnicity vis a vis a competing and over-whelming multi-cultural situation. The approach, is therefore historical, leaving room for any prospective cultural anthropologist who wishes to undertake a somewhat intensive study on the contemporary Malay 'ethnicity' in Sri Lanka and to use this as a bench-mark study as it provides an evolutionary framework on the growth of ethnic consciousness in the community.

Ethnicity, in the anthropologist's parlance usually means "a proclamation of identity and worth in opposition to outsiders." (Norton 1983: 191). It is further described as "an ongoing process, a reaction to categorical ascription by others as well as a reaction to the creation and incorporation of symbols into the collective identity" (Staiano 1980: 29). It also involves "the search for identity, the formulation of some symbolic description of self". (Ibid: 30). This means in the first place that an analysis of Sri Lankan Malay ethnicity must concern itself with how the group perceives and defines itself.

This infact is a better starting point to understand the question of ethnicity of the present day Malay community. How do we define a "Malay" within the Sri Lankan context? Or to be more precise, to what extent can the Sri Lankan Malays be labelled as such?

Current Status

Currently, Malay is a term commonly used in that part of South East Asia to denote the people who live in the Malaysian Peninsula and the adjoining areas in the archipelago who claim a common Malay ancestry. Malaysian law also requires a Malay to be a Muslim by religion.(6) However, judging by their ancestry the so-called 'Malays' of Sri Lanka seem to have a greater claim to be called 'Indonesians' or 'Javanese' rather than to adopt the label of 'Malay' or 'Malaysian'. Nonetheless, the immigrants from the East have been recognised by their fellow citizens as such throughout the past. In Sri Lanka this term was commonly applied to those Muslim settlers who originated from the Eastern Archipelago and the Malay Peninsula (Hussainmiya 1976).

The local people know them as Ja Minisu (in Sinhala) and Java Manusar, (in Tamil) names indicative of their one time origin from the island of Java.(7) The Muslim-Moors, their co-religionists, most of whom are relatively more familiar with the Malays, refer to them also as Malai Karar (Malay people). The Malays are of course conscious of both ancestries when they refer themselves as Orang Jawa (People of Java) and Orang Melayu (The Malay People).

Depsite the recognition thus accorded to the Malays as a group, there exists no simple racial criterion by which an outsider may identify a Malay by any conspicuous physical characteristics. With rare exceptions, the Sri Lankan Malays are by religion followers of Islam, and because of this fact they have closely intermingled with the dominant Islamic group, namely the Moor-Muslims through intermarriages and cultural exchanges.(8) This had resulted in the loss of typical Malay features among the offspring of such marriages, and thus it is particularly difficult at times to recognise a Malay from a Tamil speaking Moor-Muslim, a fact which had been noticed as early as the beginning of the 19th century by Percival, a British Military Officer, who remarked that:

> "Although they (Malays) intermarry with the Moors and other castes particularly in Ceylon and by this means acquire a much darker colour than is natural to a Malay; still

> their characteristic features are so striking predominant."
>
> (Percival 1803: 115)

However, at present even such characteristic features of a Malay have become a thing of the past (although physical anthropologist may not always agree to the type-casting of physiological features of a given race). One might as well quote a distinguished Malaysian visitor to Sri Lanka who made the following observation on the contemporary Sri Lanka Malays.(9)

> "This is also the case with Ceylon. The only difference is that their (Malay) features have changed. They look more like Indians (the Kelings) than Malays and their language is strongly influenced by the Indian dialect. What is more they have lost touch with the Malay adat and custom, but still they call themselves Malays...
>
> But these (Malay) soldiers who went there without their womenfolk married into the family of the Indian Muslims. These Muslims were known as the Moors and after generations of intermarriages, it is hard to pick one from the other, Malays or the Moors, except when they themselves announce their racial identity".....

The Contemporary Local Malay Culture

In their culture too there exist no visible signs which can be characterised as distinctively 'Malay'. As Tungku Abdul Rahman once stated, Malay customs and traditions (as practised in the Malay peninsula) are almost entirely absent in the practical life of the local Malay people. Instead one finds that the dominant customs and traditions of the local Moor-Muslims have pervaded their cultural practices. In their form of dress and food they follow the pattern set by their countrymen, especially the Moors. For example Malay women invariably dress in Sari instead of the traditional Malay Baju and Kurung and the men, depending on their social

status, and on occasion a coat, while the ordinary Malay has adopted the sarong and shirt. Similarly the food habits of the Malays too are more akin to those of any other Seri Lankan family which invariably means rice and curry for the main meals. However, it is also true that the Malays are conscious of their traditional food preparations such as nasi goreng (fried rice) satay, and Malay kueh (cakes and puddings), but they are turned to only a very rare occasions and that too only among the well-to-do and fashionable Malay families. Likewise, in their wedding ceremonies there is occasional evidence of following Malay customs such as bersanding (the sitting together of the groom and the bridge on the bridal couch) etc., by some conscientious Malay families, but these are again rare exceptions to the rule. Some Malay families who are particularly conscious of their Malay-Indonesian heritage take pride in having retained versions of 'Malay/Indonesian' surnames such as Weerabangsa, Nalawangsa, Singa Laxana, Bongso, Tumarto, Bangsa Jaya, Cuttilan, Cuncheer, etc, whila a good number of Malays also bear the usual Muslim names (common to the Moors) and on this acount too they cannot be distinguished from the personal names adopted by their fellow Muslim-Moors.(10).

Thus the change away from traditional 'Malay' cultural patterns has been so marked that relying on any obvious cultural indicator to identify the local Malays may become misleading and irrelevant. Therefore, within the Sri Lankan context, one has to refrain from any attempt to define a Malay on the basis of any racial, legal or social criteria.(11) In this context the need to settle the question of Malay identity should rest largely on the basis of what we may call a self-social identification. It means that a Malay in Sri Lanka is one who considers himself or herself a Malay, functions as a member of and identifies oneself with the Malay society.

The Language of the Malays

This self-social identification as Malays, and of alignment with a Malay social system is reinforced by the continued use in the Sri Lanka Malay households of a kind of 'Malay' colloquial. The 'Malay' spoken in Sri Lanka is an offshoot of a 'Bazaar Malay' dialect introduced to the island along with the early Malay settlers. The local Malays take great pride in the fact that they speak their own language which they call 'Malay' (Bahasa Melayu), although

it is widely divergent from the standard language currently spoken in either Malaysia or Indonesia. This variety of Sri Lankan 'Malay' language is widely spoken in Malay homes. (Hussainmiya 1986).

To a very great extent, it is on the basis of this Malay creole, not to mention the Malays' emotional link with the countries of their origin in the East, that the Malay people of Sri Lanka continue to treat themselves as members of an exclusive racial community and inheritors of a common Malay heritage. In this respect they have much more claim for continuous affinity with their counterparts in the Malay world, unlike the 'Malays' in South Africa who have origins identical to the Sri Lanka Malays.(12)

The Sri Lankan Malays and The South African Malays

It may be useful at this juncture to compare the present status of these two groups of people as Malays in order to illustrate the degree of their relative self-identities. The Cape Malays are an ethnologically mixed people found mainly in the Cape Peninsula in South Africa. Their identity is based mainly on their following the religion of Islam. Of the 360,000 Muslim population in South Africa, who are categorised as coloured or Asian, the Cape Malays form a sub-group whose number today stands at nearly 182,000 (Du Plessis 1972:145). Originally the cape Malays are said to have belonged to the Javanese and Balinese section of the Malay race.

While the Sri Lankan Malays continue to take pride in, and emphasise their Malay heritage, the Malays in South Africa are for various reasons now in the process of shedding their Malay identity. Both groups had identical beginnings. They hailed from almost the same areas in the then Dutch East Indies and were introduced to these distant lands for almost the same reasons by the Dutch colonial authorities. Despite this commonality, a major difference exists between these two groups in the degree of continuing their special identity as Malays.

The Malays of Sri Lanka still speak their own language however remote may be their variety of language from the standard Malay spoken in the Malay world. By contrast, Malays of South Africa have ceased to speak their own language for quite sometime in the past (Mason 1861: 23).

The language of the latter is Africaans which is common to the other Muslim immigrants settled in South Africa. So much so, they are more often referred to by their religious identity i.e. as 'Muslims' or 'Mohammedans'. Furthermore, it appears that their rate of mixture with the other local races seems much more complete so that it is more natural to treat them as members of the Muslim group, i.e. as a religious group rather than as a racial group. As Du Plessis (1972: 145), on the Cape Malays mentions:

> At the Cape they become much diluted with other races, among them the indigenous people of South Africa and also Arabs, Indians, Chinese and Whites.

If not for this linguistic factor it is almost certain that the fate which befell the Cape Malay community would have extended to the small community of Malays in Sri Lanka and led to the decline of their self-identity.

II

While language remains a most portent symbol of the ethnic identity of the Sri Lankan Malays, there are other equally important factors which have influenced and reinforced their self-perception and feeling of belonging as members of a Malay race. As Chandra Jayawardena stated "the medium through which an ethnic group or ethnic identity exists is the consciousness of sharing a common culture derived from a set of traditions attributed to a common homeland. This homeland is not necessarily a fixed geographical identity. It is periodically redefined by historical events and present developments, so that for e.g. the creation of Pakistan and Bangladesh need not affect emigrant consciousness of India. (Jayawardena 1980:43). Similarly in the case of the Sri Lankan Malays, the creation of Indonesia, Singapore, Brunei, or Malaysia which once belonged to a single Malay world, have no relevance to their understanding of their past origins, unless the point of reference is to a larger Melayu Raya. The reality of their history is such that they share their ancestry from all these countries, despite the fact that the 'Indonesian' element had been preponderent among the very early migrants as mentioned earlier.

The Origins

When the Dutch colonial government introduced the Eastern nationalities to Ceylon, almost all major Indonesian racial groups were represented among them. Javanese, Bandanese, Bugis, Amboinese, Minangkabau, Balinese, Tidorese, Madurese, Sundanese, and not the least the Malays themselves. Since the city of Batavia (the present Jakarta) was built up from 1619, all these national groups had moved into the city, and formed their own Kampungs outside the Dutch fort (de Haan 1922: 474). They shared the benefits of colonial trading and subsidiary economic activities of the Dutch colonial establishment. During wars and emergencies faced by the Dutch in other parts of Asia, chiefly in Sri Lanka, the native settlers of Batavia were recruited in large numbers to fight the Dutch wars or to garrison Dutch coastal cities. The Batavians also supplied the most-needed manpower in Dutch colonial territories. It appears, however, that the early Indonesian migrants, drawn from such varied eastern races had shed their different identities even before they were introduced to Sri Lanka, and had evolved into a single identity through the use of the Malay language, which served in uniting all these different national groups.

In Sri Lanka, during nearly one and half centuries of Dutch rule from the middle of the seventeenth to the end of the eighteenth century, the Malay 'identity' can be said to have firmly evolved. In an entirely alien soil, confronted by strange religious and communal surroundings, the early Malay settlers had forged among themselves a strong unity, not only by the ties of a common language but also by their firm adherence to the religion of Islam. As far as Islam was concerned, they had the fortune to live side by side with the Tamil speaking community of Moors (whose history in Sri Lanka goes back to almost the same period when Islam became an official religion in the Malay/Indonesian region). However, as we shall see later, the Malay ethnic-consciousness came into sharp focus particularly when the Muslim-Malays tried to assert their individuality vis a vis the numerically superior Muslim-Moor community.

By the time the British took control of the maritime provinces of the island by defeating the Dutch rulers in 1796, the local Malay community had taken a true Sri Lankan identity. This is clearly borne out by the fact that the British documents of the early period clearly refer to the

community only by the appellation of (Ceylon) Malays, perhaps reflecting the true nature of its new identity. Robert Percival, an early British writer who wrote a descriptive account of Ceylon in 1803, for instance, devoted several valuable pages of his book to a description of the Ceylon Malays, alongside his description of the other local Sri Lankan native communities, such as the Sinhalese, Tamils, and Moors.

With the establishment of the British rule, a further element of Malays from abroad did join the already well-established Malay community in Sri Lanka. This time they originated from the Malay peninsula itself. As the British continued the services of the Ceylon Malay Regiment, first established by the Dutch, there was a big need for further recruitment of Malay military personnel. The local Malay population was not considered sufficient to fulfill this need. Furthermore, Frederick North (1798-1805), the first British Governor in Sri Lanka, formulated a deliberate colonial policy to increase the Malay population in the island, so that it could serve as a nursery for future prospective recruits to the military. He, therefore, sent special recruiting missions to the East, especially to the British Straits Settlements in Singapore, Malacca and the then Prince of Wales Island (Penang) to bring not only Malay men, but also Malay women and children to accompany them for permanent settlement in the island. He encouraged their arrivals by offering cash and remunerations for each and every Malay who was willing to make Sri Lanka their new home. It is said that the Sultan of Kedah also sent a good number of his subjects to be settled in Sri Lanka in deference to the British wishes. Until about the 1850's Malays from all over the Malay Peninsula, though not in large numbers, had settled in Sri Lanka through the special recruiting depots set up first in Penang and later in Singapore in 1840.(13)

The Sri Lankan Malay community thus constitute an interesting and fascinating conglomeration of people of Malay descent who hailed from right across the Indonesian Archipelago to the Malay Peninsula, whose claim to a common Malay ancestry therefore is indeed a strong one from the point of view of their broad origins from the Malay-Nusantara region in the East.

During the greater part of the 19th century, the Malay identity had remained very strong in the island. The Malays had maintained continuous links with the other parts of the

Malay world, especially with the British Straits Settlements. Just as much as new Malay blood infused from Peninsular Malaya by the immigration of Malay settlers, so the members of the Sri Lanka-born Malay community did enjoy at the same time the opportunity of visiting Penang, Malacca and Singapore and forged new links.

The British administration periodically sent recruiting parties of Sri Lankan-born Malays to these areas with a view to encourage the overseas Malays to come and join the military regiment. In fact, some members of such recruiting missions stayed long enough in the peninsula, at times more than two to three years at a stretch, to bring back not only new developments in Malay culture, but also Malay literary texts and manuscripts to be distributed in their community.(14) Thus in a situation by which extra-territorial links could be maintained with their homeland, there was little threat to the community's separate existence. In a way, even after the disbandment of the Ceylon Rifle Regiment in 1873, which had effectively put a stop to direct links with the peninsula, determined efforts by some members of traditional Malay elites in Sri Lanka, such as Baba Ounus Saldin (b. 1838 - d. 1906) prolonged some form of cultural links with Malayan archipelago until the very late part of the 19th century. His newspaper Wajah Selong, published in Colombo for instance, was in circulation in Batavia, Malacca, and Singapore, while he imported Malay books, journals and newspapers for Malay readership at home.(15)

During the period dominated by the traditional Malay elites, that is when a vigourous Malay classical literary tradition was still alive (until the end of the 19th century), the Malays in Sri Lanka can be said to have been very much conscious of their places of immediate origin. Thus for example, Baba Ounus Saldin often took pride in emphasising that his family had originated from Sumenap in the island of Madura in the East. Similarly, obituary notices inserted in the local press always mentioned the country of origin of the dead persons. For instance, The Ceylon Independent of 18th August 1910 referred to the late Subedar Tuan Assan as a native of Trengganu. Also the same newspaper of 11th August 1911 gave the origin of the late Jemidar (lieutenant) Tuan Rahim Cuttilan as Minangkabau. Thus, although the local Malays had been long naturalised in Sri Lanka, the country of their adoption, the memory of their birth places exercised a strong influence in their national identity with the motherland.

The situation began to change with the emergence of a new generation of Malays, educated and nurtured in the local and western traditions. Their memory began to fade fast, so that despite their consciousness of Malay ethnicity, they could not really focus precisely on the real areas of their origin, as their predecessors did.(16) On the other hand it is not only the community, but also their political social and cultural environment in the country had begun to change drastically, which required continuous adjustment with the socio-political reality on the part of the new generation of Malays.

III

If the Malay community, were to survive as a separate entity under changed socio-political circumstances in Sri Lanka after the early 20th century, what was required was not simply a consciousness of a separate ethnic - identity on their part, but also to develop an aura of ethnicity. This can be better explained by a reference to and comparison with the similar issues of ethnic consciousness among the people of Indian origin in Guyana and Fiji.(17) The former, having been cut off totally from their Indian homeland have lost their separate ethnic identity, whereas the Fiji Indians, through their continuous interaction with Indian sub-continent managed to maintain their own identity in a multi-racial environment. Thus in the case of Fiji Indians their Indian indentity is said to be a routine feature of their daily lives. They still adhere to the Indian marriage patterns, some distinctive form of religious worship and the retention (though teetering on the brink of extinction) of Tamil & Telegu as domestic languages. This is not the case with the Indo-Guyanese community, having lost or abandoned all but the most rudimentary aspects of traditional Indian culture. The Sri Lankan Malays are in this respect to be compared more with the Guyanese Indians, and can be said to have evolved an ethnicity in a multi-racial country while also managing to maintain their ethnic identity.

Constitutional Agitation and the Malays

The Sri Lankan Malay community is one of those societies in which ethnicity had manifested itself through a combination of political and historical forces. In order to

elaborate this aspect, one needs to be more familiar with certain local political developments in Sri Lanka in the first half of the 20th century. In Sri Lanka, after nearly a century of British rule, nationalist fervour had been on the rise, spurred by similar developments in the neighbouring Indian sub-continent. Social changes in operation in the second half of the 19th century resulted in a steady increase in the numbers of the elite, especially the English-oriented, who began to make increasingly political demands for sharing of power under the British colonial adminstration (Roberts 1977). Two developments could be discernible in the tactics for demands for self-rule on the part of the local nationalist-reformists. One was the nationalist wing, who endeavoured to accord greater prominence to the cultural patterns and religious traditions of the country; while the constitutionalists stood for a limited programme of political freedom, though not bargaining for a total disturbance of the main features of the British colonial hold on the island.

With the agitation for reform in the Ceylon legislative council on the increase, the British Colonial Administration began to give in little by little to more political self-rule (de Silva 1973: 407). First came the McCallum reform in 1910, which introduced the elective principle, but only for a small segment of the educated elite. But in the next reforms, initiated by Governor Sir William Manning in 1920, the British policy of divide et impera was at work by sowing the seeds of discord among the various local communities, so that they could be manipulated to perpetuate the British colonial interests. This began to be followed with ruthlessness. Governer Manning was the prime cause behind the torpedoeing of newly formed Ceylon National Congress (founded in 1919) with two years of its existence because he strived to maintain the British power without substantial concessions and he exploited existing or potential communal disharmony utilizing willing collaborators among minority groups. Instead of granting territorial representation in the legislative council, one of the main planks of Ceylon Nationalist Congress programmes, he chose to introduce communal electorates, ostensibly to adjust the balance in favour of minorities (de Silva 1972 and 1973).

If so, what effects did these communalist politics or the British policy of divide et impera have on ethnic self-perception within the tiny community of Malays? For the

first time the local 'Malay elites", though a miniscule minority, began to demand their own political rights in Sri Lanka, the country of their adoption, when they felt the opportuniy to claim a seat in the legislative council.

The agitation which followed and tactics adopted by the local Malay community leaders at that time brought into focus more sharply the strong feeling of ethnic-consciousness of the Malays. Their demands for political representation were not, however, directed against the larger interests of the ruling British colonial government, or against the majority community of Sinhalese, or the next minority of the Hindu-Tamils, who were in the forefront of the constitutionalist - nationlist agitations. The greatest concern of the minority of Malays was that their ethnicity and identity was getting over-shadowed by the numerically superior Muslim-Moor group who they accused as having tried to submerge other minority-Muslim groups in order to advance the Muslim community's interest on the basis of a common religious identity.

The period between 1920-1930 constitutes a watershed in the evolution of ethnic-consciousness among the Malays of Sri Lanka.They decided to form a political association for the first time, followed by a mass meeting of Malays in Colombo on 6th November 1921. The motive was to urge the British authorities to concede a Malay seat in the legislative council. The meeting organisers sent a massive petition to Governor William Manning urging him to consider the political rights of Malays. The memorandum stated among other things that:

> "The Malays of the island form a distinct and a separate community, still preserving the ancient habits, customs and their own language. They have separate places of workship preserved for themselves and their priests and elders are of their own community. They are members of the great Malay community, spread over the far East and counting some fifty million souls."(18)

The political-identity crisis for the Malays also brought in its wake a strong desire to revive the community's cultural past which had been in the process of

Tuan Brahanudeen Jayah
b 1890 - d 1960

A Malay Elite family group: 1930s
Seated in the centre is M.K. Saldin
State Counsellor 1931-36

Malay Progressive Union Members - 1936
Seated in the centre Dr. M.P. Drahman
Member of Parliament 1956-1960

slowly being discarded. This became very evident when the golden Jubilee of Colombo Malay Cricket Club was celebrated in 1922 on a very grand scale by the Malays. The club, having been one of the first of its kind to have been established (in the island in 1872), was designed to promote sports activities, especially the game of lawn-cricket among the members of its community.

The motive and need for a communal club among the Malays can be said to have been confined for almost a half-century to the field of sports activities. But during the golden Jubilee year of the Colombo Malay Cricket Club in 1922, the Malays decided to widen the scope of a communal association by founding an all Ceylon Malay association with the view to cater to the cultural, economic and religious needs of the community. This occurred one year after the formation of the Malay political association. The shift in the attitude and goal of the Malays at this juncture underlined their search for a meaningful ethnicity. In other words, the need for a political identity in a multi-racial polity reinforced their cultural-ethnic consciousness.

It appears that the community, which had taken its existence for granted, suddenly became aware of their great Malay heritage which they tried to explore and promote through the new association. Dr. T.B. Jayah, then a rising leader of Malays voiced his sentiments as follows during his Chairman's address at a mass meeting held on 22nd January 1922 at Colombo.

> "It was the fervent hope of the promoters of the meeting to deal with questions that vitally affected the social, educational and moral welfare of the Ceylon Malays.
>
> ...It was their desire to endeavour to study the history and civilization of the race to which they all had the honour to belong, and study its language and culture.
>
> ...It was deplorable that the Malays had little or no knowledge of the great past of their race, or the great civilization to which they were heirs.
>
> ...It was after listening to that discourse and also after a conversation with Dr. Ananda

> Cumaraswamy, who knows more about Malay institutions and Malay civilization than any Malay in Ceylon, that he came to the conclusion that it was a great pity that the Malay community and the Malay civilization should be more or less sealed book to the Malays of the country".(19)

The proceedings of the meeting, (published later in the All Ceylon Cricket Club Golden Jubilee Souvenir book, noted that T.B. Jayah's address, which lasted for one hour, held the audience spellbound. The Malays' desire to assert their special heritage has been pursued relentlessly since then by various means, by organizing public lectures on their history, by activating special committees to conduct archival research on their past to search and revive their original Malay Jawi, and Javanese script, to publish books in Malay and to conduct special classes in Malay language etc.

The grand celebration of the golden Jubliee of the Malay cricket club itself must be seen as a symptom of this new ethnic awareness. As part of the celebrations, the club committee undertook to publish a source book on the Malays, which later appeared in the year 1924. In fact the editor of the book felt slightly apologetic to publish articles on Malay history in a book purporting to be a record of a cricket club:

> "The articles (regarding Malays) may at first sight seem to be out of place in a book avowedly published in the interest of sports. But in view of the fact that no attempt has hitherto been made to place before the public authentic information in a collective form regarding the Malays in Ceylon, the complilers seek the indulgence of the kind reader for having availed themselves of this opportunity to present these articles in this book that their decisions will be received favourably."(20)

So long as the issues of communal electorates was persisting the Malay political association to which

references had been made before remained active. Thus when the special Donoughmore Commission began its sittings in 1927, calling representations from various communities to air their views about the proposed new constitutional reforms, the members of the Malay associations vociferously put forward their case for a separate seat for the Malay community. It is significant to note that some of them even went to the extent of disclaiming at this juncture any affinity with the Muslim-Moor community even on grounds of a common religion and the forgetting their long years of fraternal association.

Malay-Moor Dichotomy

For more than three hundred years of their existence in Sri Lanka, the Malays had closely interacted with their co-religionists, the Tamil speaking Moors who were nearly twenty times more in numbers, and whose ancestors had settled in the island long before the Malays.(21) During the early stages of the Malay migration to the island, the Moors proved to be their great allies, whose religious needs were met by the Moorish 'priests'. However, as the Malay community grew in numbers, and with the patronage extended by the colonial rulers, their religious needs were fulfilled according to Malay traditions. As the Malays claimed, special mosques for their congregations were set up in the Malay-majority townships, while they were ministered by special Malay Khatibs or priests (as styled by the Malays). The Malays also had their own religious Kitabs and legal texts written in The Malay language. In effect, the Moor-Malay dichotomy had been clearly engraved in the Islamic religious history of Sri Lanka. On the other hand, close neighbourhood living and common religious ties were mainly responsible for inter-marriages between the Moors and Malay communities, which had resulted in the dilution of the special physical characteristics of the Malay progeny as mentioned earlier.

Despite the outward unity on the basis of a common religion, ambivalence between these two communities, mostly at subjective level of community consciousness did persist and surfaced now and then when their respective ethnic interests collided.

The crystalization of Malay ethnicity of the 1920s caused by political agitation was the result of the

exaceberation of such differences found among these two fraternal entities. In the process, the Malays endeavoured to define their identity more clearly as the scions of an Eastern civiliztion rather than the inheritors of a Muslim civilization claimed by the Tamil-speaking Moors as the descendants of the Arabs, and the Indians. To a very great extent, Malay ethnic consciousness can be viewed then as the outcome of a issue related to a sub-ethnicity.

The British colonial government, though having deliberately intended to exacerbate the divisive issues of communal politics, particularly among the majority community, the Sinhalese, and the minority Tamils, least expected such tiny minority communities like Malays to take up their own rights. At best they tried to dump the Malays with the other Muslim groups in the island as part of a larger Muslim entity. In any case the right to send one of their own men to the legislative council was conceded to the Malays, and from 1924 to 1952 at least one Malay was chosen to represent the community's interests. In 1952, they temporarily lost the Malay representative in the parliament, but through the six special seats alloted for special interests in the Ceylon Parliament in accordance with the provisions of the Soulbary constitution of 1948, a Malay member was nominated to the parliament but only until 1965. Since that year, no Malay member was nominated even for a special seat. The Malays lost this privilege of a nominated member of the parliament with the introduction of a new constitution in 1972, which abolished both the nominated M.P. system and the upper house or senate.

The significance of Malay political representation in strengthening their communal identity in Sri Lanka cannot be underestimated. The community had always felt that its dignity as a self-identifiable group had been maintained by such a political arrangement. As an ardent Sri Lankan Malay Lawyer, Al-Haj M.S. Ossman, puts it:

> "As Muslims and with a distinguishable ethnic identity the Malays enjoyed recognition in the Legislature and thus recognition in the Legislature which is a recognition of human right gave the race the prestige and dignity of equality in expression in the most important forum of the country."(22)

The recent history of Malays in the island supports the central argument in this paper that a Malay-cultural ethnic consciousness had been boosted up by a recognition of their ethnicity at the political level. This is proved to some extent by the recent decline in the activities as well as the important place occupied by the All Ceylon Malay Association in the cultural and social life of the Malays as a result of lack of motivation at the leadership level.

Founded in 1922, the All Ceylon Malay Association (ACMA) had been a principal rallyig force of the community. It's headquarters is situated at Padang, in the heart of the Malay enclave of the Slave island area in Colombo, and its branches spread to other parts of Sri Lanka which have significant Malay population. The annual conventions of ACMA, in particular attended by Malay representatives from the urban and rural areas in the island and officiated by the local and foreign V.I.PS., used to be colourful and impressive. Three of its past-presidents, M.K. Saldin, (1931-36), Dr. M.P. Drahman (1956-60), and M. Zahiere Lye (1960-65) were elected to the legislature. In short, the ACMA had been a symbol of Malay ethnicity for more than three decades. Consequent to the loss of special Malay representation in parliament since 1965, ACMA seemed to have lost its hold on the community and had declined in importance as the single, vocal representative of community's interest. Earlier, ACMA had tried to initiate several ambitious projects to revive the ethnic symbols of Malays. For example, special committees were set up to collect oral and written literature; Also Malay dancing and music were revived. The Malays were urged to wear Malay dress, and cook their traditional meals and so on. Above all, ACMA played host to distinguished foreign Malay visitors, such as His Excellencies Tunku Abdul Rahman, Tun Abdul Razak (Prime Ministers of Malaysis), Dr. Ali Sastroamidjojo and Dr. Subandrio of Indonesia.(23) Furthermore, a six member delegation from the ACMA attended the Merdeka (Independence) celebrations in Kuala Lumpur on the special invitation of the Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman in 1962. In the previous year a youth delegation sponsored by the ACMA had visited Malaysia, especially to witness the installation of the Raja of Perlis as the Yang di Pertuan Agong.

The loss of importance of the ACMA as the main Malay organization during the last two decades, also symbolised perhaps the crisis in the ethnicity identity of the Malays,

so much so very recently there was an attempt even to change the nomenclature of their identity, i.e. the Malays into 'Indonesians'. In 1983, there was a move to form an all Sri Lankan Indonesians organization and to give a new identity to this community, but it was a short-lived attempt on the part of some misinformed Indonesian diplomats stationed in Sri Lanka.

The Recent Trends

The recent trends in ethnicity and politics in Sri Lanka have again awakened the ethnic consciousness of the Malays. The last major communal riots between the Sinhalese and the Tamils of July 22nd 1983 and the aggravated demands for separation and self-rule on the part of the Tamils, a largest minority community Sri Lanka, have spurred feverish activities on the part of all the communities to define their respective rights. The birth of a new umbrella Malay organization in 18 August 1985, SLAMAC, or Sri Lankan Malay Confederation (its Malay name being KORAMEL, Konfederasi Rakyat Melayu Langkapuri) can be seen as direct response to new political developments in Sri Lanka. It is the latest attempt to assert the political and social identity of the community. All Ceylon Malay Association, although functioning independently, is submerged in the new organization functioning both at the national and local levels. The preamble of SLAMAC constitution explains the main motive of this new focus of Malay ethnicity.

> "Desirous for the preservation of their cultural heritage and their existence as a race of Malay origin, the Malays as an integral part of the sovereign people of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka organized themselves into a bond of unity and solidarity with the ultimate aim of achieving justice, security, and prosperity for themselves and their descendants".

Prospects for the Future

Very recently there appears to be sudden upsurge in the ethnic awareness of the community. Firstly, there are the recent political developments following the 1983 ethnic

riots in Sri Lanka as referred to above. Secondly, there is the awareness and pride injected among the younger members of the community by knowledge about a vigourous cultural past of their forefathers, especially their contributions to a written Malay literary tradition. Thirdly, there is the successfully concluded 2nd Malay World Symposium held in Sri Lanka in August 1985, which brought to Sri Lanka a comparatively large number of Malaysian academics and literary personalities. The Malays in Sri Lanka, as a result, feel very encouraged to believe that they are a part of a larger Malay world and can still reach for help and understanding from among their Malay compatriots elsewhere to strengthen their own cultural life and revive their traditions. Several important resolutions were passed during the above mentioned symposium urging the Sri Lankan government to help preserve the cultural identity of the Malays, while appeal was made to Malay governments abroad to help them to revive their language and culture.

Hitherto, some individuals especially from the Moor community who belonged to partial Malay ancestry felt ambivalent to identify themselves fully with the community. The 2nd Malay world symposium seems to have wiped out such doubts, and now a pride has overtaken them to emphasise more their Malay roots. To that extent, Gapena (The Malaysian Writers' Federation)and its leader, Professor Datuk Ismail Hussein, must take some credit to have brought in this new consciouness and pride to the community, which gratefully endowed him with the title of Pendita during the symposium.

The future is therefore bright for the Sri Lankan Malays. If they can revive their language, culture and traditions while maintaining links with the Malay world as in the past their ethnic-identity can last for many more years to come. The Sri Lankan government and people do not mind it, because history has shown that the Sinhalese people have learnt to live and respect if not encourage, the individual entities of other ethnic groups. On the other hand, Malay governments and Malay communities abroad may also feel happy that they have rediscovered their lost cousins in the island paradise of Sri Lanka.

FOOTNOTES

1. It is a pleasure to express my gratitude to Prof. Madya Dr. Muhammad Kamlin of the Political Science Department

and Mr. Abdul Kadir Din of the Geography Department of the Universiti Kebangsaan who gave reflections of their own thought on questions of ethnicity while I was engaged in preparing this paper.

2. See Ceylon Daily News, 5th. August 1985 for a full text of President's speech.

3. Raden Sutomo, an Indonesian Nationalist campaigner, who visited Ceylon in 1930s and was a guest of the Malays wrote on the unique situation of the Malay community in his travel diary (due to be published by Prof. van de Veur of the Ohio University, Athens, U.S.A.)Also Prof. Ismail Hussein, Professor of Malay Studies from the University of Malaya who have made several visits to Sri Lanka has a great admiration to the identity conscious Malays of the island, and thought Sri Lanka should be the best place to host the 2nd. Malay World Symposium (held in August 1985).

4. The Mss. were accidentally discovered by me in late 1974 during a field work trip to Sri Lanka to study the Malay community, sponsored by the Australian Monash University. I happened to pass through Kuala Lumpur in May 1975 on the way back to Melbourne with a sample of my findings which naturally excited a number of Malay academics including Prof. Ismail Hussein, and Dr. Shaharil Talib. The discovery was widely publicised in the Malaysian newspapers including Straits-Echo August 2, 1975. For a neat report see Monash Reporter Australia, 1st. July, 1975.

5. This aspect is dealt with in detail in my unpublished Ph.D Thesis (submitted to Sri Lanka's Peradeniya University) titled Orang Regimen: The Regiment People: A study of the Malays of the Ceylon Rifle Regiments c. 1800-1873. A revised version of the thesis is due to be published by the UKM publisher soon.

6. The Federal (Malaysian) constitution defines a 'Malay' in article 160 (2) as follows:

"A Malay is a person who professes the Muslim religion, habituallly speak the Malay language, conforms to Malay (adat) custom and is a Malaysian citizen".

7. By comparison, the term Jawi or Jawa used by both the Cambodians and Arabs shows it is a generic term meant

to refer to Muslims in South-East Asia.

8. The early Dutch Tombos or Head-Registers maintained by the Dutch government (1656-1796) in Sri Lanka refer to a number of such marriages. Similarly I have found documentary evidence of mixed marriages in the Kadutams, marriage registers maintained by Sri Lanka Malay and Moor Khatibs (Some are in my possesion).

9. Former Malaysian Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman had many friends to count among the Sri Lankan Malay community. In fact during his early trips to London while he was a law student, he used to stay as a guest of a distinguished Malay family of late Dr. M.P. Drahman, as several other Malay dignitaries did in the early 20th. century. Even with his intimate knowledge of the Malays, he made this remark in his regular column of writing in (Malaysian) newspaper Star of 1st. June 1981.

10. The now defunct Ceylon Malay Research organization (CEMRO) headed by Mr. Murad Jayah had the names of the following Malay office bearers in 1970.

    Messers Murad Jayah, M.A. Sourjah, T.A. Dole, N.B. Saman, M.S.M. Akbar, T.H. Ismail, K. Girsy, T.G. Hamid, B.M.B. Bangsajayah, M.N. Weerabangsa CEMRO (News Bulletin) vol. 5, No. 4 Oct/Nov/Dec., 1970, p. 10.

11. Statutorily, it is the father's race which determine the racial identity of the children in Sri Lanka, especially for census and statistics purposes.

12. This is true only until the end of the Dutch rule in Sri Lanka at the end of the 18th. century. Subsequently, new blood from Malaysian Peninsula was added to the Malay population in Sri Lanka.

13. Since Singapore was made the administrative centre of the Straits Settlements in 1840, the recruitment Depot operating in Penang since 1800 was transferred there. Sri Lanka National Archives (S.L.N.A.) 7/536 Chief Secretary to Assistant Military Secretary No. 14 of 10th. January, 1840.

14. Kapitan Samsudin of Sri Lanka, sent on Military duty to Singapore in 1840s, completed copying several Malay

Mss. including Hikyat Inderaputera made available to him in Kampung Gelam, Singapore. Similarly Kapitan Sumarie who went to do garrison in duties in Pulau Labuan in 1869/70 brought back some valuable mss.

15. His newspapers Alamat Langkapuri (1869/70) and Wajah Selong (1895/99) contain many references to such import of Malay books. Some issues of Wajah Selong also give names of his sales agents in Singapore, Malacca and Sumatra.

16. Mas Jury Weerabangsa who wrote down his family tree in 1924 confuses, for example the location of Macassar and Sumenap in Madura. I intend to devote a separate study on the myth-making among the Malays based on Weerabangsa family tree.

17. My comparison is based on Chandra Jayewardane's fascinating article on the subject in Man, 1980. (See bibliography).

18. A copy of the original memorandum is in my possession. It is a printed pamphlet dated 23rd November 1921. The main signatories were B.N. Lathiff, as chairman and Z.H. Mantara, and T.Y. Amit as secretaries.

19. See Jubilee Book of the Malay Cricket Club, Colombo, 1924, p. 179.

20. Ibid., p. 2.

21. For a comprehensive study of the Moors of Sri Lanka see The Muslims of Sri Lanka: The Avenues To Antiquity (ed. M.A.M.Shukri), Colombo, 1986.

22. M.S. Ossman (1985), Symposium Dunia Melayu, souvenir book, no. page.

23. For details of foreign visitors to ACMA, see M.M. Thawfeeq B. Zahiere Lye pamphlet, Colombo, August 1985.

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APPENDIX

A MASS MEETING

OF THE

Malays of Ceylon

WILL BE HELD AT THE

PUBLIC HALL,

on Sunday, the 11th December 1927, at 3 p.m.

All Malays and those in sympathy with the movement are cordially invited to be present.

Mr. M. K. Saldin (President, All-Ceylon Malay Association) will preside

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Resolutions

1. "That the Malays of Ceylon assembled in this Public Meeting do resolve that it is essential to the welfare of the Malays that their interests should be represented in the Ceylon Legislative Council by a Special Representative of their own as in the case of other minority Communities in the Island such as Europeans, Burghers and Tamils.

2 "That this Meeting do confirm the resolution pessed at the Mass Meeting of the Malays of Ceylon, held in November 1921, at the Wekanda Mosque School to the effect that there must be a Separate Malay Seat in the Legislative Council and that they should not be included in the Muslim Seat along with the Moors, and further approve all the actions of the Malay Political Association since 1921—in that this Association has carried out the Mandate of the said Mass Meeting of 1921.

Leader Press.

2

EARLY MALAY CONTACTS WITH SRI LANKA

Any enquiry into the origins and history of the present day Malays of Sri Lanka has to begin with the establishment of Dutch rule in the island in the middle of the 17th century, as the documentary and other evidence available for such a study date only from that period. This does not mean however, that the Malay people had not been in contact with Sri Lanka before the advent of the Europeans. In fact, the island's relations with the Malays of the Malay-Indonesian archipelago date from ancient times. Their role in Sri Lanka's political history during the medieval period has given rise to controversy, following the researches of the late Professor Paranavitana on the relations between Sri Lanka and Malaysia.(1) It calls for a probe and review, albeit briefly, into the nature of these early Malay contacts to determine whether the present day Malay community has any direct connections with the arrival and settlement of the Malays which took place before the coming of the Dutch to the island.

Due to the alleged Indo-centricism which dominated the writings of some pioneer local historians, Sri lanka's early history was seen essentially as a continuation of India's heritage and consequently her relations and interactions with the Malay-Indonesian archipelago and other South East Asian countries were hardly mentioned.(2) The tendency to over-emphasise the Indian influence can be said to have been deep-rooted in the country's historical traditions, the chief sources of which are Mahawamsa and Culawamsa, the past chronicles of Sri Lanka. Having been written by Buddhist monks, these chronicles concerned themselves with the island's political and cultural relations with the home of Buddhism i.e. India.

Therefore, one cannot depend too much on the local literary sources to determine the extent of Malay contacts with Sri Lanka in the early period. However, there have been many suggestions by the scholars on the basis of archeological findings in South East Asia and other evidence that Sri Lanka and Malay-Indonesian Archipelago had maintained remarkable trade, religious and cultural relations in ancient times.(3)

The most important factor which brought Sri Lanka closer to the Malay people was her geographical position as

an island lying in the centre of the Indian Ocean commanding the entrance to the Bay of Bengal from the West. If one sailed directly eastwards from the eastern coast of Sri Lanka, the first country that one would meet after passing the Andamans would be the Malay Peninsula. Conversely, those who sailed westward from a port in the Malay Peninsula or the western coast of Sumatra would touch land on the eastern or southern coast of Sri Lanka.

The great antiquity of the ocean-voyaging by the Malay race is not an unfamiliar assumption among scholars.(4) Their navigational maturity, known to have been attained in the early Christian era had taken them as far as Africa, and made them the dominant race in the island of Madagascar. In all probability, they would have touched Sri Lanka which would lie on their route to the West.

One might wonder if such maritime contacts by the early Malay sailors gave rise to the port settlement of Hambantota in the Southern littoral of Sri Lanka. Although it is difficult to date the origin of this town, it must still be granted that the word Hambantota is clearly a derivation of the Malay word for boat, i.e. Sampan (a word of Chinese origin). It may be that the Malay Sampans had frequented this place in ancient and medieval times(5) (in Sinhala language the phoneme Sa and ha can be interchanged).

It is interesting to note that Dr. N. D. Wijesekera suggests the possibility of Mongoloid elements in Sri Lanka's population which he considers to have originated from the Indonesian islands.(6) In this regard, however, he also exercises caution "in classifying a population into racial units which is still one of the most delicate and difficult problems."(7) Furthermore, it should be pointed out that modern researchers in physical anthropology do not favour this typological notion of race.(8) Besides, as emphasised by Kennedy in the case of Peninsular India, claims of a Mongolian element have been based upon the misinterpretation of a few isolated physical characteristics. The same argument can also be considered to hold true in the case of Sri Lanka.(9)

Leaving aside this racial element, there may be some cultural elements which can be indicative of a strong Malay-Indonesian influence in Sri Lanka dating from ancient times. Not the least important of these elements is the presence of outrigger canoes in Sri Lanka. The Sinhalese word "oruwe"

meaning boat or outrigger seems to have been derived from the Malay-Polynesian 'Oru-u'. Tennent observes that the outrigger canoes and double canoes used by the Ceylonese are never used on the Arabian side of India but are peculiar to the Malayan race in almost every country to which they have migrated.(10)

The other cultural elements which are suggested by Wijesekera as evidence of Indonesian influences in Sri Lanka are the masks, the mode of wearing the lower garment in the Southern (Sri Lanka) and the Crocodile Cult.(11) Intensive research may be needed in these fields to prove anything substantial regarding the nature of the early Malay-Indonesian contacts with Sri Lanka. As it is one finds it difficult to postulate any theory of Malay settlements in Sri Lanka in early times with only the aid of this slender evidence.

The arrival of the Malays in Sri Lanka on which most of the literary sources agree took place in the middle of the thirteenth century with the invasion of Chandrabhanu, the King of Nakhon Si Dammarat in the Isthmus of Kra of Malay Peninsula. He landed during the eleventh year of Parakramabahu II (A.D. 1236 - 1270). About this incident Culavamsa states:

> "When the eleventh year of the reign of this king Parakramabahu II had arrived, a king of the Javakas known by the name of Chandrabhanu landed with a terrible Javaka army under the treacherous pretext that they also were followers of the the Buddha. All these wicked Javaka soldiers who invaded every landing-place and who with their poisoned arrows, like (sic) to terrible snakes, without ceasing harassed the people whomever they caught sight of laid waste, raging in their fury, all Lanka".(12)

It is well established that the term Javaka as used in the context of this choronicle actually refers to the Malays of the Peninsula.(13) Chandrabhanu's first invasion did not succeed and he tried a second time to attack the Sinhalese kingdom with the help of the soldiers brought over from South India.(14) The result of this second invasion also ended in disaster as the Malay king lost his life in the battle.

In between these two invasions the Malay king appears to have gained a foothold in the Northern part of Sri Lanka and became the ruler of the Jaffna kingdom. The Javaka King of Sri Lanka who is mentioned in the inscriptions of the South Indian Pandyan King, Jatavarman Vira Pandyan (A.D. 1235-1275) has been identified as Chandarabhanu.(15) In the Kudumiyamalai Prasasti, dated in Vira Pandya's eleventh regnal year, reference can also be found to the son of the Malay King (Cavakan Maindan) who had been disobedient for some time, made his submission to Vira Pandya, received rewards, and was restored to the Kingdom of Sri Lanka once ruled by his father.(16)

The Malays' association with the northern-most part of Sri Lanka in Jaffna appear to be further confirmed by some toponomical evidence from that region. Cavakacheri (Javaka settlement) and Cavakotte (Javaka Fort) are two of such names still in use and were mentioned in the Yalpana Vaipava Malai, the chronicle of Jaffna, which contain a reminder of this Java/Malay element.(17) Besides, Prof. Paranavitana refers to the Sinhalese works known as Kadaimpotas composed in recent centuries which give the territorial divisions in the three kingdoms of the island including Javagama (Java country) as a part of Pihiti rata.(18) Javagama has been identified as Jaffna. Thus an examination of these place names reveal some connection with the Malays whose presence in this area before the modern period is further attested by the information contained in the Pandyan inscription as shown above.

It is now generally agreed that the rule and role of the Malays in Sri Lanka's mediaeval history is confined only to this brief episode of Chandrabhanu's invasion. But this was not the case with Prof. Paranavitana. His researches on the relations between Sri Lanka and Malaysia showed far deeper involvement of the Malays in the political history of the island than what was known earlier. Thus in his Ceylon and Malaysia he states:

> "According to Ceylon History as at present accepted the invasion of the island by Chandrabhanu of Thambralinga were not related to any event which took place before or after them, and it was only in this period that the Malay people influenced the course of the political history of Ceylon. But, if a certain

> detail with regard to Chandrabhanu's attack on Ceylon, given in the Rajavali is properly understood ... it would appear that Chandrabhanu's attempt to secure the sovereignty of Ceylon for himself was the result of a long historical process and that the people from Malaysia had played a very important part in history of this island."(21)

The crux of this theory is that not only Chandrabhanu, but also the Kalinga dynasty which ruled Sri Lanka from the Capital of Polonnaruwa for about fifty years from 1184-1235 had originated from Malaysia. To prove his point he marshalled all evidence possible from the chronicles and literary sources and also much more elusive information from the so called inter-linear writings in the inscriptions. This is no occasion to discuss his conclusions on the Malay involvement in Sri Lanka's past. However, it must be said that he earned a lot of scholarly criticism for his Malaysian theories. Having made a detailed study of these criticisms, the writer also believes that there is no sound basis for Professor Paranavitana's ideas,(22) and moreover the conclusion made in this chapter is not going to be improved in any manner even if there is going to be a fresh undertaking of criticism of Paranavitana's theory.

Having discussed briefly the few possibilities of the early Malay contacts with the island, it now remains to be seen if any connection exists between the Malays (who came during and after the Dutch rule) and those who came here during the earlier centuries. The answer turns out to be negative after several considerations.(23)

First of all, it is not easy to determine in what numbers the Malay people had settled in Sri Lanka before the advent of the Europeans. For example, the number settled here might not have been sufficient to allow them to remain as a distinct racial element, and would therefore have been soon absorbed into the local population of Sinhalese and Tamils. The local literary sources and chronicles or other evidence belonging to the early period do not refer to a community of Malays as part of the population of Sri Lanka. Nevertheless, there had been much argument among scholars, again spurred by Paranavitana's researches as to whether the term Malalas, to be found in some Sinhala literary sources, actually refers to the Malay people.(24)

Secondly, the majority of the Malays who came and settled in Celylon after the arrival of the Dutch were Muslims. As a result, especially with regard to the present day Malays, their identity is primarily determined by their adherence to the religion of Islam. It is certain that the Malay settlers who came in the early period did not know Islam, as Islam is known to have begun spreading only since the fourteenth century in the Malay-Indonesian archipelago. Thus, the earlier settlers might have been absorbed easily within the other ethnic/religious groups in the island. Therefore, as Muslims, members of the contemporary Malay community will trace their origin only from those Malays who arrived since the Dutch rule began in Ceylon.

It must also be mentioned here that in the few indigenous Malay writings extant now, no reference has been made to any Malay ancestors of the earlier period.(25) The local Malay writers of the last century always maintained that the first Malays arrived during the period of the Dutch rule.

There has also been a suggestion that it was not the Dutch who introduced Malays for the first time to the island but that the Portuguese had already done so when they ruled the coastal parts of the island from 1506 to 1656. One H. M. Said, who wrote a brief article on the Ceylon Malays in JSBRAS made this suggestion as early as 1926.(26)

The problems that bothered Said was "why should they be called 'Malays' when they are in reality Javanese?" and he goes on to say that:

> "Meeting Ceylon Malays there one cannot help noticing that some of them have the features of Javanese while others look like Malays and their personal names incline to both Javanese and Malay. These give an impression that there were some pure Malays residing in Ceylon either before or later than Javanese referred to. It is more likely to be prior to the banishment of the Javanese. Otherwise they would not be called 'Malays'."(27)

He then argues that these Malays were brought to the island by the Portuguese. The attempt to extend the origins

of the Malays in Sri Lanka from the Portuguese period on the basis of this question of nomenclature is unacceptable, and an explanation has been given in the following chapter as to why they came to be called Malays. To strengthen his thesis further, Said quotes from a few passages of John Crawford's "History of Indian Archipelago" which is also the basis of Sirisena's belief when he concludes that the Malays were brought by the Portuguese from Malacca.(28)

Crawford says that when the former Sultan of Malacca attempted to attack Portuguese-controlled Malacca in the year 1523, Alfonso de Soysa arrived in time to relieve the city and after destroying many vessels and killing six thousand persons at that place (Malacca):

> "takes prisoners in such numbers as afford to every Portuguese six salves."(29)

Said takes the word 'six slaves' and finds its connection with a place called 'Slave Island' in Colombo where Malays have resided for many generations. He says that Alfonso de Soysa might have brought these so called slaves to Sri Lanka and placed them at a spot which was afterwards called 'Slave Island'.

The weakness of this argument is quite obvious. First of all, Crawford was writing at a much later date, and he did not mention what happened to these slaves in the end. Secondly, there is no other evidence to show that these slaves were brought to Ceylon and kept in the place came to be known as 'Slave Island'. As will be seen later, 'Slave Island' was created during the Dutch period, and its name derived from the fact that the Dutch confined the Company slaves in this area. Apparently it was Said's ignorance about the origins of the Malay settlement in this area which led him to find a connection between the Malays of Slave Island, and the slaves mentioned in Crawford's book. Thus it is difficult to accept on such a flimsy ground that the Malays were brought to Sri Lanka by the Portuguese long before the Dutch did.

Even though one may tend, on the basis of the evidence cited by Said and others, to reject the idea that the Malays were introduced to Sri Lanka by the Portuguese, the possibility of the arrival of the Malays prior to the

establishment of the Dutch rule should not be ruled out altogether. For, the Portuguese were in control of both the Port of Malacca and the coastal regions of Sri Lanka at about the same period in history. Thus through this connection people of Malay origins from the areas surrounding Malacca might have reached the Portuguese controlled areas in the island. Just as the Dutch government did in tie subsequent period, so the Portuguese too might have employed Malays in their service on foreign soil. Thus, for instance the Malays could have frequented the coastal towns of Sri Lanka as sailors. Further, the Portuguese needed such manpower to garrison their newly conquered fortresses and in addition they might have employed their Malaccan Malay subjects in various trades and occupations in the island. However, it must be granted that such conjectures cannot be supported with any positive evidence yet.

In the light of the above discussion, therefore, it is safe to conclude that the nucleus of the present day Malay community (and the Malays about whom this study is concerned) has to be found only among the Malay settlers who came during and after the establishment of the Dutch rule in Sri Lanka since the middle of the seventeenth century.

FOOTNOTES

1. See Paranavitana (1966) Ceylon and Malaysia, Colombo.

2. A classical example of this can be seen in G.C. Mendis's Early History of Ceylon, Colombo (1938) where one finds the division of North Indian and South Indian period of Sri Lanka's history prior to the advent of the Europeans.

3. For eg. Pierre Dupont (1959) was one of the first scholars to suggest, after examining the Buddha images from Western Java and one Amaravati school could have been actually traced to the influence of Sinhalese sculptural traditions.

4. See Wolters (1970); pp. 154. In his forward to Sirisena (1978) Basham states:
"That this was the case is virtually certain from the fact that prehistoric relations between Indonesia and

Madagascar are proved without question, by linguistic and other evidence. Such relations must have been made by sea, and it would be impossible for sailing ships of the type used by the early Indonesians to find their way to Madagascar without stopping in Sri Lanka or South India."

5. The present day Malay population of Hambantota is of fairly recent origin, when Lord North decided to settle them in 1800 to develop the salterns or Mahagampattu region.

6. Wijesekera, (1949); p. 45.

7. Ibid.

8. Kennedy, (1974); p. 79.

9. Ibid.

10. Tennent, (1859) p. 321.

11. Wijesekera Op.cit., pp. 45-46, However he has not given any details of these cultural elements.

12. Culavamsa LXXXIII; pp. 36-51.

13. Javaka, as used in the Sinhalese chronicles is to be taken as an ethnic term for Malay/Indonesian which is similar to the modern Cambodian 'Java' and applies to the Malays of the Peninsula as well as to the islands of Indonesia. Even in Sri Lanka the Moors used to refer to the Malays of both the Peninsula and the Indonesian islands by the common term 'Java Manusar'.

14. For details of this invasion see Sirisena (1971). However in the published version of Sirisena (1978) discussion on political contacts was omitted.

15. Sirisena; (1971) p. 14.

16. Nilakanta Sastri (1949); pp. 161-62.

17. Place names with this Javaka element both with a Sinhalese equivalent of Ja can also to be found in other parts of Sri Lanka. For eample a small town called Ja-ela meaning Java canal is situated in the

South Western Coast. But it is difficult to determine when and how this name came into use.

18. Paranavitana (1961); pp. 194-195.

19. Paranavitana (1966); p. 81.
"Not only the Kalinga Dynasty, but even the kings of the Kotte Kingdom who ruled during 14th & 15th century in Western Sri Lanka had Malay origins." Ibid.

20. For a study of the Kalinga dynasty see Sirima Wickremasinghe 'The Kalinga Period of Ceylon History' unpublished thesis (M.A. University of Ceylon 1956).

21. Paranavitana's claims that extracts from a number of chronicles which should prove extremely important to students of Sri Lanka and South East Asian history are inscribed in between the lines of several inscriptions including that of the slab inscription of Vesagiriya and the slab inscription No. 1 of Mahinda IV at the Abhayagiri monastery which has already been published. R.A.L.H. Gunawardena (1967); pp. 1-46 conclusively proves that there is no scientific basis for Professor's reading of these manuscripts and above all the interlinear writing claimed by him do not exit at all.

22. See especially R.A.L.H. Gunawardena (1967) for an apt and learned criticism of the Paranavitana theory.

23. It is however important to note that some members of the Malay community at present take pride in tracing their beginning fom the Malay Kings who ruled Sri Lanka in the mediaeval times; They prefer to contribute to Paranavitena's theory rather uncritically. For instance read the following text taken from a mimiographed pamphlet authored by a Malay, Mr. M.C. Mantara (1970), "The Sinhalese must consider the Malays as their Royal cousins, as many of the kings who ruled Ceylon in ancient times were of Malay and Indonesian origins."

24. For detailed discussion of the problem posed by the term Malalas see Sirisena (1971); pp. 14-20.

25. Especially, Baba Ounus Saldin in his Syair Faid al abad traces the origins of the Sri Lankan Malays only

from the period of the Dutch rule. (These local Malay writings are not fully catalogued yet. The work mentioned is available in the private collection of Malay Manuscripts owned by the writer).

26. Said (1926); pp. 266-268.

27. Said, Op.cit., p. 267.

28. Sirisena (1971), p. 42.

29. John Crawford, (1920), p. 494.

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3

ORIGINS OF THE SRI LANKA MALAYS

The first arrival of the ancestors of the present day Malay community was coterminous with the founding of European colonial rule in Sri Lanka. The Portugese first set foot in the island in 1506 A.D. It is safe to state that the nucleus of the present day Malay population in Sri Lanka arrived only after the establishment of Dutch rule in the middle of the seventeenth century. Archival material left behind by the Dutch in Sri Lanka, Netherlands, and Indonesia abound with references to early Malay arrivals from the areas of the present Indonesian archipelago which was under their control.

The Malays brought to Sri Lanka by the Dutch government can be broadly divided into two categories. The first group consisted of Indonesian political exiles (usually referred to as 'Staatsbannelingen' in the Dutch documents) as well as other section of deportees banished here by the Batavian government. The other groups consisted of all other categories of 'Malays' who came here to serve the Dutch in various fields, especially in the military establishment.

Political Exiles

It had been a Dutch practice to banish from the Netherlands East Indies rebellious rulers and princes as well as other recalcitrant chiefs and dignitaries when they posed a threat to their authority in the East. Outside the archipelago, Sri Lanka and The Cape of Good Hope had been the principal centres of banishment during the period between 1650 to 1770. Sri Lanka, however, seems to have been preferred by the Dutch authorities due to its proximity to the Indonesian archipelago, possibly because the cost of transporting the exiles could be kept down, and also that they could be speedily returned to their homeland should the Batavian government so desire. Being appreciably further away, The Cape of Good Hope seemed a more satisfactory haven for the more dangerous of those deportees. Indeed, when it was felt that some of the Indonesian political exiles sent to Sri Lanka might cause security problems, they were re-exiled to the far away Cape.(1)

Some of the earliest political exiles originated from the Moluccas and other lesser Sunda islands where Dutch

influence in the East had first taken root.(2) As a result of their involvement in the wars of succession that began in the late 17th century, several Javanese princes were exiled to Ceylon. The first batch included Pangeran Adipati Amangkurat III, known in the Javanese history as 'Susunan Mas' who along with his family and retinue was banished in 1708.(3) In 1722/23 another group of Javanese princes who had risen in rebellion against the reigning Susuhnan in Mataram were captured and sent into exile, among them the sons of rebel Surapati.(4) In 1728 Arya Mangkunegara, a brother of the king Pakubuwana was banished to the island to be joined in 1723 by Danuraja, chief Minister. A decade later his successor Natakusuma followed him.

Besides these Javanese nobles, many other eastern kings, princes and aristocrats spent their time as exiles in Ceylon. Some idea of the wide-ranging provenance of these princely exiles can be obtained from a Dutch document dated 1788(5) (The spelling of names is that of the original).

1. Selliya, widow of the Temenggong Sawangalie Sosoronogora.
2. Raja Bagoes Abdoella, Prince of Bantam.
3. Raja Oesman, King of Goa.
4. Pengerang Menan Ratoe Maharaja Moeda, the Crown Prince of Tidor.
5. Dinajoe Slaje, Widow of Pangerang Boeminata (of Jawa).
6. Temenggong Sosora Widjojo (of Jawa).
7. Raden Ariappen Panoelar, Prince of Madura.
8. Raden Pantje Soerinata (a brother-in-law of the above).
9. Temenggong Soetanagara, son of the 1st Regent of Palembang.
10. Raden Pantje Wierja Diningrad (Java).
11. Pater Alam (Sultan of Tidor).
12. Prince Major Batjan Sadoe Alam, Prince of Batjan.
13. Poegoe Kitjil Naimoedin, 2nd Prince of Batjan.
14. Carol Boni, King of Kupang.
15. Pangeran Soerija die Koesoema (of Java).
16. Panglima Raja Johansa, king of Padang.
17. Pengerang Adipati Mangkoerat (of Java).
18. Widow of the Regent Rangka Marta Widjojo (of Java)

Most of the above had members of their families living with them in the island. They had either accompanied the main exiles or had joined them later. A number of the younger members of their families had been born in the island. It appears that there must have been at least 200 members of this eastern nobility resident here in the later part of the 18th century, a significant number, taking into account that the whole 'Malay' population in Sri Lanka at the time did not amount to much more than 2,000.(6)

Not much is known about the life led by the exiles. Most of them lived in the four main coastal towns under the jurisdiction of the Dutch: Colombo, Galle, Trincomalee and Jaffna. In Colombo, the part of Hulftsdorf area where they used to live is still known among the Malays as Kampung Pangeran, where the Dutch Dissava of Colombo had his residence.(7) In the other towns, for obvious security reasons their residences were normally inside the Dutch forts. The more important exiles had armed sentries guarding their homes,(8) e.g. Sunan Mas, whose bodyguard of an ensign, a sergeant, and 24 soldiers were provided by the Dutch government for his residence in Galle.(9)

There were other security measures taken by the Dutch concerning these political prisoners. The Dutch political council in Ceylon stipulated (in accordance with a decision taken on 15th Nov. 1747) that all Javanese princes, when going out of their residences, must be followed by soldiers.(10) This decision seems to have been taken as a sequel to the escape of one Surapati (probably a son of the renowned Balinese rebel of this name who came to the island in 1722/23) from Trincomalee into the enemy king's territory in the Kandyan hills.(11) Moreover, the exiles were not allowed to correspond freely with their colleagues. In 1727 the Dutch authorities discovered an illicit correspondence between Sunan Mas's sons then resident in Jaffna, and the newly arrived exile, Sura di Laga from Java, who was kept in confinement in Trincomalee.(12)

Such restriction by the Dutch government in Sri Lanka could not have been intended to place a total restraint on the exiles from associating or mixing freely with each other. A policy of that kind would have required extra vigilance on the part of the Dutch authorities especially in the case of those who were allotted to live in restricted areas. The overall impression one gets, especially towards the end of this period is that the exiles had indeed

interacted closely among themselves. Marriages had been contracted among them while in the island. For example, Batara Gowa Amas Madina II, the king of Gowa (in Macassar) who was exiled here in 1767, married one Habiba, a 'Malay' lady of noble birth, and their daughter Sitti Hawang was given in marriage to a Javanese prince Pangeran Adipati Mangkurat.(13) It is almost certain that social events within the exiled community such as births and deaths requiring group participation must have brought its members into close contact with one another on various occasions. Furthermore, some exiles were in the paid employment of the company, having been given command of eastern soldiers serving in the island(14) and thereby enjoyed more freedom to move about within the community. It must also be mentioned here that the status of political prisoner seems to have been imposed only on the main exile of each family. For example, when Pangeran Purbaya was permitted to be accompanied by his bride, the Dutch authorities made a point of clarification that she was not be treated as a political prisioner.(15) This means that, unlike the main political prisoners, the other members of their families must have been at liberty to associate with each other.

In any case the Dutch had little to fear from the exiles; their experience showed that the once-feared national rebels from Indonesia when sent into exile became subdued and weak due to years of isolation and unsavoury living conditions. In fact, the Batavian government received from time to time pathetic letters from some of the exiles, in which they even expressed their willingnes 'to wet the feet of the Dutch Governor General with tears,' imploring him to use his right of pardon and to allow them to return to their homeland.(16) Batara Gowa Amas Madina II is known to have sent as many letters as possible to his brother Madiuddin, his successor to the throne of Gowa, urging him to mediate for his release with the Dutch authorities in Batavia. Sultan Madiuddin's many attempts to gain the release of his brother never materialised, and he ultimately relinquished his throne in despair.(17) The unfortunate King of Gowa was left to die in Ceylon in 1795 after thirty years of life in exile.(18)

The life in banishment became excessively burdensome due to the poor living conditions to which these aristocratic political prisoners were subjected to while in the island. For their subsistence, the Dutch Government had provided monthly allowances of cash in rix dollars and some

provisions which included rice, pepper and dried fish. The amount allotted to each exile was determined according to his rank, importance and the size of the family.(19) Some were given land-grants to maintain themselves.

The numerous and incessant complaints received by the Dutch authorities from the exiles regarding the meagerness of their allowances demonstrate that they ware undergoing immense difficulties in coping with their basic daily needs and appear to have often been in distress. Most exiles had to support large families living with them in the island as well as to pay for a number of servants from the paltry income received from the government. Unable to support themselves with this income, some are known to have had recourse at times to other desperate means to raise funds for their survival. Thus in 1724 it was reported that several ladies of the exiled Javanese noble families had sold their personal belongings and jewellery to some local people in order to maintain their families.(20) When the exiled king of Gowa died in the island in 1795, his wife Habiba had to borrow extensively to meet his funeral expenses.(21) The destitute nature of these exiles could be seen further from the fact that when the British government took over the Dutch possessions in Sri Lanka, the payments to them came to be administered under the Department of Orphans and Charitable funds.(22)

Despite all the hardships they had to face, the political exiles in Sri Lanka were better off at least in one respect. Unlike their counterparts who ended up in the Cape of Good Hope, the former did not have to live in total isolation in the island. They had the good fortune of being able to fraternise with the community of Muslim 'Moors',(23) which had been in existence in Sri Lanka for well over eight hundred years in the past. Although the details of the nature of mutual contacts between these people cannot be documented it is almost certain that the presence of such a strong Muslim community in the island made the life of the Indonesian Muslim political prisoners easier, especially in their religious and cultural pursuits.

According to Ricklefs,(24) there is evidence to identify the existence in Sri Lanka of a sophisticated Javanese colony.(25) It is he who points out that the exiles when returned to Java had enhanced prestige, particularly in Islamic religious affairs. Thus Raden Adipati Natakusuma who was banished to Ceylon in 1743, when returned later to Java

in 1758, was made chief of the religious officials in the court of Yogyakarta.(26) Likewise, one Wirakusuma who was born in Sri Lanka to a Javanese exile became the leader of religious group in 1781 and was also appointed as an advisor to the Prince of Yogyakarta.(27) It is difficult not to assume that such religious leadership by the exiles in their own country was at least partly due to their competent training in Islamic theology during their time in Sri Lanka. Indeed, there is evidence that at one time the Indonesian exiles had become spiritual pupils to two Islamic teachers of Sri Lanka whose names are given in The Javanese chronicle Babab Giyanti as Sayyid Musa Ngidrus, and Ibrahim Asmara.(28) The same Javanese chronicle also gives an account of the wife of Pengeran Natakusuma describing her husband's religious experience in Ceylon. She told King Pakubuwana III that the exiles became students of the above named teachers whose magical powers achieved wonderous things,(29) where, for example, at the great recitations of the Quran each Friday, Javanese fruits and delicacies were magically transported to Sri Lanka. She also related how the merchants and ship captains from such places as Surat, the Bengal coast, and Selangor, had visited these teachers. Despite the legendary nature of these tales, it is clear that such religious meetings did take place in the local Muslim community. It appears that these meetings were often held secretly for fear of prosecution by the Dutch government in Ceylon which had gone out of its way to ban such public Islamic religious ceremonies in the maritime territories, forbidding 'Yogis' and 'heathen medicants' from leading such gatherings.(30)

Because of such close contacts between these two groups of Muslims in the island Ricklefs is perhaps right in questioning whether the Dutch, who were constantly worried about the anti-European potential of Islam, were wise to have selected Sri Lanka as a place of exile for these Indonesian political prisoners.(31) Indeed, the local Dutch authorities seem to have been concerned about this fact when the Moors were suspected of assisting some high-ranking Javanese prisoners to carry out secret correspondence among themselves.(32) Moreover, the island was situated directly on the route of pilgrimage from Indonesia to Mecca, as well as on the well-established trade route favoured by the Muslim traders who came to Sri Lanka for business. Whatever the case may be, the Dutch, due to the peaceful nature of the local Muslim population, need not have worried much about any possible military threat or sabotage to their

authority arising from the combination of these two sections of Muslims living in the island.

Convicts

Apart from the princely exiles, a host of others from all ranks of life including lesser 'Malay' chiefs, petty officials and commoners had been deported by the Batavian government to Sri Lanka.(33) Many had been convicted on criminal charges and their treatment and status in the island seem to have been determined by the severity of crimes committed by them at home. Those convicted of violent crimes were usually kept in chains and condemned to do hard labour during the period of their punishment.(34) A section of the deportees, not kept in chains, but committed to prison cells, also performed hard-labour in the service of the Company. Others were allowed to remain free and earn their living either by performing services to the company or engaging themselves in some form of handicraft.(35) Sometimes, these 'criminal' deportees were recruited to serve in the native army.(36)

It is difficult to assess the number of such 'convicts', but throughout the period of the Dutch rule in Sri Lanka there was a steady inflow of this class of deportees from the eastern islands. In 1731 alone there were 131 of these convicts serving the Company in Sri Lanka,(37) not to mention the others who served in the military and those who were set free and remained in the island.

It is almost certain that the deported 'convicts' formed part of the early Malay population in the island. In 1782, for example, the Dutch government decreed that those deportees who had been taken into the service of the Company must remain in Ceylon.(38) Further, in the same year it was decided that, except the branded criminals, other deportees could be enlisted into the native army.(39) Thus, a good part of these convicts had the chance to mix up with their fellow easterners in the island. Those who were set free had the opportunity to raise families here and settle down permanently. In this sense, the 'Malay' community of Sri Lanka can be said to owe its origins partly to these 'Malay' convict settlers, a fact which has not been mentioned in the general statements on the origins of the island Malays, whose ancestry has always been attributed to either the 'Malay princes' or the 'soldiers'.(40)

Soldiers

The largest numerical group in the early Malay population consisted of people who came to make up the bulk of the Dutch garrisons on the island throughout the period. The Batavian government despatched to the island yearly contingents of troops apart from the reinforcements sent in times of emergencies and wars.(41)

From as early as the middle of the 17th century when the Dutch began attacks upon the Portuguese fortifications on the island the 'Malay' troops are said to have been present on the side of the Dutch army. These troops took part at the storming of Galle by Admiral Coster in 1640 and also during the siege of Colombo in 1655/56, the Malays were given the pride of place at the storming of the Fort.(42) In 1657, a force of Malays under their own Captain Raja Talella accompanied Rycklof van Goens in the Dutch expedition against the Portuguese stations on the Malabar Coast and subsequently took part in the capture of Mannar and Jaffna in 1658.(43) Malay soldiers are frequently mentioned in the Dutch wars against Kandy.(44)

Many eastern national groups were represented among these 'Malay' soldiers. We find references to Amboinese, Bandanese,(45) Balinese, Bugis, Javanese, Madurese, Sumanepers and Malays. During the early attacks upon the Portuguese, Amboinese and Javanese soldiers had been used by the Dutch authorities. According to Christopher Schwitser, a Swiss traveller who visited the island in the 1680s Amboinese soldiers were kept in the Dutch garrison at the fort of Sitawaka.(46) In 1737 three companies of Balinese troops were despatched from Batavia to Ceylon on the request of the Governor van Imhoff to prepare for war against the Kandyans.(47) Malays and Buginese were sent to reinforce native troops in Ceylon in 1761,(48) and in 1788, Madurese and Sumanepers were sent to garrison Mullaitivu in the eastern coast.(49) Thus it can be seen that almost all the major ethnic groups from the region of the eastern archipelago were represented among the soldiers whom we have chosen to refer to by the general term 'Malays', an appellation which will be discussed in more detail later.

Little is known about the life and other activities of these soldiers apart from Christopher Schwitser's description of a group of Amboinese soldiers who were stationed at the Dutch camp of Sitawaka(50) in 1680. His

description deserves to be quoted in full, as it throws light on several important aspects of the early 'Malay' solidiery in the island.

> "1680, 9th February.
>
> ... We sent to relieve the company that was at Sittawack... It is situated upon a rocky ground; near to this over the river, stood heretofore the King of Sittawack's palace, ruined since by the Portuguese. The Fort is about four hundred paces in circuit... Here is also continually kept a company of Amboinese in the Dutch service. Their lieutenant was called Alons, and was of Royal blood. By day they lie out of fort in a whole street together, their wives with them: But at nights they are as obliged to be in the fort as many of us. They are very nimble and active at leaping and fencing. They never have but little beards, and behind in their necks they have a growth like a wen.
>
> Their pay is, for a lieutenant 24 rix dollars a month, an ensign 16, a Cornet 8, and a Private soldier 5 all paid in money. The Cingulayans are mightily afraid of the Amboinese, far more than of the Europeans; For they are in part of the true cannibal sort. They wear musquets and short swords. Besides their own language, they generally speak Malaysh, Cingulaish, Portuguese and Dutch. They love dice and card playing excessively, and sundays they spend in cock-fighting, so that many become poor by gaming. When they have lost all their money they make from thin rotting all sorts of lovely baskets, and such. When their monthly pay comes into their hands again, each pays first his debts, and what is left they put to the venture by dice and cards, and so continue till one of them has all the money himself. Also

> it is much if the wife be not stripped of her ornaments of gold, silver and silks. The wives, which in part are Amboinese, in part Singulayans, and Malabarians may say nothing against this, but when the man games away their little property, they must nourish him and his children as well as they can through the month and await his better fortune at gaming."(51)

Reading the above description of the Amboinese soliders, one can see that many important facts are clustered together in it. In fact, it may also be taken as a general referance applicable in the case of the other Malay soldiers as well, who were serving with the Dutch army during this period.

Firstly, it is stated that the Lieutenant of the Amboinese was of Royal blood. It is difficult to trace the identity of this person who was called Alon, but the Dutch had employed some political exiles of the Malay Royal families as unit leaders of the Malay army in the island. In 1764, Pangeran Singasarie, who belonged to the family of exiled Sunan Mas, the Javanese King of Mataram, was stated to have been in charge of a regular army unit for some time.(52) Temenggong Sasara Negara, another Royal political exile, had been appointed as the Commander of the Company of the Free Javanese which was formed in 1763.(53) The military leadership of the Royal exiles seems to have ensured better discipline and loyalty on the part of their Malay soldiers.

Secondly, Schwitser relates that the wives of these soldiers lived together with their husbands in the vicinity of Sitawaka garrison but outside the fort, where the latter had to return during night time the rest of the Europeans troops. It is not common for soldiers in the garrisons to have their wives along with them, but it is of interest to note that these wives of the Easterners used to follow their husbands even to the battle front. This had created endless problems for the Dutch authorities who rarely succeeded in refraining these women from accompanying their husbands who had to leave their stations to fight the enemy. During the Dutch Kandyan wars, and the period of inland rebellions, it was not uncommon to see the whole families of the Malay soldiers become mobile, so much so that a Dutch Commander lamented in 1764 that "the trouble is that the Javanese have such a large train of women and gear, I have told them that

they must leave these behind or pay coolies, but most of them act as coolies themselves instead of bearing arms."(54)

Thirdly, that the Sinhalese were afraid more of the Amboinese than the European troops, while it may not have been a correct assessment but can be taken as reflection of the fighting disposition of these men and also an indication of the frequent encounters between these men and the local Sinhalese during times of rebellion and the Kandyan wars. The Eastern troops were of course well acclimatized to the tropical conditions of the island as they came from countries with similar climatic and geographical conditions.

It was quite easy for these troops to penetrate through the jungles to meet the Sinhalese armies, and even to engage the enemy troops in personal combat with their traditional mode of warfare, using krisses and short-swords.(55) The Kandyans are known to have generally employed a guerilla-type of warfare, which was more suitable to the local terrain. Perhaps this was one of the reasons why they were not subdued by either the Portuguese or the Dutch powers. The details of the tactics adopted by the Dutch in fighting the Kandyans are little known, but it is possible that the eastern troops were in the forefront of the Dutch army during their attacks upon the Sinhalese troops of Kandy, and thus with their ferocity they struck terror in the hearts of the local people.

Fourthly, there is an important point about the languages spoken by the Amboinese as given by Schwitser. This can be taken as an proof of the linguistic situation of the early period. However, this aspect is too important to be commented upon here, and is discussed in the paper on the Malay language in Sri Lanka (See Chapter 5).

Fifthly, it is mentioned that the Amboinese were very fond of gambling and as a result they were eternally in debt. This habit of gambling among the eastern soldiers caused the Dutch authorities some problems. It was brought to the notice of the government that the soldiers used to borrow money from respective captains of their companies and when they were unable to settle their debts deserted their ranks and disappeared in the Sinhalese countryside.(56) As a result, the Dutch government had to prohibit the practice of money lending to the soldiers.(57) Schwitser also notes in this regard that when soldiers had become poor by gaming they had made all sorts of lovely baskets from thin rotting

(rattan). Clearly, this is the earliest reference to the rattan-weaving which had remained another traditional occupation among the Sri Lankan Malays in the past.(58)

Finally, Schwitser's reference to the wives of the Amboinese soldiers is interesting, as it shows in the first place that the eastern soldiers, when embarked for Ceylon, brought their womenfolk along with them. It is not known in what proportion such women from the East-Indies came to the island during the Dutch period. Later on the British authorities are known to have actively encouraged the foreign Malay recruits to bring along their whole families to settle down in Ceylon in order to build up a strong Malay colony so that a steady supply of recruits could be obtained locally. Further investigation is necessary to confirm whether the Dutch also followed a similar policy. In any case, the number of women arriving from the East Indies was limited, as a good proportion of 'Malay' soldiers had to find their wives among the local women from the Sinhalese, Tamil or Moor communities.(59) It appears that the Malay Muslims preferred to marry the local Moor women because of their common religious background. A number of such cases of intermarriage between the Malays and the Moors is reported in the Tombos,(60) compiled by the Dutch.(61)

Slaves

Apart from the convict settlers, soldiers and political exiles, the early Malay population also owes its origin, albeit in a small way, to slaves sent now and then by the Batavian government. Most of them originated from the Moluccas, the lesser Sunda islands etc., and were forced to serve for their life-time in the Dutch government establishments. Some rich private individuals also owned slaves from the Eastern islands.(62) Furthemore, a number of slaves served the Indonesian political exiles in Ceylon. There were occasions when slaves owned by the Dutch government gained their freedom by joining the native army. In 1763 a 'Malay Company' was formed out of deportees and 31 slaves who earned their freedom.(63) Similarly, when van de Graaf made secret preparations to invade the Kandyan kingdom in 1781, many slaves were set free on condition that they would join the expedition.(64) It is almost certain that as free men they raised families like the other Easterners, settled in the island, and merged into the early Malay community.

Free Malays

As time went on there grew up a sizeable population of Free Malays, or as the Dutch preferred to call it, the Free Javanese, particularly after the middle of the 18th century. These 'Free Javanese' were in part former soldiers who, upon their discharge had settled in the island and others who engaged themselves in non-government occupations. The later category included also many descendants of the political exiles. Although evidence relating to the non-military occupations of the early Malays is hard to come by there were certain fields, i.e., such as gardening, rattan weaving, etc. in which Malays are known to have specialised as indicated in the early British reports.(65) According to Bertolacci, some Malays were engaged in petty trade by collecting and selling arecanuts in the inland areas.(66) Perhaps the donor of land in Wekande (in Colombo) to build a mosque in the year 1783, who was called Pandan Balie, a free 'Javanese" must have been one of those small traders who was able to earn enough to make a gift of land to his community.(67) At the lower level, a number of Malays were employed as domestic servants.

The civil status of the 'Free Javanese' under the Dutch rule in the island was the same as that of the Moors and Chetties who, as members of foreign communities, were compelled to perform Uliyam services for the government.(68) However, the political exiles and the Malay soldiers were exempted from such service,(69) the former because of their Royal dignity, the latter because of their position as servants of the Company. Since the number of the Free Javanese was small at the beginning there was no special organization required to form them into guild to extract this Uliyam service, and a Moor chieftain was appointed to look after their affairs. However in 1769, as their number increased, the Free Javanese were organized into a separate unit and this time a Royal Javanese exile, Sosoro Wijoyo, was appointed as their Captain.(70)

Early Population Figures

The total number of soldiers of course varied according to the military needs of the Dutch authorities. Thus in 1764, in anticipation of war with the Kandyan King they had to build up their military reserve by recruiting men by all possible means. The number of eastern soldiers increased

rapidly from about 800 to 2,408 in that year, presumably this was their highest total in the Dutch Army serving in the island.(71) It appears that under normal conditions, the total number of Malays in the Dutch army fluctuated around 800 divided into 10 companies.(72) As mentioned earlier, new batches of recruits were sent now and then from Batavia to replace discharged soldiers. All these discharged soldiers did not stay back in the island after their period of service. Some were sent back to Batavia, but it is not clear on what basis this was done.(73) It must have been difficult for them to leave the island after having lived here for so long and especially after having built up family ties in the local community.

A more definite figure of the Malay soldiers in the Dutch service is available for the years 1795/96, when the British began attacks upon the Dutch fortifications in Sri Lanka. According to the figures quoted by Colonel Stuart, the British Commander who led the main attacks, there were probably around 1,400 Malays serving with the Dutch army. Colonel Stuart gave the numbers of the Dutch troops who surrendered to the British in Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Colombo. Thus in Trincomalee, there were 373 Malays (284 in Fort Frederick, and 89 in Fort Ostenberg) who surrendered to the British and in Colombo there were two battalions of Malays consisting of 880 men.(74) In Batticaloa, Colonel Stuart was informed that there had been 133 Malays, but most of them had escaped to inland areas on the eve of the British arrival at that Fort.(75) However, it must be borne in mind that all these Malay soldiers did not belong to the regular army. Anticipating the British attacks, the Dutch had mobilised a number of civilians to their army units in the important coastal towns of Colombo, Galle and Trincomalee etc. The Malays seemed to have been their major target, and in fact, in 1785 the Dutch had decided to disband the regiment of Free Moors, and in their place recruited the local Malay civilians.(76) Thus, on the figures given by the English Colonel, it is possible to estimate approximately the total number of Malay population at the tail end of the Dutch period.

Thus, going by the number of Malays given in Stuart's despatch, i.e. 1,400, we may on the safe assumption that at least half of them had their families with them, arrive at an approximate figure of 2,200 as the number of Malays resident in Ceylon at the end of the 18th century. This does not, however, include another 200 or more members of the exiled Royal families.

The Term 'Malay'

Having analysed the composition of the early Malay population, it remains to be seen at what stage a real Sri Lankan Malay community emerged from an ethnic mosaic of this heterogeneous group of easterners and what factors contributed in the formation of such a community within the Dutch period. By the time the British had arrived in the island in 1795, the Malays appeared to have been on a firm footing in the island, so much so that the English administrators, with very few exceptions, identified and referred to them only as Malays. Some British officials had even come to regard the locally born Malays as a group much superior to the new immigrants recruited to the regiment from the Eastern Islands.(77)

In the first place, officially as far as the Dutch are concerned a common recognition was accorded to the early Malays on the basis of the fact that all of them came from the East, hence the term 'Oosterlingen' collectively. A modern Dutch author defines this term 'as referring to those people who originally came from the coastal regions of the Eastern Sea.(78) C.R. Boxer states that this term stands for those Indonesians from the Moluccas, and the lesser Sunda islands etc., known collectively as the Great East.(79) It appears that in the Sri Lankan context, the Dutch usage of the term "Oosterlingen' has been applied to any person from the Malay Indonesian archipelago including the Javanese.

Next to 'Oosterlingen', another collective term used in the Dutch sources, particularly after the middle of the 18th century to refer to these eastern communities, was 'Javaans' (Javanese). Originally it seems to have been applied only to the ethnic Javanese who are only one of the different groups of Easterners which included Amboinese and Bandanese and others. Does this mean that the Javanese population had outnumbered the other eastern element by this time? In one sense, this shift of emphasis from the 'Oosterlingen' to 'Javaans' can be taken as a significant pointer to the direction in which the early Malay community had developed during the Dutch period. One gets the impression that the rest of the eastern groups had been absorbed by the ethnic Javanese community at the close of the 18th century. But who were these 'Javanese"? Why then did the British keep on referring to these people as 'Malays' when they first came across them in 1795?

The diverse national groups of eastern soldiers such as the Amboinese, Bandanese, Bugis, Javanese and others, who came to do military service in the island, were in the main former residents of Batavia and did not always come directly from the different geographic regions of the Archipelago as their names suggest.(80) Since the founding of the Dutch fort city of Batavia in 1619, a number of such nationalities are known to have settled in the ourtskirts of Batavia.(81) De Haan shows in his Oude Batavia that there were separate 'Kampungs' for each of these Nationalities with their own social set-up and organizations, religious places of worship, headed by their own chieftains.(82) These settlements had taken place without much interference from the Dutch government in Batavia. However, when it came to the question of finding men for their native army, the inhabitants of Batavia proved to be an ideal recruiting ground for the Dutch. It is known that when mass recruitment of soldiers did take place during the protracted Dutch wars in central Jawa in 1750, on the Malabar coast in 1717, and in Sri Lanka in 1763, these outer Kampungs of Batavia became almost depopulated.(83)

Thus it seems likely that the majority of the early Malays brought here to serve in the native army had Batavia as their point of origin. If this theory is accepted, it is also to be granted that from the very beginning of their arrival in the island they had a common group identity among themselves as a result of assimilation known to have already taken place among the various ethnic nationalities from the archipelago which had settled in Batavia.

One of the main factors which assisted the residents of Batavia to gain a distinct group identity was the simplified Malay language, alias 'Batavian Malay' which they adopted as their main medium of communication. Vlekke rightly points out that:

> "Gradually this heterogeneous population developed into a new Indonesian national group, distinct from the Sundanese of the West and the Javanese of the East Java and with a simplified Malay language, the lingua franca of the Archipelago as their native tongue."(84)

So it is these 'Neo-Indonesians' who formed the nucleus of the original Malay population in Sri Lanka. Their group identity must have received an added boost once they came to live among alien people and in strange surroundings.

Thus in every case, the formative period for the locally rooted society can be said to have begun when immigrants settled in Ceylon, formed alliance with indigenous women (in addition to the 'eastern' womenfolk brought to the island) and reared children who were taught to identify themselves as 'Malays'. Marriage among these mixed-blood descendants of immigrants led eventually to the development of a fairly stable society. This process must have begun with the first few generations of 'Eastern Settlers' in Ceylon, and the culture of the resultant society was stabilized well before the end of the Dutch rule in the island. Once this stabilization of a local Malay culture and society was achieved it became possible for the other eastern nationalities like the Madurese and Sumanapers, who joined the community later around 1782 to merge into the community of "Ceylon Malays" without much difficulty.

The difference between the terms 'Javanese' and 'Malays' as used by the Dutch and the British respectively to refer to this community can be explained now. The former indicated, in the first place, the geographical identity of the early Malays. Batavia from where many of them had originated, was situated in the island of Java and hence they were commonly called by the generic term 'Javanese'. On the other hand, it may be the case that the actual ethnic Javanese might have been the dominant group among the original eastern population and therefore the whole community came to be known after this leading group. This line of argument is further supported by the fact that in 1764, the free Javanese Company was named as such precisely because of the conspicously large number of Javanese residents in the island. At the same time, the Dutch officials had included other minor groups of easterners in this Company. Thus, for instance, when two soldiers by the names of Dicko (or Bicko?) and Abdullah applied for discharge from the company in 1763 they are specifically referred to as 'Malay' soldiers.(85) But labelling this community as 'Javanese' in the way the Dutch did was not without its shortcomings. After 1780, a number of Madurese and Sumanapers also joined this community and therefore the term Javanese, if used with an ethnic connotation, would not

be proper if any newcomers belonging to other races from the East were to be included in this community.

The term Malays was introduced by the British and was indeed an all embracing one, which emphasised the linguistic unity of these people rather than their ethnic or racial origins. What the British saw in the island at the tail end of the 18th century was a fairly stabilized and distinctly identifiable group of people, whose ethnic differences had mostly disappeared and who had developed a self-identity as members of a Malay-speaking community. This term obviously had its merits, because labelling this community on the basis of its language reflected the real nature of the local Malays as they had evolved as a distinct population group through the adoption of a common Lingua Franca, i.e. the Malay. On the other hand, this term became more meaningful later, particularly when the ethnic Malays from the Malay Peninsula settled here during the 19th century and were integrated into the already well established community of Malays in Sri Lanka.

In addition to the language factor, the religion of Islam, too, provided a basis for group identity among the Malays of the island. In Dutch times, not all the easterners who came to Sri Lanka were the followers of Islam. It is particularly difficult to establish the religious background of the Amboinese, Balinese, and even Javanese, because among the first group there were a considerable number of Christians, while most of the Balinese belonged to Hindu religion. Some Javanese had embraced Christianity in 1660 and received benefits from the Dutch government.(86) Nevertheless, it is quite clear that a large majority of the early Malays were followers of Islam, and in the process of the evolution of the Sri Lankan Community all the non-muslim easterners dropped out. Thus, at last the term 'Malays' besides its linguistic connotation came to mean only the Muslim 'Malays'.

The British and the Malays

With the establishment of British rule in the maritime region of Sri Lanka since 1796, a new wave of migration from the Straits Settlements in the Malayan Peninsula began to take place. In accordance with the term of Capitulation of Colombo agreed between the outgoing Dutch government and the British conquerers in 1796, the Malay/Javanese soldiers and

their families already in service under the Dutch were to be sent back to Java.(87) However, the British authorities quickly saw the advantage of retaining the services of the Sri Lankan Malay troops on their side, and therefore added their own clause by hinting at possible recruitment of Malay troops into the East India Company's service.

Frederick North, (1796-1805) the first British Governor of Sri Lanka, took some concrete steps to place the Ceylon Malay Regiment on a respectable footing on par with the Sepoy troops serving in India. Moreover, he seemed to have had a great personal liking towards the community, which he wanted to strengthen and develop with a view in part to making it a nursery for future military recruits to serve in the Malay Regiment. In his bid to inject new blood into the community, he despatched a couple of missions overseas to attract new Malay settlers to Sri Lanka. In one of his despatches to home office in 1802, he stated his intention to induce "the (Malay) recruits to come over to Ceylon with their families in the colonies which I am forming at the Hambantota and Tangalle, which I hope will in time to produce a pure and constant supply of that hard people to perpetuate the Corps."(88) This he wrote after setting up a recruiting agency in the Prince of Wales island, (now Penang) in 1800. This was in fact the beginning of the arrival of 'Malays' from the Peninsula proper, unlike during Dutch time when the Malay recruits were drafted for service from mainly the present Indonesian archipelago, especially from the Javanese dominated areas.

It would be interesting to note what terms were offered by the British government for the Malays to settle in Sri Lanka. The prospectus for settlers was translated in Malay in a pamphlet form and distributed widely in Penang and the adjoining areas, and also whenever the recruiting party from Ceylon travelled further in the Eastern seas to coax Malays.(89)

1. The sum of Spanish dollars 21 pice 34 will be immediately paid to each man as a bounty on entering the service, and from that date he will receive the monthly pay of 3 dollars 74 pice, besides a reasonable allowance of opium.

2. That men so entering into this Corps will be permitted to take their wives and families with them

free from all expense, and every man who may be rendered unfit for active service by wounds or age will be place on the invalid establishment and thus be assured of a comfortable maintenance during the remainder of his life, and that such as may fall in battle will have their families placed under protection of the Government.

3. Every man taking his wife with him will be entitled to Spanish dollars 8 and pice 51 in addition to the bounty given to him and 43 pice per month for her subsistance. Their son will also receive Spanish dollars 4 pice 25 each on accompanying their fathers and the same monthly pay as now given to the establishment of boys attached to this Corps.

4. Men of family or influence who may be disposed to enter this service and bring with them their dependents as followers will be received with every possible respect and attention to their religious prejudices and obtain commands in proportion to the number of followers they may bring with them.

In early 1803, Lieutenant Rofsi, who headed a second recruiting mission to the East reported that he was sending back from Penang 82 recruits, and 4 boys along with their families, followed by another 9 recruits.(90) He was proceeding to Malacca at that stage to look for more recruits. It seems that Sultan of Kedah offered several of his subjects to the then Lieutenant Governor of Prince of Wales island to serve in the Ceylon Malay Regiment. It is, however, difficult to estimate the precise number of arrivals from the Malay Peninsula to Sri Lanka during North's period of governorship.

North's successor Governor Maitland (1805-1811) was not well disposed toward the Malay Regiment, partly because he was keen on reversing several of his predecessor's policies and actions. He even went to the extent of abolishing the regiment and instead in its place sought to promote the Kaffirs(91) to fill their ranks. But the Malay Regiment was far more difficult to dismantle at this stage. In any case, Maitland succeeded in evicting a most important, if not the cream of the Malay population from the island. These were the Malay/Indonesian princely exiles left behind by the previous Dutch government. According to Maitland, these

exiles had become "a great pecuniary burden to the colonial revenue, besides being a danger to the British interests in the Island."(92) On the other hand, earlier Governor North had thought up of a grand scheme to use these princely exiles to provide the leadership to the local Malay population; for instance, he managed to persuade some exiles to open up a new Malay colony in the Hambantota area. For some reason or other , the Dutch authorities in Batavia did not show any keeness to take back their exiles, until after a threat from Maitland that he would forcibly "send them in one of his Majesty's cruizes to the Eastward to be landed among these islands."(93) Only then did the Dutch respond. Thus departed forever to their homeland a most important element of the original Malay population in the island.

A few members of the exiled Royal families seemed to have stayed behind, especially those who married local women. Muhammad Balankaya, whose father was the Aid de Camp to Sultan Batara Gowa Amas Madina II exiled here in 1767 was one among them. He had married a Moor lady from Kandy. However, the often-claimed princely ancestry of many later day Sri Lankan Malays can rarely be be substantiated with any credibility.

Between 1810-1820 the local Malay Community received a further boost in numbers by the arrival of a fairly large number of men and women from the islands of Madura and Jawa. The then British Governor in Sri Lanka, Sir Robert Brownrigg, (1812-20) who completed the conquest of the whole of Ceylon, arranged to bring them from Indonesia, using the brief interlude of British control over the Dutch possession in Java from 1811-1816. Thus in 1813, more than 400 Madurese men accompanied by their women and children embarked from the port of Surabaya to join the Ceylon Malay Regiment, followed in 1816 by a shipment of about 228 Javanese soldiers and their families, mostly recruited from the North-Coast cities of Semarang and Gresik in Java. No recruits come from Indonesia after 1816, since the Dutch authorities never allowed their subjects to join the military establishment of another rival power in the East.

Subsequently, the British authorities had to depend only on one alternative to crimp Malays to Sri Lanka, i.e. from the British controlled Straits Settlements areas of Malacca, Singapore and Penang. But the Malays did not flock to Sri Lanka as they anticipated. Several missions sent abroad failed miserably in their bid to bring meaningful number of

Malay recruits. In 1830, for example, the mission by Captain Thomas Skinner to the East became a very expensive affair as he could not obtain more than about 10 recruits in all. As a result, it was decided to send abroad Sri Lankan Malay officials to head the recruiting missions for improved results. This proved a success initially. Subedar (Captain) Boreham, a Sri Lankan born Malay, as the head of the recruiting mission in Penang, was able to find 100 Malay recruits in 1834.(94)

The recruiting office in Penang was shifted to Singapore in 1840 as the later was made the administrative capital of Straits Settlements.(95) The number of Malays coming forward to migrate to Sri Lanka and join the regiment was not, however, encouraging as the following table will show:(96)

Table I

1833	None
1834	100
1835	64
1836	50
1837	37
1838	29
1839	37
1840	32
1841	33

By the year 1842, the recruiting Mission in Singapore was abandoned since it was felt uneconomical to fetch foreign recruits.(97) In 1845, again the mission was opened with the hope that this time again a European subaltern officer in command could produce better results. 73 Malay were recruited in Singapore and the Straits of Malacca between the period of 1st Oct. 1845 to 31st January

Corporal
Ceylon Malay Rifle Corps
C.1820

Jemidar
Ceylon Malay Rifle
Corps - C 1820

1846,(98) but that was all and again the mission was closed down in 1848. Despite the renewal of efforts by sending recruiting missions to the East, little success followed. In 1856-57, Captain Tranchell travelled extensively in the Eastern Seas which included stop overs in Brunei, Labuan, Pahang, Trengganu and Kelantan, but all in all he succeeded in bringing back only recruitment 7 Malays,(99) which prompted a contemporary British officer to cast a pungent remark on the mission.

> "The expedition and the expenditure as compared with the proceeds of it, must show these four or five (Malay recruits) to be about the most expensive in the British army."(100)

After 1860, rarely any foreign Malay recruit joined the Ceylon Rifle Regiment, which was finally disbanded in 1873.

Not all the Malay migrants who arrived in Sri Lanka for military service stayed here permanently. Some are known to have returned home at the expiry of the stipulated service. This happened when the foreign Malay recruits were given the concession in 1833 (G.O; 1st March, 1833) to return to the land of their origins at the expiry of 15 years of military service. The actual number of people who opted to go back however, remained small. For example, in 1837,(101) only 9 of them left for Singapore, and after a decade during the period beginning from 1841 to 1847, only 11 Malays are known to have gone back to resettle their families in Singapore and Penang.(102) Figures after this date are not readly available, but presemably several must have returned back.

Many Malays opted to stay since they had raised families in Sri Lanka and the kinship ties were not easy to be broken off. Interestingly enough, even some of those who had sought passage to return to Malay were known to have "changed their minds on the very hour of the embarkation and determined to stay on the island."(103)

FOOTNOTES

1. Some cases are mentioned in Dagh Register, dated 5th and 6th October 1691. Shaikh Yusuf of Macassar was a well known case; He was re-exiled from Ceylon to Cape of Good Hope in 1696. See Drewes (1926).

2. Dagh Register, 30th August 1682 and 25th November 1682.

3. See de Graaf (1949), pp. 238-241 for these events in Javanese History.

4. Crawford (1920), Vol. II, pp. 493-4.

5. S.L.N.A., 1/200, Minutes of the D.P.C., Colombo, 8th March 1788.

6. See infra p.

7. Father S.G. Perera (1939), p. 36-38.

8. S.L.N.A., 1/69, Minutes of the D.P.C., Colombo, 14th Nov. 1733.

9. "Lives of the Dutch Governor-General of Netherland India J. Maatzuiker," CLR, 1(21), December, 1931, p. 166.

10. S.L.N.A., 1/102, Minutes of the D.P.C., Colombo, 15th Nov. 1747.

11. S.L.N.A., 1/95, Minutes of the D.P.C., Colombo, 5th Nov. 1748.

12. S.L.N.A., 1/16, Minutes of the D.P.C., Colombo, 13th June 1727.

13. Patunru (1969) p. 86. But a contemporary document states that it was one Sitti Habiba's sister who was married to Pangeran Adipati Mangkurat, and the other sister was married to Sadur Alam, Prince of Bacan, another important exile living in the island at that time. S.L.N.A., 7/20, North's Mily. diary, 19th December 1803.

14. Pangeran Singaarsi of Java was one such exile who commanded a unit of native Malay troops serving the Dutch in 1767. Raven-Hart (ed.) (1964) p. 44.

15. S.L.N.A., 1/37, Minutes of the D.P.C., Colombo, 7th December 1761.

16. See Dagh Register, 24th November 1682.

17. Patunru (1969), p. 85.

18. De Graaf (1949), p. 241.

19. The details allowances paid to the exiles can be seen from S.L.N.A., 1/200, Minutes of the D.P.C., Colombo, 8th March 1788.

20. S.L.N.A., 1/58, Minutes of the D.P.C., Colombo, 20th September 1724.

21. S.L.N.A., 7/20, North's Mily. diary, 19th December 1803.

22. de Silva, Colvin R., (1953), p. 241.

23. 'Moor' is the generic term by which it was customary at one time in Europe to describe a Muslim from whatever country he came. The epithet was borrowed by the Portuguese who bestowed it indiscriminately upon the Arabs and their descendents, whom in the 16th century they found established as traders in almost every part of the Asian and African coasts.

24. See Ricklefs (1974) pp. 102-8 for information on the political activities of the exiles in the Javanese Kingdom.

25. Ricklefs, personal communication, 10th November, 1976.

26. Ricklefs op.cit., p. 104.

27. Ricklefs, personal communication 10th November 1976.

28. Ricklefs, op.cit., p. 103.

29. Ibid.

30. "...dat geen Sjogys ofte Hedense lantlopers of Ceylon in Scomp' landen geoogt worden, nogh oock dat de Mooren eenige publyqaue Mahomataenese Godsdienst nomen te pleegen alsoo't selve op hoge paens yerboden is." Memoirs of Ryckloff van Goens, p. 25.

31. Ricklefs (1974), p. 103.

32. S.L.N.A., 1/61, Minutes of the D.P.C., 13th June 1727.

33. A number of such cases are mentioned in Realia, Eerste Deel, (1881) pp. 236, 258, 259 and 260.

34. These include not only criminals but even men such as Said Muhammed, an Islamic preacher who originated from Arabia but domiciled in Batavia in 1780s was banished and committed to chains in the island for his suspected anti-Dutch activities in Batavia and Bantam. See de Jonge (1884), Vol. 12, p. 128.

35. Dagh Register, 30th August 1682.

36. Realia, Vol. 1, p. 87, (5th July 1782). In anticipation of war with the Kandyans, the Dutch made plans to strengthen their military in 1763. An extra Malay company was formed in that year by including about 120 deportees. S.L.N.A., 1/4864, Minutes of the Secret War Committee, 9th September, 1963.

37. Memoirs of Van Gollenese, p. 92.

38. Realia, Vol. 1, p. 87, 19th March 1782.

39. Ibid., 5th July 1782.

40. Jayah (1969), p. 74 attributes their origins to the exiled Princes, while K.M. de Silva (Ed.) (1973), p. 300 refers only to the East Indian Troops.

41. Such reinforcements of Eastern troops were received in the island in 1737, 1761 and 1782.

42. Reimers (1924), p. 3.

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid.

45. Peiris (1929), p. 190 states during the Dutch attack on the Fort of Colombo in 1656, "Bandanese" did good work in their pursuit with their sharp swords at one blow they struck off the heads of their adversaries (Portuguese).

46. Raven-Hart (ed.) (1959), p. 69/70.

47. Rusconi (1939), p. 19.

48. S.L.N.A., 1/490, Annex to Minutes of the D.P.C., Colombo, 22nd January 1761.

49. S.L.N.A., 1/1793, Annex to Minutes of the D.P.C., Colombo, 18th January 1788.

50. Memoirs of Rycklof Van Gooens, p. 13 mentions "that the post highest in elevation belonging to Colombo is the excellent stone redoubt at Sitawaka, ten hours journey from Colombo (an hours journey is equal to about 3 1/2 miles).

51. Raven-Hart (ed.), (1959) op.cit., p. 70.

52. Raven-Hart (1964), p. 21.

53. S.L.N.A., 1/4864, Minutes of the Secret War Committee, 9th September 1863.

54. Raven-Hart (ed.), op.cit., p. 64.

55. See Schrieke (1975), Vol. 2, pp. 122-127 for a discussion on the Javanese methods of warfare and the arms used.

56. One Rahman, a Malay Captain is said to have exorted 6 shillings for a debt of 3 Rix dollars or 50% per annum. S.L.N.A., 1/4865, Minutes of the Secret war committee, 11th August 1764.

57. The Dutch authorities prohibited loan or more than half a rupee to the Malay soldiers, Ibid.

58. See Christie David (1958), p. 7. says "The original cane workers here were Malays and the trade was plied in Slave Island..."

59. Schwitser did not mention about the religious background of the Amboinese, and it may be that they were not followers of Islam, which explains partly why only Sinhalese and Malabari (Tamil) wives are mentioned in this case. Or it may be that the 'Moorish' women were included in the racial term of 'Malabaris'.

60. Thombo (Sinhalese Thombuwa) is a system of registration introduced to Ceylon by the Portuguese which they borrowed from the Sinhalese. The Dutch perfected this system in the 1760s by recording details of persons, and properties in their districts of administration.

61. S.L.N.A., 1/7358, Head Thombo, p. 63 and p. 71.

62. Christoffel de Saram, alias Atapattu Mudaliyar owned two Eastern slaves namely Troena de Wangsa and Amber. S.L.N.A., 1/4740, Criminal files on Individuals.

63. S.L.N.A., 1/4864, Minutes of the Secret War Committee, 9th September 1763. Also in 1786, eastern slaves were freed to be formed into a Company of Militia. S.L.N.A., 1/193, Minutes of The D.P.C., 26th April 1786.

64. S.L.N.A., 1/591, Annex to the Minutes of the D.P.C., Colombo, 21st October 1781.

65. For example in 1803 Robert Percival, a British military officer speaks highly of Malay gardeners, Percival (1805), p. 174.

66. Bertollaci (1817), p. 18.

67. Jayah (1971), p. 8.

68. Uliyam (Tamil) is originally the compulsory manual labour which the foreign communities such as Moors and Chetties performed in the Kandyan kingdom. The Dutch too followed this system but the British found it obnoxious and abolished it in 1808.

69. S.L.N.A., 1/88, Minutes of the D.P.C., Colombo, 30th September 1743. However the descendants of exiles had to perform Uliyam like the rest of the Malays.

S.L.N.A., 1/87, Minutes of the D.P.C., Colombo 6th July 1743.

70. S.L.N.A., 1/2556, Appointment of local Chieftains, 13th 1769.

71. The total number in the Dutch army as on 15th May 1764 consisted of 3,909 Europeans, 2,458 Easterners and 1,242 Sipahis, Raven-Hart (1964), p. 56.

72. Before the above increase took place these were 10 Companies of Malays totalling 791 men, op.cit., p. 21.

73. S.L.N.A., 1/736, Annexes to the Minutes of the 'Militaire department", 15th April 1794.

74. S.L.N.A., 1/362, Stuart to Dandas, 30th August 1795, and enclosured for the garrison, Capitulation etc.

75. W.O., 1/362, Stuart to Dandas, 10th October 1795 and enclosures.

76. S.L.N.A., 1/179, Minutes of the D.P.C., Colombo, 24th June 1785.

77. For eg. Colonel I. Fletcher, who served the Malay Regiment in Ceylon for more than 20 years wrote about "the Ceylon Malays" in 1831 as follows: "The free Malays of the island are a superior race of people, possessing more intelligence... The Ceylon Malay is generally of honest and respectable parentage inheriting a pride of family reputation etc." S.L.N.A., 6/1308, A.M.S. to C.S., 5th October 1831.

78. de Hullu (1914), p. 343.

79. Boxer (1975), p. 118.

80. de Haan (1922), p. 473.

81. de Haan, op.cit., pp. 472-484.

82. Ibid.

83. Ibid.

84. Vlekke (1945), p. 174.

85. S.L.N.A., 1/1555, 11th October 1783.

86. Reimers (1924), p. 3. He quotes from a Dutch document dated 8th September 1660. "Where the Javanese soldiers 28 in number, have now for some time past suffered to be instructed in the Christian doctrine have made public profession there of, eccepted Holy Baptism, and have solemnly married according to Christian rite..."

87. S.L.N.A., 7/2343, Terms of the Capitulation of Colombo, 1796. Article No. 12.

88. S.L.N.A., 7/18, North to Hobart, 10th September, 1802.

89. S.L.N.A., 7/18, North's Mily. Diary, 28th May 1802.

90. S.L.N.A., 7/22, North's Mily. Diary, Rofsi to C.S. 19th April 1805.

91. Kaffirs, or Caffres, Black troops originated from the Mozambioque area in Africa.

92. S.L.N.A., 5/4, Maitland to Castlereagh, Enclosed in 28th Februari 1808.

93. S.L.N.A., 5/4, Maitland to Castlereagh, Enclosed in 8th February 1808, (Maitland to William Windham).

94. S.L.N.A., 4/22, Enclosed in Glenely to Horton, 88/18th Januari, 1836.

95. S.L.N.A., 7/536, C.S. to A.M.S. 14/10th January 1840.

96. The figures for the years 1833-38 are taken from S.L.N.A., 10/163, I Fletcher's Memorandum enclosed in 8th August 1839.

97. S.L.N.A., 6/1775, I. Fletcher's Memorandum 9th February, 1845, Enclosed in Campbell to Stanley, Mily, 2/12th February, 1845.

98. W.O. 1/453, Campbell to Gladstone, Mily, 6th March, 1846.

99. S.L.N.A., 6/2454, Captain Tranchell's Memorandum 31st May, 1858, Enclosed in A.M.S. to C.S. 24th June, 1858.

100. Cowan (1960), p. 326. He wrote that every one of these was subsequently set at liberty, being physically unfit for 'fighting', when they arrived at headquarters.

101. S.L.N.A., 6/1502, A.M.S. to C.S., 12/17th January, 1837.

102. W.O. 1/456, George Anderson to Earl Grey. Enclosed 20 of Mily. 179/21st November, 1851.

103. Same as note 105 above.

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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN FOOTNOTES

AMS	Assistant Military Secretary
BEFEO	Bulletin de l'Ecole Francaise de'Extreme Orient
BKI	Bijdragen tot de Taal-Land-en Volkenunde
CEMRO	Ceylon Malay Research Organization
C.L.R.	Ceylon Literary Review
C.S.	Colonial Secretary
D.P.C.	Dutch Political Council
G.O.	General Order (Colombo)

JMBRAS	Journal of Malayan Branch of Royal Asiatic Society
Mily.	Military
S.L.N.A.	Sri Lanka National Archives
U.C.R.	University of Ceylon Review
W.O.	War Office (London)

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4

TRADITIONAL MALAY LITERATURE IN SRI LANKA - A SURVEY(1)

The scholars devoted to the study of traditional Malay literature would have rarely thought of Sri Lanka as a place where there could have been lively literary activities pursued in many parts of the Malay/Indonesian archipelago.(2) Even in Sri Lanka, the Malays themselves are generally ignorant about the cultural and literary activities of their forefathers,(3) so that it is not surprising that a Sri Lankan Moor scholar, a specialist in Muslim Literature, did once assert that the Sri Lankan Malays did not have any form of literature.(4)

Occasional visitors from Indonesia and Malaysian peninsula in the past had noticed, however, the vigour of communal identity among the Malays in Sri Lanka.(5) As far as the majority of Malay speakers in the Malaysia/Indonesia are concerned, hitherto there was little information available about this small community, but since of late there has been much enthusiasm, especially in Malaysia, not only to know more about them, but also to lend moral and psychological support for the cultural survival of the Malays in Sri Lanka.(6) The recently concluded Malay World Symposium (Simposium Dunia Melayu II) in Colombo, Sri Lanka attended by more than 90 delegates from Malaysia alone, can be considered as a culmination of the enthusiasm and interest evinced by the Malays to the unique situation and contribution of the local Malay community to an overall Malay cultural and literary development in the past.(7)

The notion that the Sri Lanka Malay community is literarily arid has been drastically revised in the light of the recent discovery in this island of a relatively large number of Malay manuscripts and printed texts.(8) A study of Malay literary material unearthed shows that the local Malays belonged to a fairly literate society, and that while much of their literature derives as might be expected, from the 'great traditions' of Malay literature, i.e. versions of Malay classics popular throughout the Malay world, some of them are original works written in Sri Lanka by the members of the Malay community themselves. The first question that strikes anyone is how this small minority though separated from the centres of Malay civilization by time and distance managed to maintain and contribute to this literature until the very early part of the present century.

This paper attempts at first to provide a general account of the characteristics of this literature and a discussion will follow as to the factors which led to its rise and fall within the Sri Lankan context.

It will be convenient to discuss the Malay literature of Sri Lanka under two separate headings. The first category includes all those classical Malay texts which are common to the traditional Malay literature of the Malay Peninsula and the Indonesian Archipelago. These texts include 'literary' Hikayats and Syairs as well as the religious Kitabs and miscellaneous items on magic, incantations and so on.

To the second category belong all other works which are indigenous, i.e. written originally by the members of the Sri Lanka's Malay community. In their contents and literary style, the indigenous Malay writings still remain within the same classical Malay literary tradition, as the first category.(9)

The greater part of the Malay (nearly 90%) texts discovered in Sri Lanka belong to the first category, i.e. Malay 'classical' texts common to the Malay and Indonesian speaking countries.

Fortunately, despite the general lack of care and concern by later day Malays to preserve the literary texts copied by their forefathers, enough of these have survived to enable us to gain an insight into the type of literary material that interested the members of the local Malay community, though we cannot of course know what percentage of these texts have been lost to posterity.

Let us first look at the major titles of classical Malay hikayats and syairs thus discovered in the island.

Hikayats

1. Hikayat Seri Rama
2. Hikayat Amir Hamzah
3. Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiyyah
4. Hikayat Ahmad Muhammad
5. Hikayat Si Miskin
6. Hikayat Syahi Mardan
7. Hikayat Inderaputera
8. Hikayat Isma Yatim

9. Hikayat Kobad Syah Ariffin
10. Hikayat Indera Quraisy
11. Hikayat Raden Bagus Gusti
12. Hikayat Nabi Muhammad
13. Hikayat Mikraj Nabi Muhammad
14. Hikayat Nabi Bercukur
15. Hikayat Nabi Perang Khaibar
16. Hikayat Nabi Pulang Ke Rahmatullah
17. Kisas al-Anbia
18. Hikayat Ali Kahwin
19. Hikayat Munajat Musa
20. Hikayat Abu Samah
21. Hikayat Ibrahim ibn Adham
22. Hikayat Derma Tahsiyah

Syairs

1. Syair Ken Tambuhan
2. Syair Bidasari
3. Syair Jauhar Manikam
4. Syair Sultan Abdul Muluk
5. Syair Burung Merpati
6. Syair Ma'rifat
7. Syair Ibadat and
8. Kisah Sultan Uthman Syah Syarif

Religious Texts

1. Hidayat al-Salikin
2. Miftah al-Jannah
3. Sakarat al-Maut
4. Hujjat al-Balighah
5. Kitab al-Nikah
6. Kitab al-Faraid
7. Masail al Muhtadi li Ikhwan al Mubtadi
8. Hikayat Iblis
9. Bustan al-Salatin (Volume I)
10. Sirat al Mustakim

In addition to these, several Mss. dealing with traditional Malay medicine, incantation, magic, sorcery and other miscellaneous subjects have also surfaced.

The greater part of the Malay texts discovered in Sri Lanka as evident from the above list of titles belong to the

first category, i.e. Malay 'classical' texts. From this fact, it is clear that such texts occupied a most important place in their literature and must be viewed as an extension of the classical Malay literary tradition which flourished all over the Malay world. The types of Malay classics found in the island reflect above all the major literary interests of this microscopic minority community while the local writings though admittedly few, reveal its vigour and individuality.

In dealing with the strictly 'literary' type of Malay classics, one finds that the text containing the epics, romances, legends and other tales which were usually derived from foreign sources such as Indian, Arab, Persian and Javanese, have had much popular appeal among the local Malays. These are the well known Malay literary hikayats narrated in prose form, and the classical syairs written in traditional Malay poetic form.

Although the lists are not long they are sufficient to show that the pattern of literary concern of the local Malay community was much the same as that of other Malays.(10) Both secular types of literary classics and the stories and legends with a distinctly Islamic character have appealed to their popular imagination.

Literary Texts

They were fascinated by fabulous stories in which the superhuman heroes, driven by dreams and omens, wander through the world, encountering at every step seemingly invincible monsters, unsolvable enigmas and unapproachable princesses. Thus they obviously found reading or listening to the hikayats of Indera Putera, Ahmad and Muhammad and Si Miskin etc. both entertaining and edifying. The heroic exploits of the Hindu hero Seri Rama fired their imagination just as much as the bravery of the celebrated Islamic warriors Amir Hamzah and Muhammad Hanafiyah.

Among the strictly religious type of legends the 'Anbiya' texts (stories dealing with the Prophets of Islam) provided valuable and edifying reading material to the pious Malays. Sunan Giri alias Tuan Raden Bagus Gusti, whose missionary activities are related in the Hikayat Raden Bagus Gusti,(11) had been a venerated figure in their homes. Their religious beliefs received much strength by reading

the stories related with the life of the Prophet Muhammad, his ascension to heaven, his miraculous cleavage of the moon, the shaving of his head and so on.

Most of the Malay classical literary texts listed above are familiar to the scholars of traditional Malay literature. Several of them have already been edited and published and possibly some of the manuscripts discovered can be traced directly or indirectly to the versions in printed editions of such famous Malay classics as Hikayat Sri Rama,(12) Hikayat Ibrahim ibn Adham,(13) Syair Sultan Abdul Muluk(14) etc. Other manuscripts contain versions of Malay classics which would seem to be inferior to those already known,(15) although the relative merits and the importance of each and every Malay classical literary text found in Sri Lanka must be worked out after intensive study and by comparisons with similar versions deposited in the collection of Malay manuscripts in the other countries.

Among the classical Malay literary texts found in the island, there are one or two works on which we would like to focus our attention because their Malay models have hitherto not been traceable elsewhere, even though it is suspected that these texts were, like the other classical Malay texts found in the island, brought to Sri Lanka from outside. One of these texts bears the title "Hikayat Raden Bagus Gusti." It deals in the usual legendary fashion with the life and career of Sunan Giri, who was considered to be one of the 9 Walis (Apostles of Islam) who are credited with having spread the religion of Islam in Java.(16) It is true that there also exists another Malay work dealing with the life of Sunan Giri, which is in the form of an interlinear translation of a Javanese text but this is clearly not the same as our Hikayat.(17) The Sri Lanka text must therefore be regarded as unique.(18)

Despite its Javanese origins this hikayat contains some serious distortions of Javanese history. For example, Sunan Giri is stated to have bestowed the kingdom of Mataram upon one of his followers, and the city of Surabaya is identified with the kingdom of Majapahit in this text. Perhaps an interesting feature of the text is the episode of the last sermon delivered by Sunan Giri to his followers from the pulpit of his mosque which reminds us of the famous last address made by the Prophet Muhammad to his followers on the mount of Arafat.

The legend of Sunan Giri seems to have been very popular among the Sri Lankan Malays. Some of the older Malays interviewed recalled that this hikayat had been recited in their homes in the early part of the century.(19) It is not certain for how long in the past this hikayat has been known among the local Malay community. Possibly the early Malay settlers from Batavia, Semarang and other Pasisir (North Coast) cities in Java, brought with them elements of the Sunan Giri legend current in those regions.

The other Malay hikayat peculiar to Sri Lanka bears the title of Hikayat Indera Kuraisy. No similar work appears to exist outside the island. The Hikayat Koerajsj and Koerasi Mengindera Radja both of which have a title similar to that of our hikayat, contain different stories according to the description of their contents given by Van Ronkel.(20) Our hikayat can be described as a Malay romance of the usual type in which the hero Indera Kuraisy sets out from the country of Sarmadan in order to win the heart of an unapproachable princess from heaven (Indera Kayangan), and before he is united with his bride he faces all sorts of obstacle and enemies only to emerge victorious in the end.

This text too is writen in good idiomatic Malay and is quite likely to have been brought from abroad like the other Malay classics. A somewhat curious feature of this hikyat is that the name of its hero Indera Kuraisy is still remembered by some elderly Malays interviewed who have apparently heard this story recited to them,(21) while the same persons could not recall the name of other popular heroes of classical Malay literature such as Syahi Mardan, Ahmad and Muhammad and Marakarma or Si Miskin. The Hikayat Indera Kuraisy must have been particualrly attractive, because of the many popular pantuns interspersed in it. There is reason to believe that these pantuns from the hikayat later gained wide circulation and were sung at Malay social gatherings in the island.(22) Furthermore, special mention must be made of a manuscript found in the island bearing the title of ya ini Pantung Indera Kuraisy in which many of the pantuns from the hikayat have been written down separately by a later day copyist.

The next text which has a special claim for our attention is called Qisah Sultan Usman Syah Syarif, but this is not because its Malay model has not been found. Two more manuscripts are known to exist and are now in the possession of Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka in Kuala Lumpur.

This Qisah is a curious piece of classical Malay literature, which surprisingly enough does not seem yet to have aroused the interest of Malay scholars. The significance of this work does not lie in its contents, a standard Malay romance of the type to be found in many other Malay hikayats, but in its employment of a special kind of literary medium to narrate the story. The entire text is written in a kind of 'rythmic prose'.

The use of 'rythmic prose' is of course not completely unknown in traditional Malay literature particularly in traditional Malay folk literature, usually referred to as 'Penglipur Lara' tales. 'Rythmic prose' is known to be an inherent feature of the stylised form of speech employed by the Malay story tellers. As Winstedt states:

> "...a device due not only to the need of chanting passages twice over for the ears of an audience liable to inattention, but also to the relief afforded to a reciter, whose memory and inventiveness could not be at full stretch all the time."(23)

Writing about the oral folk tales which were adapted and written down by Malay scribes (such as Yahya bin Mat Ali), Amin Sweeney states that such adapted Malay texts "as they stand only from palace hikayat literature in that they contain examples of rythmic prose".(24)

It is quite significant, therefore, to find a Malay classical literary work such as our Qisah Sultan Usman Syah Syarif written entirely in rythmic prose. Although this text deserves intensive study, our concern is not so much with a detailed stylistic analysis, as to illustrate the main characteristics of the 'rythmic prose' employed in this text.

The Sri Lankan manuscript containing this Qisah is written in two columns, and is obviously meant to be read as a normal syair, in the same manner as syairs of Ken Tambuhan, Bidasari, and Jauhar Manikam which are contained in the same manuscript. By way of illustration an excerpt taken from the beginning of this Qisah is reproduced below:

Seri Sultan paduka Sultan
seri Sultan Usman Syarif
raja bangsawan yang budiman
bukan raja sebarang raja
raja berusul dari nabi
dari perkasa termasyhur
gagah berani ter m'utabar
nobat di desa bumi misir
nobat tujuh kali sebenar
betul tujuh kali s-l-m-n
berjodoh tujuh puluh puteri
berhala dewa mendapat puteri
sentiasa berdukacita
sediakala berduka masa
dewa mendera kepada Allah
dewa berniat sebesar niat

From the above excerpt it can be shown that the lines are rythmical, but not metrical i.e., they are more or less uniform in length, each line generally consisting of eight to ten syllables. The rythm appears to be based on the regular spacing of accents. Some stock phrases recur again and again as the narration proceeds. Perhaps this text may hold some clues to the origins and development of Malay poetic forms of Syairs and Pantuns, as this is the only known Ms. containing a literary form which oscillates between prose and poetry.

Religious Texts: The Kitab Literature

Next we come to the discussion of the religious texts which form another important part of the literature of the Sri Lanka Malays. The type of religious classics which are partly semi-literary, i.e. Hikayat Amir Hamzah, Muhammad Hanafiyyah to which reference have already been made held a wide and popular appeal. In contrast, it can be said that the religious texts dealing with Islamic law, theology and jurisprudence etc. were generally meant to be read by specialists or a Ulama group among these Malays. Particular reference can be made to people like Baba Ounus Saldin,(25) Baba Yusuf Jurangpati,(26a) and Ince Salay Wahid(26b) and others who gave advice on matters of religion to their community. Moreover there was a group of Malay religious officials, (often referred to as 'Malay Priests' by the Malays of older generation) who looked after the Malay

mosques and administered the religious/community functions such as marriages, births and deaths etc., specialised in the religious knowledge base on the Malay/Islamic religious treatises. It is noteworthy that a relatively large number of Malay/Islamic treatises were recovered from the collections preserved by the descendants of such religious officials.

Among the religious manuscripts are various 'Kitabs" devoted to the fundamental aspects of Islamic fatith and its rituals such as the popular religious text of Nur-al-din al Raniri's Sirat-al-Mustakim which discusses such topics as Muslim dress, ablutions, cleaning of teeth, defilements, prayer, burial, fasting, and so on. Four manuscripts of this work have been found in Sri Lanka. One of the manuscripts of Sirat-al-Mustakim was copied in 1229 A.H. or (1806 A.D.) is the earliest datable Malay text from Sri Lanka. Another important kitab of this class is Abd-al-Samad al Palembani's Hidayat-al-Salikin, a translation of Imam Ghazali's Bidayat-al-Hidayah which deals with orthodox beliefs, religious duties, sins and virtues, dhikr, (love of God) etc. In addition, one finds a number of small religious tracts on orthodox Islamic belief and practice, most of which do not bear any titles. These are to be found in the Primbon type religious manuscripts copied by local scribes. One of these Kitabs entitled Sarahu Sittin, which has an Arabic text and Malay interlinear translation deal with basic principles of the creed, is not mentioned in the catalogues of Malay manuscripts, although a Javanese version of this text is known to exist.(27)

Apart from the texts cited above there are a number of other famous Malay tracts also found in Sri Lanka which discuss scholastic theology. Mention must be made of Book One of Nur-al-din al Raniri's magnum opus Bustan-al-Salatin which has a detailed exposition of the creation of heaven, hell and earth. Other texts found include Sifat Dua Puluh is devoted to a discussion of the twenty attributes of God; and Miftah-al-Jannat based on Al-Sanusi's Um al Barahin contains a doctrinal exposition of Muslim faith. In addition works dealing with eschatological aspects of Islam were also popular among the Sri Lankan Malays; e.g. Syaikh Abd-al-Rauf's Sakarat-al-Maut. It will be pointed out later that the subject relating to the approach of death constitutes a prominent theme in their indigenous literature.

As regards the Islamic legal texts in Malay, the following works have been found in Sri Lanka. Hujjat-al-

Baligah dealing with law suits, evidence, and perjury, 'Kitab al-Nikah' is devoted to the legal aspects of marriage in Islam, and Kitab al-Fara'id dealing with the Islamic laws of inheritance.

Alongside their interest in orthodox-legalistic religious works belonging to Sunnite Islam, the Malays of Sri Lanka have also had a preoccupation with the mystical aspects of religion. The orthodox texts emphasised the observance of Sharia' as an external guide to life while the texts on Sufism urged them to engage in time-honoured speculation on man and his place in the universe. The quest for Ma'rifat or Gnosis was a strong instinct among the members of the community as it was among their counterparts in the Malay/Indonesian areas. It is not surprising therefore to find that a majority of the religious tracts in Malay read by the local Malays were devoted to some aspects of Sufism.

The source, origin and authorship of a number of mystical tracts copied locally are not easy to determine as they are contained in manuscripts which usually consist of miscellaneous collection of tracts written one after the other without any reference to titles or their authorship. Because of this, it is difficult to sort out these mystical writings and assign them to any particular school of Sufism practised in the Malay word. However, reading through these texts, one gets the impression that they belong to a more traditional or orthodox type of Malay Sufism, such as that advocated by teachers like Syaikh 'Abd-al Rauf of Singkel. The Shattariya school of mysticism which was popularised by him in the Malay peninsula and the Indonesian archipelago seems to have been particularly popular among the local Malays, judging by a number of Shattariya tracts on Sufism found in Sri Lanka.

On the whole the Malay mystical writings unearthed in Sri Lanka do not appear to exhibit the age-old conflict between pantheistic and orthodox sufistic ideas which polarised the Malay Sufi thinkers particularly during the late 16th and the 17th centuries. This is also evident from the fact that while the writings of the orthodox religious preachers like the above mentioned Syaikh 'Abd-al Rauf Singkel and Nur al-din al-Raniri are familiar to the community, none of the works which are ascribable to either Hamzah Fansuri or Syams al-din al-Pasai, who are generally regarded to have preached a heretic, pantheistic type of

mysticim in Malay coutries have been discovered in Sri Lanka.

The presence in Sri Lanka of the various types of Malay religious texts, and particularly the presence of works which discuss the orthodox legalistic features in Islam, suggest that some form of institutionalised Islamic religious instruction in Malay was available in the past to the members of the community. The categories of the Malay Islamic texts found in Sri Lanka are also known to have been used in Malay/Indonesian region as books of orthodox religious instruction in Pondoks, Madrasas or Pesantrens, the seats of Islamic education in those countries.(28) It is not certain that any large scale 'Malay Madrasa' existed in Sri Lanka,(29) although we know that small Malay schools intended to impart rudimentary instructions in Malay and Tamil functioned during the 19th century.

One of the noteworthy features of Malay literature in Sri Lanka is that while a variety of Malay classical texts were known to the local Malays, certain other types of Malay classics seem to be almost totally absent from their literature. Particularly noticeable is the absence of manuscripts dealing with dynastic and historical chronicles, such as Sejarah Melayu, Hikayat Acheh etc. Also missing are regional Malay digests of law like 'Undang-Undang Melaka' and 'Undang-Undang Pahang' and so on.

The absence of the manifestly dynastic Malay chronicles in Sri Lanka, on the one hand may be understood as an indication of the community's lack of interest in the history of distant Malay regions. The Malay court chronicles which eulogised and elaborately detailed the history of the Malay ruling class had little appeal to this community, because its cultural or social life never centered around a Malay ruling aristocracy, nor did it ever lived under a Malay ruler. A further question may be raised as to whether such Malay court dynastic chronicles were as readily available to the members of this community as other kinds of manuscripts containing popular literary and religious works. Normally before the advent of the printing press, the manuscripts containing courtly chronicles were known to have been more or less in the exclusive possession of the Malay aristocratic and noble families. It is doubtful that such texts were easily accessible to the local people.

Indigenous Literature

The literary activity among the Sri Lankan Malay community was not confined to a merely 'reproductive' literature alone; they also had their own contributions to make in the field of the classical Malay literature, although it must be admitted that the indigenous creative writings are relatively few among the recent findings of manuscripts. The dates of the extant copies of manuscripts carrying these indigineous writings are mostly ascribable during the 19th century while few amateur attempts were made to compose pantuns and syairs during the early part of the present century.

Syair writing was perhaps a most notable literary activity of the Malays. This was in keeping with the current fashion in the other regions of the Malay-speaking world. For instance, based on her own familiarity with the literary movement of Penyengat (an island south of Singapore, presently part of Indonesia), Virginia Matheson remarked that the 19th century was the period of great blossoming of syairs.(30) The activities of the Sri Lankan Malays too substantiate her contention as the product of a universal and contagious interest in this form of literature which seems to be the only form of creative literary expression availabe to the then aspiring writers.

Leaving aside a multitude of untitled syairs dealing with religion and pontification composed by unknown writers as to be seen in a number of manuscripts as well as several short poems published in Sri Lankan Malay Newspaper Alamat Langkapuri, following is a list of indigenous creative writing worthy of note:

a. Syair Kisah nya Khabar Orang Wolenter Bengali:

This was written by one free - Malay named Boreham (Burhan) ibn Kapitan Lai (of the Ceylon Malay Regiment) in the year 1820. It describes in about 90 verses an armed skirmish which took place in Colombo on the new year's day in the year 1819 between the Malay soldiers of the Ceylon Malay Regiment, and the Bengali soldiers of 20th Bengali infantry volunteer Battalion then stationed in Ceylon. The only Ms. in which this syair is written seems to have been copied towards the end of the 19th century by a policeman, Ince Anum ibn Kapitan Husain bin Wirabangsa.

b. Syair Bida'at al-Islam:

This is an exhortative syair which condemns many modern deviating practices in the observance of Islam. It's author was one Pangeran Sepali a locally - born Malay. Judging by fairly large number and provenance of manuscripts containing this text, it appears that this syair had been quite popular in the community. It must have been written around the middle of the 19th century.

c. Syair al-Wujud wal 'Ilmu Suluk:

It's author was Ince Abu Salay Wahid, a well-known teacher of Malay language, who began his career as a soldier the Ceylon Rifle Regiment and later became a teacher in the regimental (military) school). His syair was printed by lithograph in Colombo. It deals with mystical aspects of religion. The date of the syair is 1895.

d. Syair Syaikh Fadlun:

This syair can be described as a romance-epic which narrates the story of a pious Muslim Syaikh Fadlun, who lived during the period of the reign of Caliph Omar in Arabia. It describes how he was falsely implicated by a woman called Kinanat as having committed adultery with her, but later he was exonerated through a miracle due to the strength of his piety. The story originally in Arabic, later seems to have been adapted by Muslim communities in many Asian countries. The Sri Lankan Malay version itself was adapted from a South Indian Malayalam text. So far three Mss. of this texts have surfaced in Kandy, Sri Lanka.

e. A Commemorative Syair on the Golden Jubilee of the accession to the throne by Queen Victoria, 1887:

This is a short poem of encomium composed in Kandy by Ince Yusuf Jailani ibn Jurangpati, a leading literary figure in the late 19th century Kandy in Sri Lanka. Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee celebrations was conducted with much pomp and glory in Sri Lanka during the Governorship of The Hon. Sir Arthur H. Gordon (1883-90), to whom this poem is dedicated.

f. Syair Faid al Abad:

This is a lithographed publication of 1900, written and printed by Baba Ounus Saldin (1832 1906) a doyen among the Sri Lanka's Malay literati in the late 19th century. It deals with miscellaneous subjects including a brief history of the community, advice to younger generation to respect their elders, and some devotional verses on the Prophet Muhammad.

g. 'Pantong Pada Orang Mooda Selong':

This is a curious piece of poetry booklet published in romanized script by Cooryson Hashim Mantara (at Meenambal Press, Colombo) in the year 1906.(31) Unlike the earlier writers, the new generation of English educated Malays could not handle syair metre but through exposure to traditional literati had imbibed a spirit of poetry-writing, but their writings exhibit inferior standard compared to works produced before. Their efforts seem to have had no followers in the community as others could not even try writing Malay since the beginning of the present century.

h. 'Pantong-Pantong Temenggong dan 44 Raden Melayu and miscellaneous songs':

This is also in romanized script written at the same time as the above work, possibly as a rival attempt by its author who wanted to exhibit his talent as a better poetry writer than the above Hashim Mantara. It's author's name is Jumaron Tungku Usmand who wrote this work while he was working as a conductor (Supervisor) in a tea-estate in a hill country station in Sri Lanka during the first decade of the present century.(32) The quality of language and metre in this text is also very poor symbolising perhaps the last ditch effort to revive the literary interest among the community, but with no avail.

There seems to be no significant efforts of original prose writing on the part of the local Malays. To a greater

degree, their literary quest was satisfied by copying, reading or listening to prose-hikayats of imported type described earlier. Thus it seems obvious that their concept of a 'creative' literature was only confined to the medium of syair writing.

The only mentionable original prose writing from Sri Lanka are two lithographed booklets, one on the Islamic prayer(33) and the other a work on Malay grammar by Baba Ounus Saldin.(34) However as is now well known in Malaysia, Sri Lankan Malays at least have taken precedence in publishing a Malay newspaper in Jawi Script, in 1869.(35) It was called Alamat Langkapuri, published fortnightly, edited by Baba Ounus Saldin in 1869/1870, in Colombo, Sri Lanka (now preserved in the Sri Lanka National Archives). It reappeared in 1877/78, (but no copies are available now). Another Malay/Tamil newspaper Ajaib al-Sailan which appeared according to Sri Lankan Archival records at the same period, (but no copies have survived). Ounus Saldin also published another Malay Jawi fortnightly newspaper bearing the title 'Wajah Selong', which continued to appear from 1895 to 1899. It is important to mention that unlike Alamat Langkapuri which was largely oriented towards a local readership by publishing news and views pertaining to Sri Lankan Malay affairs, Wajah Selong published foreign news with a view to satisfy foreign Malay subscribers in Malacca, Singapore, Batavia and Sumatra.(36)

On the other hand, books, pamphlets, and newspapers imported from the Eastern archipelago were also in considerable demand among the local Malays. I have discovered several of such printed works published mainly in Singapore and Batavia and it appears that the British government in the island had actively promoted such exchange of Malay books and periodicals between the Sri Lankan Malays and the Malays of the East.(37) Baba Ounus Saldin was a notable importer of publications from the East. Thus in Sri Lanka one can still come across rare first editions of Malay lithographed booklets which may or may not be available in the libraries and archives of Malaysia.

Only until about the first decade of the present century, publishing by lithographic means of Jawi Malay booklets, and pamphlets had continued. By that time the traditional Malay elites noted for their interest and proficiency in Jawi had disappeared; the new generation had lost interest in continuing their literary traditions and

could not succeed producing works, even in romanized script, the reasons for which will be discussed next.

The Sri Lankan Malay Mss. have not been properly catalogued yet of which a part of the collection is deposited in the Sri Lanka Department of National Archives for repair and safe-keeping. Some are in private hands, and the present writer has been fortunate to have come into possession of a number of texts which were saved in time.(38) None of them have yet been subjected to intensive research; although scholars like Lode Brakel,(39) Russell Jones,(40) Inon Shaharuddin bin Abdul Rahman(41) and R. Mulyadi(42) have checked some details of the Sri Lankan versions of individual Malay literary texts edited and published by them.

On the basis of information culled from colophons of locally found Mss. in respect of authorship, date, copyists, provenance and their ownership some important data have emerged to throw light not only upon the nature and characteristics of the classical Malay literary tradition as practiced in the island, but also as to its beginnings and final disappearance.

The Beginnings

The beginnings of Malay literature in Sri Lanka are not easy to trace. Almost all the Malay manuscripts discovered in the island belong to the 19th century. From this fact, it would seem, that Malay literature emerged here only during the last century, although the community itself had been in existence for nearly one and half centuries before. It is difficult to believe that during this earlier period the local Malays had been living in the island without any form of written literature.

It is possible that some of the originals or prototypes of the Malay classical texts copied in the island during the 19th century might have been brought to the island well before that date, i.e. in the early period of the Malay immigration into Sri Lanka, although the details given in the colophons of the manuscripts are not sufficient to provide evidence of this.

On the other hand, one might as well expect Javanese literature to have been found in Sri Lanka, because the

island was a place of exile of a good number of Javanese royal and aristocratic families with literary background. For that matter one may also ask about Madurese or Buginese or about the existence of other Indonesian regional literature in Sri Lanka, as the early Malay/Indonesian population living in the island was a conglomorate of various Indonesian races. But in Sri Lanka so far there is no trace whatsoever of literary texts written in any other Indonesian languages.

It is, however, of some significance to find that the Sri Lankan Malay term still used to refer to the Malay text written in Arabic script is Gundul, a Javanese word (also Gundil) meaning hairless, which has been applied to Javanese texts written in unvocalized Arabic script.(43) Possibly, the practice of calling Malay texts 'Gundul Kitabs' by the local Malays goes back to the early days of Malay-Javanese settlements in the Island, i.e. during the 17th and 18th centuries. The usage suggests also that there might have been some form of texts in the possession of the community written in either Javanese or Malay. The term Gundul can as well be applied to Malay texts written in Arabic script, commonly known as Jawi, because normally it is written without vowelization. Furthermore, Malay-Arabic literature is known to have occupied an important place in the local culture of Java's north coast areas, from where the majority of the early Malay-Javanese settlers came to Sri Lanka. Some of these immigrants could have brought Malay and Arabic texts with them for use in their new country. The early Malay literature, if there was any in Sri Lanka must have been predominantly Islamic-religious in nature. At least these basic religious texts giving instruction on faith, creed and rituals would have been used by these early Muslim-Malay settlers in their own language in order to preserve and strengthen their religious tenets and beliefs in their new surroundings.

Although it has been suggested that some form of Malay or Javanese literature had existed in Sri Lanka before the 19th century, it is fairly certain that literary activities could not have been wide spread in the community in the early phase of their settlement. A nascent community of Malays in a foreign soil could hardly be expected to plunge into and cultivate the literary arts. It may have taken a few generations for a microscopic-minority community to settle down and take roots on a foreign island as well as equip itself with the necessary institutional framework for

education and social recreation, before engaging in developing its own literature. The Malay immigrants in Sri Lanka were slowly building themselves up as an identifiable community continuously accomodating new settlers throughtout the years of Dutch rule in the island. By the time the British had replaced the Dutch rulers in Sri Lanka in 1796, the Malay community seems to have become well established, and localised.

The 19th century, particularly it's later half, witnessed the peak of Malay literature in Sri Lanka; major part of the literary activities, was of course copying down classical Malay texts which were available locally and overseas. More than 95 percent of the Malay classics discovered in the island can be found to have been copied during this period.

On the whole the 19th century was marked by a thirst for reading material in Malay in the community which was partly satisfied by the import of lithographed and printed Malay books from abroad as mentioned before. Locally too the printing of Malay books, pamphlets and even newspapers was undertaken through by means of lithographic press by such enterprising individuals as Baba Ounus Saldin to satisfy the curiosity for reading among his colleagues.

Why this sudden flurry of literary activities among the Sri Lankan Malays during the 19th century? Besides the fact that the community itself had taken firm roots in Sri Lanka at the turn of the 18th century, a number of other factors can be shown to have facilitated the growth of literary consciousness among the members of the Malay community.

To a very large extent the military occupation to which these Malays were committed under the colonial governments had determined the development of literary movement in the community. There were two main purposes (as we have discussed in the Chapter 3) for which the Dutch colonialists introduced them to the island. In the first place, Sri Lanka was considered to be a safe haven for settling the rebel kings and princely nobility of the Eastern Archipelago. At the same time the Dutch recruited many 'Easterners' form the outskirts of the city of Batavia and Semarang to serve in their garrisons in the island. In normal peace time a battalion of nearly one thousand 'Malay' soldiers are known to have been employed in active military service.

When the British replaced the Dutch authority in the island in 1796 the Malays were recruited en block in their military establishment and the successive British Governors too saw the advantages of employing Malays as soldiers in the native army.

The British authorities also built up a neat regiment of Malay soldiers which was known respectively first as His Majesty's Malay Regiment, and then the First Ceylon Regiment and later incorporated into the Ceylon Rifle Regiment in 1827.

The Malays of the Regiment lived mainly in the military cantonments established in the coastal towns of Colombo, Galle, Trincomalee, Hambantota and Chilaw. After the Singhalese Kingdom of Kandy was conquered by the British in 1815, a strong contingent of Malay soldiers were kept to garrison in the hill-town of Kandy. My researches based on the British military records preserved in the National Archives of Sri Lanka as well as the British War Office (archives) confirm that the Regiment constituted the centre of Malay life in Sri Lanka throughout the British rule during the 19th century.

Unlike the Dutch, the British made elaborate arrangements for not only the physical training of the Malay soldiers but also for their intellectual development in a bid to make better soldiers of them. Thus they established special military schools for the soldiers of the Regiment as well as their children to impart formal education, a facility which was neglected by the other section of the Muslim-Moor population at the time due to fear of proselytisation. In addition to coaching them in the English language, special teachers were appointed to teach their native tongue, Malay. In this way the Jawi script and learning of Malay texts were kept alive by a compulsory bureaucratic arrangement by the British by their commitment to train Malay military men. These Regimental schools where English, Arithmetic and Malay were taught had been set up in the military cantonments mentioned above. Furthermore, there were other informal arrangements whereby the soldiers had formed their own lending library under the sponsorship of the British Military officials in order to exchange reading material which included manuscripts and booklets in Malay printed both at home and abroad.

Since the British authorities had to keep up the numbers of Malay soldiers in the Regiment they sent

recruiting missions often to the Straits Settlements and the Dutch East Indies to fetch new blood when they faced with difficulty in enlisting the locally-born Malays. Several locally-born Malay officers and non-commissioned officers had the opportunity to travel to the East during such missions abroad. During their stay abroad they were able to obtain copies of Malay manuscripts in Singapore, Penang and other Eastern cities and brought them back to the island. Some Malay officers seem to have spent their leisure time in copying manuscripts whilst sent on official duty.(44) Thus one can easily perceive the importance of military occupation to these Malays at least in terms of their uninterrupted pursuit of literary interests. Naturally, therefore, locally-born Malays due to their education acquired in the Regiment schools happened to take a leading role in the literary activities of the community.

This is also borne out by the fact that according to the many colophons included in the manuscripts their copyists had more often than not themselves had served in the Regiment. It is interesting also to observe that several of them have shown added interest especially in the twilight stage of their life in retirement to engage in literary pastime of copying and reading manuscripts.

Cultural Nationalism

The literary activities in the community during the 19th century owe as much to certain other social and political factors, as the 'infrastructural' facilites provided by the British patronage through the Ceylon Rifle Regiment. During the second half of the nineteenth century the Malays had been witnessing a great cultural upheaval in Sri Lanka on the part of the dominant communities as a result of to nationalistic awakening. For instance, the majority community, the Sinhalese, was trying to free themselves of the cultural shakcles imposed by a Christian-dominated colonial governments. The spread of a Western life-style was seen as the moral and material decline of the Sinhala people which in turn was traced to Western political domination.(45) The emerging Sinhala nationalism in the 19th century resented Christianity, Westernization, and British rule; Sinhala elites began to extol the virtues of the glorious cultural past of the ancient Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa Kingdoms.(46)

Likewise the Tamil community, the second largest population group in the island, was in the midst of a parallel cultural awakening, which culminated in the formation of such cultural-nationalist organisation like Saiva Paripalana Sabhai formed in 1888.(47) Even the Muslim-Moors, so far considered a backward community due to their presistant refusal to pursue English education to avoid being proselytised, began asserting themselves due to the inspiration provided by the nationalist awakening among their compatriots.(48) It may be mentioned here that as in the neighbouring India, Sri Lanka's cultural-nationalist movement was led largely by an English-educated elite class.

Unlike amongst the other fellow communities, the number and quality of the elite group within the Malay community was largely limited. They consisted mostly of the traditional vernacular-educated men with or without a smattering of English. However, the number of such traditional elites were progressingly declining towards the end of the 19th century particularly after the disbandment of the Ceylon Rifle Regiment in 1873, giving way to the rise of a new generation of Malays who had no care or need to learn the Malay language and Jawi script.

The Malay-educated traditional elite were the main protagonists as well as the beneficiaries of the Malay literary movement in Sri Lanka. As might be expected, a good part of their clan consisted of the retired army personnel of the Regiment, particularly from the higher ranks of Captains (or Subedars) or Lieutenants (or Jemidars) who had received their Malay education in the regimental schools. They entertained themselves by engaging their days of retirement in the reading and copying of Malay texts. Also they composed, or encouraged their better talented colleagues to write poems of social use for the guidance and benefit of the younger generation.(49) They had a special reason to worry about the future course of their community, especially at a time of the rising political and social turmoil at the latter half of the 19th century. Their main concern was to re-examine their status as a locally rooted community vis-a-vis the indigenous people, and above all to preserve their self-identity.

The traditional Malay elites especially those living in the town of Colombo and Kandy, were deeply influenced by the vigourous cultural and literary manifestation around them,(50) which spurred them to assert their own cultural

glories as scions of a greater Malay civilization. It must be emphasised here that little had survived in the form of cultural symbols which the Malays could proudly revive in order to reinforce their unique identity. The Malay/Indonesian forms of dancing, art, and music reported to have been practiced among the early Malay community until about the early part of the 19th century were all lost by this time,(51) probably because of the orthodox religious influence exercised by the Muslim-Moors their fellow religious compatriots, who shunned such cultural expressions as non-Islamic practices. Perhaps this may be the reason why there is no trace of Wayang Kulit (shadow puppet play), tradition among the Malays of Sri Lanka who being of a preponderant Indonesian origin must have brought some elements of it as a popular form so pervasive in the archipelago.

Consequently, it is to their literature and language that the Malays turned to as one of the last remnants of their cultural heritage. Literature and language have a peculiarly intimate relationship with cultural identity, both as expressive vehicles for a society's beliefs, values and sentiments - for its innermost spirit and as a means of self-recognition. As William Roff has observed, "... in Malaya, one of the first signs of a conscious ethnicism ignoring local political boundaries was a concern for the nurture of the language as symbol and expression of the group."(52) This is no less true in the case of the Sri Lankan Malay community whose enthusiasm in literary activities then has to be largely interpreted against this cultural-nationalist background in the late 19th century.

Viewed in this light, the Malay literary movement in Sri Lanka share few things in common with similar developments in colonial cities like Singapore, Penang and Jakarta of the late 19th century. Deriving its stimulus originally from the activities of colonial governments, the desire to develop one's vernacular literature arose as a challenge to assert the indigenous culture against the domination of alien values. In Singapore, for example in addition to normal literary activities there had been a spate of lithographed publications in Malay (together with some Arabic and regional languages) while interest in copying classical Malay Mss. and writing traditional Malay Syairs were also pursued there with much enthusiasm.

Likewise in Sri Lanka, apart from the individual interest in the study and copying of Mss. by the literati,

publishing activities by hand-lithograph machines also made their appearance. Religious booklets seem to haver been particularly in demand, while Baba Ounus Saldin, described once as the 'princes princeps' among the local lithographers had brought out a couple of booklets on syairs and a Malay grammar.

The comparison between Singapore and Colombo in Sri Lanka as regards development of the traditional Malay literature, however, cannot be pressed far. While Singapore/Malacca literature was entering a period of 'a transtitional Malay literature', - a term coined by Cyril Skinner,(53) because new forms of prose writings were coming into existence for the first time following Abdul Kadir Munshi's autobiography, the Sri Lanka Malay literature can be said to have had entered its final and dying phase. Its last phase can be described 'as a flickering flame burning brightly before being finally put off'.

Even the themes dealt in the few extant locally - written Malay works such as Syair Ibadat and Syair Bida' at al Islam illustrate well the mood of the late nineteenth - century Malay literati. Since many of them had reached an advanced age by that time, their concern was chiefly with a preparation for Akhirat, or the next-world where they could enjoy the peace and solitude of heaven.

The syairs, emphasised the good deeds to be performed in this world by reminding often about the oncoming death. It appears such themes were even universal as far as the Malay world was concerned at this period judging by the spate of Nasihat or exhortative syairs of advice produced in such Malay literary centres as Penyengat.(54) Little attention has been paid to this genre which if properly investigated may reveal some hitherto unknown aspects of the last phase of the traditional literary activities in other Malay societies.

By the early 20th century, literary activities among the Malays of Sri Lanka were nearly coming to a stand still. Perhaps the death of Baba Ounus Saldin, in 1906 symbolised the death of the local Malay literature as well. It is in this year that we see for the first time an attempt to write poetry in romanized-script by C.H. Mantara and Jumaron Tunku Usmand, but their freaky efforts were also buried with them. Only now and them some self-taught Malays had use for Jawi script in their private correspondence, and the Malay

Registrars of marriages did until recently maintained marriage records or Kadutams in Jawi script.(55)

In conclusion it must be said that the discovery of a Malay literature in Sri Lanka extends the boundary of the traditional Malay world to further West in the Indian Ocean which until recently was thought to comprise of the Malay Peninsula and Archipelago only. Once the texts thus discovered are subjected to intensive studies many new data should emerge to widen our knowledge about the classical Malay literary tradition in general.

Interestingly enough, the type of Mss. discoveries which are continually being reported in different areas of the Malay-speaking world do as well illustrate a curious fact as regards the interest and relevance evinced by later day Malay societies in the preservation of the Malay manuscripts. I am particularly referring to those similar Malay communities which produced only works of traditional Malay literature and never entered a phase of creative writing in modern literature. In this case, Patani in Southern Thailand and Sri Lanka offer an interesting variation. In the case of Patani, the latest discoveries include only works of religion on Islamic theology and jurisprudence written in prose. Texts on literature, syairs and pantuns are virtually absent.(56) The Sri Lanka case is different as has become apparent in our discussion; Literary texts and syairs have emerged side by side with the religious texts. It seems that Patani Mss. had been in the possession of the descendants or followers of an ulamak class who copied and wrote on religion to serve as teaching material in pondoks or religious schools. In Sri Lanka too a good number of Mss. were discovered from people belonging to the familise who are the descendants of khatibs and Ulamaks. In Sri Lanka, there is evidence that long after the habit of copying Malay texts had gone out of fashion, still stories from some of the literary hikayats had continued to be orally related or transmitted. It means that at least some people were still in the habit of reading these if not in the very recent past.

FOOTNOTES

1. I owe a deep sense of gratitude to late Professor Cyril Skinner, Chairman of the Indonesian/Malay

department, Monash University for having guided me into this field research.

2. Talking of the library collections of Malay Mss. in the world, Professor Ismail Hussein once stated, "there are rumours of some Malay Mss. in India, and never know what may come up one day from some libraries in Taiwan and Japan." Hussein Ismail, "The Studies of Traditional Malay Literature", JMBRAS, 39(2) 1966, pp. 1-22. Even he could not imagine at the time of the Mss. collections that one day might surface from the island of Sri Lanka!

3. Nearly two decades ago, all Ceylon Malay Association, Padang, Kew Road Colombo is known to have launched an island - wide project to collect orally - transmitted Pantuns known to some elderly Malays. Other than this, as far as I am aware, there has been no attempt to discover or preserve any written literature in Malay. This is understandable, because very few among the Malays are in a position to read texts written in the Jawi script in which most of this literature is written.

4. In Tamil, "Javanukku Eluthillai" (literally - the Malays do not own any alphabet). The idea is so pervasive that even illiterate Moors used to poke fun at their Malay colleagues, which I myself have often heard. Strangely enough the Sri Lankan Moors themselves did not have any script to call their own, except that their literature came to be written in Arabic-Tamil which is Tamil written in Arabic, but with an unusual amount of Arabic terms pertaining to religion. Dr. M.M. Uwise, an expert on the literature of the Moors said so in Kalamunai, during his address to Muslim writers association in 1968.

5. Raden Sutomo, a well known Indonesian nationalist campaigner who visited Sri Lanka in 1933 recorded his impressions in the form of a diary on his meetings with the Malays there. In several instances he had noted the strength of the cultural consciousness of this people. An English translation of this diary is being prepared by Professor Van der Veur of the Ohio University, Athens, U.S.A. who kindly sent me its draft in 1978.

6. The Malaysian government I understand has favourably considered recently a request made by Sri Lanka's Malay Confederation for various kinds of support to prop up the educational and cultural upliftment of the community.

7. The 2nd Malay World Symposium which was held between 4th to 11th August 1985 at Galadari Meridien Hotel, in Colombo Sri Lanka was a sequel to the 1st symposium held in Malacca, Malaysia in December 1982. Sri Lanka Malay Confederation, an umbrella organization of the local Malay community and Gapena, the Malaysian Writers Federation headed by Prof. Datuk Pendita Dr. Ismail Hussein were the co-sponsors. The symposium received full blessings of the Sri Lankan Government represented by His Exc. J.R. Jayawerdena, The President of Sri Lanka, who officiated its opening ceremony on 4th August 1985, while the concluding ceremony was attended both by Hon. M.H. Mohamed, Sri Lankan Minister of Transport and Islamic Religious Affairs and Hon. Bakeer Markar, Minister without portfolio.

8. The Mss. were accidentally discovered in late 1974 during my field trip to collect material in Sri Lanka for my thesis on the island's Malay community. The trip was sponsored by the Department of Indonesian and Malay Studies and the Centre for South-East Asian Studies of the Monash University in Australia. I passed through Kuala Lumpur in May 1975 with some samples of my findings which exited a number of academics, particularly in the University of Malaya and the discovery was widely published in the Malaysian Newspapers. See Strait-Echo August 2, 1975, and also Monash Reporter, Australia, July 1st 1975.

9. Some scholars object to apply the term classical to refer to the old Malay literary texts, because it conjures up in one's mind the standard of Greek texts, and some Western literature. Nevertheless, for the Malays they remained classical in the sense that the texts under study were in themselves reached their standard of Weltenschaung, and literary expectations.

10. Nearly 60 titles have been classified until now.

11. Several Sri Lankan Malays who had some idea of their literary past confirmed this. Mrs. Merbani Salim (age

90) nee Weerabangsa, Mr. Basheron Cuncheor and others interviewed in 1978.

12. i.e. Shellabear, W.G (ed.), "Hikayat Seri Rama", JMBRAS, 70, 1914.

13. Van Eysinga, Roorda, Geshiedenis van Sultan Ibrahim, Amsterdam, 1843.

14. Syair Sultan Abdul Muluk, Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch Indie, pt. 4, 1846.

15. Dr. Russell Jones found the Sri Lankan version of Hikayat Ibrahim Ibn Adham below standard copy with full of dittographies. Personal communication, July 1977.

16. See for an accout of the life and career of Sunan Giri Pigeaud, Theodore G. Literature of Java Catalogue Raisonne of Javanese Mss., Vol. 1, (Introduction) 1967, The Hague and Leiden.

17. Cabaton, A, "Raden Paku, Sunan de Giri (Legend Musulmane Javanaise) Texts Malaise, traduction Francaise et notes, Revue de'L Histoire des Religions, Vol. 44, 1906, pp. 374-394.

18. The contents and it's style betray an interesting blend of a typical Malay Hikayat as well as influence from local Arabic-Tamil literary traditions. I am preparing an annotated edition of this text.

19. See note 11 above.

20. Van Ronkel, Ph.S., Catalogus der Maleish Handschriften in het Museum van het Bataviaach Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen, VBG, LVII, 1909, p. 140.

21. Information derived from personal interviews with late Tuan Kamaldeen Cuncheer of Rajapihilla Mawatte, Kandy, Late Mr. M.H. Bongso of Andeniya, Badulla and Late Mass Ghaise Weerabangsa of Palaiyootru, Trincomalee, April, 1995. Titles of these and other Hikayats were suggested to those interviewed.

22. Late Mrs. Merbani Salim nee Jury Weerabangsa (age 90) was able to recite some of these Pantuns when interviewed in 1975.

23. Winstedt, R.O., "A History of Classical Malay Literature,", (Revised edition) JMBRAS, 31 (3) 1958, p. 150.

24. Sweeney, Amin, "The Professional Malay Story Teller, Some Questions of the Style and Delivery", Working paper, 24th Congress of Orientalists, 1973, p. 5.

25. Baba Ounus Saldin (b. 1838 d. 1906) was born in Colombo to Baba Allaldeen Saldin who was a son of Kapitan Pantasih, a native of Sumenap in Madura brought to Sri Lanka in late 18th century to serve in the Dutch army. Ounus Saldin first joined as a private in the Ceylon Rifle Regiment, but after 8 years of service bought himself out from the army and served in several private European establishments as clerk. He is perhaps the most outstanding of the Sri Lanka's Malay literary personalities and a much respected member of the community. His greatest achievements was in the filed of lithographic printing which he pioneered in the island with several publications to his credit. His life and career can be partly studied from a Ms. copy of his memoirs, a copy of which is deposited in the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka library in Kuala Lumpur and an annotated edition is being in the preparation with the help of Prof. Datuk Ismail Hussein.

26a. Baba Yusuf Jailani Jurangpati also hailed from a family originated from Sumenap, Madura, but details of his life is still sketchy. He was said to be a self-employed mason by occupation, but in his middle years he seems to have devoted himself to literary matters. In fact, he had copied fairly a large number of Malay Mss. including Hikayats and Kitabs. He lived in Kandy in the latter part of the nineteenth century and probably died in the 1890s.

26b. Ince Ariffin Sallay Wahid lived in Kampung Kertel in Colombo in the late nineteenth century and died in the year 1896. He was a school master in the military school of the Ceylon Rifle regiment where he taught Malay. After the disbandment of the regiment in 1873 he ran his own school in the Kampung Kertel for girls.

27. Ricklefs M.C. and Voorhoeve, P., Indonesian Mss. in Great Britain, London, 1977. p. 63.

28. Soebardi, R., A Book of Caboelek, Leiden, 1973, pp. 331-349, mentioned some of the Javanese-Arabic religious treaties used in peasantrens.

29. Sameem, M., "Madrasa Education in Ceylon", National Educational Society Journal, (Sri Lanka), Peradeniya, 1968.

30. Matheson, Virginia, "Questions arising from a nineteenth century Riau Syair, Review of Indonesian and Malay Affars, Vol. 17, Winter/Summer, 1983, pp. 1-6).

31. The original booklet which carries the National Archives of Sri Lanka book registration no 6886 is unfortunately misplaced now. I managed to copy down only few verses when I last read it in 1976.

32. Jumaron Tungku Usmand's father is said to have came from Kedah. He is known to have written several playlets including Orang Hikmat Terchanda (meeting). Information from his niece Mrs. Ruhani Dole of Colombo.

33. Fardu Sembahyang, Alamat Langkapuri press, 1890.

34. Al-sir al Jawi fi talim al-nahu al-Jawi, Alamat Langkapuri press, 1891.

35. Singapore's, Jawi Peranakan, appeared only in 1876, 9 years after Alamat Langkapuri.

36. Wajah Selong lists the names of some sales agents appointed to distribute the paper in the region.

37. Hussainmiya, B.A., "The Demise of an immigrant literary tradition: The Case of Malay Literature in Sri Lanka, Tenggara, No. 16, 1983, pp. 21-27.

38. After I have collected several Mss. in 1974/75 which were in the possession of Mas Ghaise Weerabangsa of Trincomalee, and Tuan Kamaldeen Cuncheer of Kandy, both passed away. Former's house does not exist anymore, which was built on a piece of land donated by the SriLankan government as means to encourage colonists in the eastern port city of Trincomalee. The place is Palaiyootru in the Anuradhapura Road

junction, some 3 kilometers away from the city centre. His children do not know the whereabouts of several other Mss. which the late Weerabangsa did not wish even to loan for some sentimental reasons. Mr. Cuncheer was the first cousin of my grandmother Nenek Indran. He too kept some interesting Malay documents which would not be traced after his death which occurred in 1979.

39. Brakel, L.F. "Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiyyah: The Story of Muhammad Hanafiyyah", Bibliotheca Indonesica, 16, The Hague 1977.

40. Russell Jones, "Hikayat Sultan Ibrahim: The Short version of the Malay text", Bibliotheca Indonesica, 24, Dordrecht, 1983.

41. Inon Shaharuddin bin Abdul Rahman, "Si Miskin: A Structural Study", Monograph 2, Institut Bahasa, Kesusasteraan dan Kebudayaan Melayu, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Press, Bangi, 1983.

42. Mulyadi, S.W.R., "Hikayat Inderaputera: A Malay Romance," Bibliotheca Indonesica, 23, Dordrecht, 1983.

43. Pigeuad explains, "Javanese texts written in Arabic script are called Pegon texts..." Pegon script was popular in Java in Muslim religious communities spread all over the country, where the Malay and Arabic texts were studied. In several cases Javanese texts written in pegon script were left unvocalised, partly or entirely without vowel marks. This variety of Pegon script was called Gundil, hairless. Of course Gundil texts are difficult to read for person unfamiliar with the idiom of the Muslim religious communities where Gundil script was common in use".

44. Eg. Kapitan Salimuddin of the Ceylon Rifle Regiment whilst serving on a recruitment mission in Singapore in 1841 managed to copy down Hikayat Inderaputera made available to him in Kampung Gelam, Singapore.

45. For a study of the emergence of Sri Lankan nationalism see Roberts, Michael (ed), Documents of the Ceylon National Congress and Nationalist Politics in Ceylon, 1929-1950, Vol. I, Colombo, 1977.

46. See Roberts, Michael (ed), op.cit., p. Ixxxvii.

47. For a general account see De Silva, K.M., "The Government and Religion: Problems and Policies, C. 1832-1910 in Ceylon from the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century to 1948, ed. K.M. de Silva, Colombo, 1973.

48. Samaraweera, Vijaya, "Aspects of the Muslim Revivalist Movement in Late Nineteenth Century Sri Lanka in Shukri M.A.M (ed)., Muslims of Sri Lanka, Avenues to Antiquity, Beruwela/Colombo, 1986, pp. 363-383.

49. Baba Ounus Saldin's only published syair the Syair Faid al Abad 1900, mentions specifically that it was undertaken on the request of his friends.

50. Malay literary activities were mainly confined to these two towns as evident from a large number of Mss. mentioning them as the places of their origin. These two towns also witnessed much nationalist cultural activities on the part of many middle class Sri Lankans at the time.

51. Percival, Robert, An Account of the Island of Ceylon, London 1803, pp. 168-185 devotes many pages to a description of the Malays in the island in very early 19th century, and refers to their various cultural practices.

52. Roff, William, The Origins of Malay Nationalism, New Haven and London, 1967, p. 46.

53. Skinner, Cyril, "Transitional Malay Literature: Pt. 1., Ahmad Rijaluddin and Munshi Abdullah, Bijdragen tot de Taal-land and Volkenkunde, Deel 134. Aflevering 4, pp. 466-487.

54. Matheson, Virginia, op.cit., p. 16.

55. Kadutam a Tamil word for paper, meant the traditional marriage registers maintained by Khatibs in Sri Lanka until the early part of the present century.

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5

SYAIR KISAHNYA KHABAR ORANG WOLENTER BENGGALI: A SRI LANKAN MALAY SYAIR, INTRODUCTION AND TEXT

Background

On new year's day, 1819, a serious armed clash broke out in the vicinity of Slave-Island, the military cantonment area in Colombo. It involved two different races of native soldiers serving the British army.(1) On the one side were the Malay soldiers of the 1st Ceylon Regiment, and on the opposing side were the Sepoys of the Bengali (Ceylon) Volunteers of the 2nd Battalion of the 20th Bengal Native Infantry.

The First Ceylon Regiment, consisting of Malay soldiers, was a regular infantry unit which grew out of a long standing Malay Corps under the Dutch rulers (1656-1796).(2) It was reorganised in 1800 on the initiative of Frederic North, the first British Governor of Ceylon.(3) Subsequently three other battalions of native soldiers, namely 2nd, 3rd and 4th Ceylon Regiments were formed which included Sepoys and Kaffirs (of African descent) respectively.(4) Once the British had succeeded in establishing their control on the whole of Ceylon by annexing the last of the Sinhala Kingdom, in Kandy, in the year 1815,(5) it was found redundant and even uneconomical to maintain four different battalions of native infantry units, and consequently these were reduced to only the 1st Ceylon Regiment of Malays and the 2nd Ceylon Regiment comprising of Sepoy and Kaffir soldiers.(6)

Within two years of their success in taking over the Kandyan Kingdom, the British faced a serious crisis in holding on to their power as a result of a massive rebellion which broke out in the hill country region of Uva in September 1817.(7) The available military force at the time, the afore-mentioned two native battalions and the British Regiments of 73rd Highlanders and the 19th Foot were hardly sufficient to quell the Sinhalese uprising, let alone controlling a whole island. When things turned very bad for the British following successful inroads made by the rebels in the hill country, who wiped out the British military outposts at the initial stage of fighting, the then Governor Robert Brownrigg was compelled to seek urgent assistance from the East-Indian Company forces stationed in India,

first from the Presidency of Madras and later from the Fort William in Calcutta.

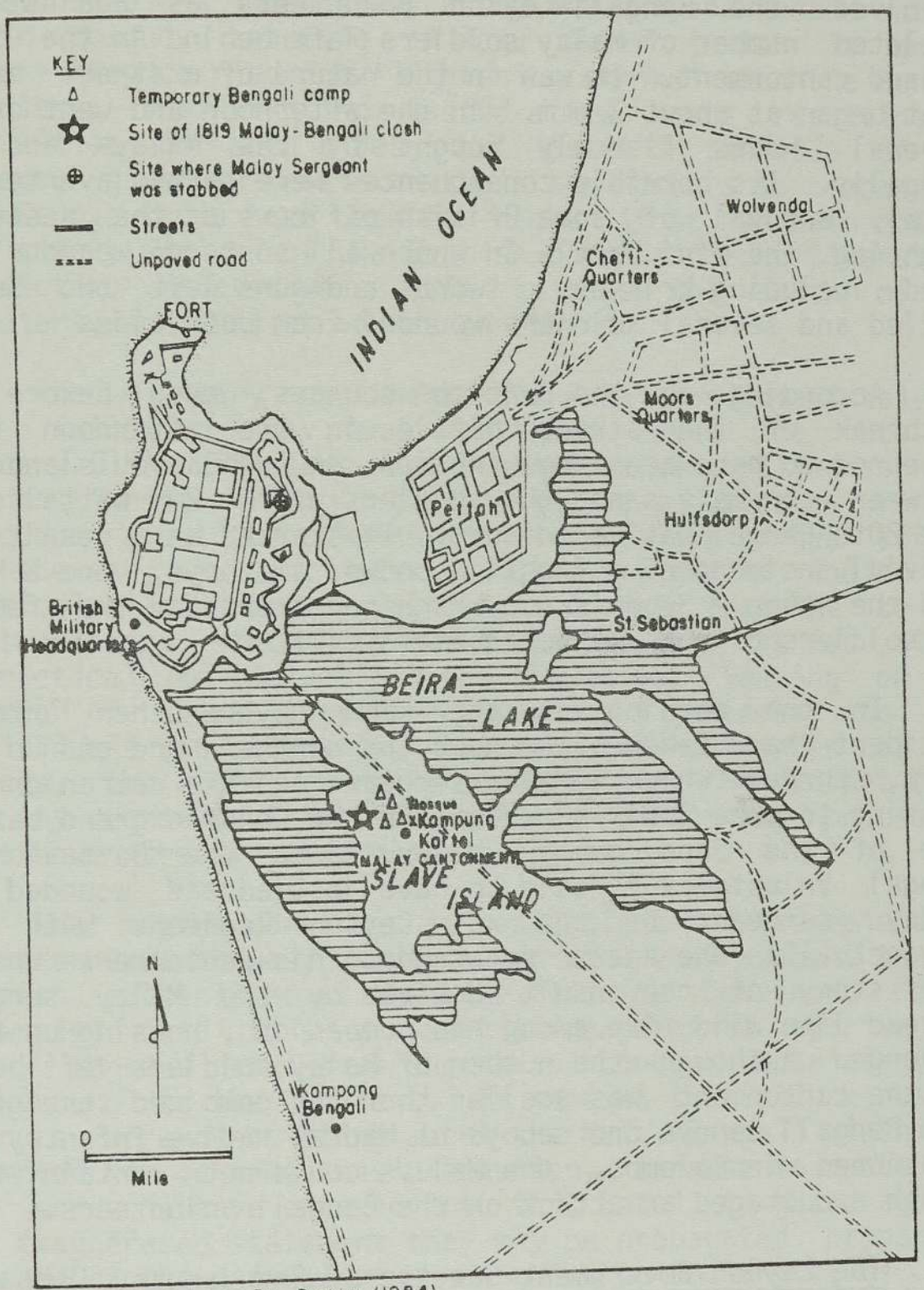
The first batch of foreign troops to arrive from Madras on the 22nd March 1818 were the First Battalion of the 15th Madras Native Infantry and the 2nd Battalion of the 7th Regiment.(8) By September, further reinforcements of troops from Calcutta arrived on the island which consisted of the 2nd Battalion of the 20th Bengal Native Infantry (also known as Bengal-Ceylon Volunteers) and the British 89th Regiment.(9)

The British had ultimately succeeded in routing the rebels by the month of November in 1818. Governor Brownrigg himself could return to Colombo on 25th November 1818, after nearly eighteen months of absence. The other government troops also began to come back to Colombo, including the Sepoy soldiers of the Madras Native Infantry sent to quell the rebellion. As for the Malay soldiers of the 1st Ceylon Regiment, many were still waiting for orders to return home at the year's end, leaving only a company or two of about 200 soldiers remaining in the city of Colombo. All of them were living in the cantonment area of Slave island, (which later emerged as a main residential area for the Malays in Colombo). The area was known to the Malays by the name of Kampung Kertel, (the latter word derived from an original Portugese word Kartel, meaning barracks).

Slave Island alias Kampung Kertel, in the early 19th century was a tongue of land surrounded by a lake (now known as Beira lake) on three sides, almost like a Peninsula, joined to the Colombo Fort by a bridge and a causeway.(10) Originally founded as a safe place to house the slaves of the Dutch, the area grew into a military cantonment in the early years of British rule, and became the home of the Malay Regiment (later Ceylon Rifle Regiment) until it was disbanded in 1873. Slave Island had full paraphernalia of a native military establishment, an administrative block, officer's mess, married men's quarters, a bachelor's mess, military school, and a parade ground etc. Not far away from the Malay quarters, but across the Beira lake on the road leading to Galle, (a Southern coastal town), were found the homes of the Sepoys troops, known as Bengali quarters'.(11)

The Sepoys of the 20th Bengal Native Infantry, arrived on the island at the end of the 1818 rebellion. They were given temporary shelter in Kampung Kertel or Slave Island,

MAP OF COLOMBO: SITE OF 1819 MALAY-BENGALI CLASH



Source: Adapted from R L Brohier (1984)

not far away from the Malay soldiers' residence. Of the five hundred Bengali Sepoys, more than four hundred were placed in their temporary camps in the Slave Island.

The unfortunate incident of the 1st of January 1819 involved the Bengali-Ceylon Volunteers as against the depleted number of Malay soldiers left behind in the Slave Island cantonment. It was in the nature of a street battle that began at about 2 p.m. in the afternoon and went on for several hours fiercely fought by the Malays and the Bengalis. Its horrible consequences were partly averted by timely arrival of some British officers at the scene of fighting. The mini battle in which all sorts of weapons were used including krisses, swords and guns left two Sepoys killed and several soldiers wounded from both sides.

According to the British sources, even before the outbreak of the street battle in the afternoon there appeared to have been some tension in the Slave Island area between the Malays and the soldiers of the 2nd battalion of the 20th Bengal Native Infantry. It started as a result of a trivial incident of a fighting betwen two boys, one a Malay and the other a Sepoy's son which had irritated the feeling of soldiers of both nationalities'.(12)

In the morning on the same day another untoward incident had taken place near the northern end of Colombo Fort, through which a Malay sergeant and his companion were passing to make their purchases in the Colombo grand bazaar. One of the Sepoy guards belonging to the Battalion of Bengal Volunteers is said to have jostled and wounded the Malay sergeant of the 1st Ceylon Regiment with his bayonet.(13) The latter returned to his cantonment whereby the story of the insult received by the Malay sergeant spread like wild fire among his companions, rousing up their revenge. Although the number of Malay soldiers left behind in the cantonment was smaller than the combined strength of the Bengali Sepoys and sepoys of Madras native Infantry then stationed in Colombo, the Malays could not contain their wrath and staged an attack on the Bengali volunteers.

The Ceylon Government Gazette of 2nd January 1819 which first reported this incident states that the affray took place in the afternoon of the previous day at 2 p.m.

The timing of the fighting is significant, because January 1st in the year 1819 fell on a friday. It means that

the Malay soldiers had been carefully planning for a pouncing attack, or more plausibly, that they decided to put off their fight until the completion of their Friday noon congregational prayers which usually lasted between 12.30 to 1.30 in the afternoon.(14) One might perhaps imagine how the Malay soldiers immediately after the prayers rushed out of their mosque, chanting 'Allahu Akbar' (Allah is great) before they carried out 'lightening strike' upon the Bengali soldiers. The fighting lasted a few hours resulting in casualties on both sides, but losses on the side of the Malays, given the ratio of their low numbers as compared to the Sepoys would have been far higher if it had been not for the timely arrival of the British commissioned officers. The vindictive Malays were able to cause the death of two soldiers, and inflict wounds on others.

The military court began its enquiries immediately on the following day and continued until the 8th of January.(15) Witnesses from both sides were called as well as testimonies from outsiders who were able to furnish evidence about the origins and circumstance of the affray. In the end, no conclusive evidence emerged to indict any particular offenders. The court decreed that due to the contradictory statements of the witnesses, it was almost impractical to determine the nature of fighting or the degree of culpability that could be attached to the individuals involved in the clash. The Commander of the Forces, therefore, finally conceded that "he did not think it any degree useful or advisable to direct any proceeding that have already taken place".(16)

What may be construed as seemingly a trivial episode by a modern reader was, but caused some embarassment to the British authorities at the time.(17) The Governor, Robert Brownrigg, had to send a special despatch to Major General Henry Torrens at Horse Guards in London explaining the background to the incident. It appears that all kinds of rumours were circulating about the Malay-Bengali clash that prompted him to take this precaution, because to quote his own words "I have entered into this detail to guard against any exaggerated statement thay may be propagated propaganda by some of the many persons now going to England."(18)

On the other hand, as far as the Malays were concerned, as a party directly invoved in the fighting, the incident seemed to have made a deep memorable mark, not only in the minds of contemporary people, but also in the generations to

come. Thus, an anonymous Malay writer as late the 19th century still could make some detailed reference to the events preceding the fighting as if it had happened yesterday.(19) As we will see next, the 1819 Malay-Bengali clash also became the theme of a Malay 'rhymed chronicle', written almost immediately after its outbreak.

The Syair

Apart from the information provided by the British sources, on which the above summary is based, there also exists an interesting account of the Bengali-Malay clash of 1819 in the form of a Malay Syair, first written in 1820, by a locally-born Malay. It is a first hand, eye-witness account of the actual scene of the fighting, composed as its author claims with the motive of providing a true and accurate description of the incident, because he had been aware of several others in the community and outside who had been spreading exaggerated stories about the clash, the number of deaths, etc.(20)

The syair has been chosen here to be presented in the form of a romanised edition with notes, not because its theme is of some extraordinary interest to students of Malay literature, or because it provides an interesting or added sidelight to the 1819 clash already well documented in the British sources as described above.

The syair is presented here because it is by far the earliest of the original composition among the indigeneous writings that surfaced with the recent discovery of Sri Lankan manuscripts. This is also the first time that an attempt has been made to present a complete sample of a Malay writing from Sri Lanka; earlier our knowledge was confined to only a general description of the type of Malay classical and indigenous literature.

Among the category of 'topical' syairs, i.e. dealing with a description of a contemporary events, written in the other parts of the Malay world, such as Sha'er Kampong Gelam Terbakar' composed by Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir Munshi in 1847, our syair SKKOWB can be considered as among the earliest samples of its kind.(21) Moreover, it would be of some interest to find out how a Sri Lankan Malay author handled a topical syair and how it compares with other similar works of note.

The Author

The syair is the work of one Burhan ibn Lay, (Lai) or (Lye) who claims to be a Priman, a Free Malay (i.e. a civilian, one who was not attached to the colonial government service, especially in the Ceylon Malay Regiment to which many Malays belonged at the time). His father, however, held the rank of Captain in the Regiment. While, the author claims himself to be a Peranakan Melayu (in this context a Sri Lankan - born Malay) his ancestors seem to have originated from Malays of Chinese origin (Peranakan China) from the region of Semarang, situated at the north coast of the island of Java.(22)

Hambalah bernama Burhan Lay
anaknya Tuan Kapitan Layu
daripada peranakan anak Melayu
duduk mengarang rasanya payu

(V. 56)

Although little information is available on the life and career of our 'poet' Burhan Lay, it is significant to note that interest in Malay literary matters seems to have been running in the veins of some members of the Lye family in successive generations. For example, another Sri Lankan Malay Ms. titled, Syair Syaikh Fadlun was copied by one Kapitan Ahmad Sallay Lye in the year 1886, and a decade before a Malay/Arabu Tamil fortnightly newspaper was known to have been edited and published by one Baba Noor Sally Lye.(23)

Unfortunately, the only Ms. containing the SKKOWB, first written in 1820, on which this edition is based, is a copy made sometime in the late 19th century. Knowingly or unknowingly, as will be discussed next, its copyist may have not done full justice to the task of giving us a complete original text of the syair.

Manuscript and its Copyist

The present text is based upon the only extant Ms. which was kindly donated to me by the late Mr. Ghaise Weerabangsa of Trincomale, Kandy.

The Ms. consists of three parts. The first part (Ms. A)in which the text is written measures 18 x 11.5 c.m., and has 30 folios (i.e. 60) pages of which only 31 pages are devoted to the text. P. 32 carries the colophon and reads as follows:

> "Barang siapa yang meminjam di dalam sehari dua hari baik membalikkan jangan simpan selama-lamanya. Kerana yang punya terlalu ingin mahu hatinya. Kitab ini yang punya sebenar-benarnya Baba Mas Anum Ibnu tuan Kapitan Husain jua adanya. Kapitan Sawal nama uwahandanya. Kapitan Birabangsa nama kake(k)nya. Kapitan Husain nama ayahandanya. Mas Anum itu orang yang punya".

On the opposite page of the colophon begins (Ms.B), description of some local herbal medicine in Tamil language but written in the Arabic script. On page 39 is written an Arabic do'a, and at the end the name of Mas Abdul Wahab with the date 3-12-(18)99 is mentioned . The remaining pages are left blank, but the last four pages contain some Arabic and Arabu - Tamil doa's. The last part of the Ms.(C) consists of an Arabu-Tamil story entitled Zainal Mulk Padusya Kisyah. This section is written in blue European paper and measures 17 x 10.5 c.m. and has 28 pages in all. This last section must have been bound later with the above Mss. A and B.

Returning to our text, text A of the Ms., each page contains 12 lines, written one line after another of which four lines make a quatrain, i.e. the same as the four lines as edited. There are altogether 91 verses in the text, the last 4 verses added by the copyist to serve as a colophon. V. 5 and 9 have only 2 lines being half a quatrain (as edited), the assumption is that the copyist must have missed out on the other half of the quatrains while copying (It may be also a case of a six lines verse).

It is written in black ink, and the writing in Jawi is clear and legible, though hardly to be described as calligraphic. The text is brimming with dittographies, but the unfortunate aspect of the text is that since no other copy is available for comparison, it is difficult to ascertain if certain questionable examples of Jawi spellings in the extant Ms. are the fault of the copyist himself; The

deviant spellings may as well be a feature of the original text on which the present Ms. is derived.

The Ms. must have been copied somewhere in the very late part of the 19th century when its copyist, Mas Anum Weerabangsa, was serving as a policeman in the town of Kegalle about (80 K.M. from Colombo on the way to the hill Capital Kandy). According to a note found in page 59 of a still unclassified Ms. (a long blue ledgerbook which contain among other-texts, Kitab Sultan Nasiran, an Arabu-Tamil story) now deposited in the Sri Lankan Department of National Archives,(24) Mas Anum Weerabangsa died on 7th November 1906 (20th Ramadan 1322 A.H.), the later being a convenient date as a termino ad quem.

Mas Anum Weerabangsa, as the colophon in the Ms. states was a son of Kapitan Husain, a Subedar (Captain) of the Ceylon Rifle Regiment, whose father Weerabangsa also had once served in the Regiment in the same capacity.(25)

The family of Weerabangsas was among the few leading Ceylon Malays who had shown active interest in the fostering of traditional Malay literature in the island. This is demonstrated by a fairly large number of Malay Mss. found in the possession of the members in their family particularly the above mentioned late Mas Ghaise Weerabangsa.(26) He inherited much of this literary treasure from his grand father, Anum Weerabangsa, our copyist. The latter, also had copied a few other Mss. including Hikayat Sri Rama. It must be mentioned here that when compared with his contempories such as Baba Ounus Saldin,(27) and Baba Yusuf Jurangpati,(28) Anum Weerabangsa does not rate well as a competent copyist, as is reflected in a multiple of careless errors found in the Ms. copy of our syair.

General Remarks

The syair under discussion is a relatively shorter one when compared with similar topical syairs written elsewhere in the Malay-speaking countries.(29) All in all it consists of only 91 stanzas (of which two stanzas no. 5 and 9 are not complete, although the copyist of the Ms. wrote down these two verses in a continued form, combining them with the other preceding stanzas).

On the whole, one begins to doubt if the only extant version SKKOWB is a faithfull reproduction of the text which

could have been longer in its original form. It appears that the text available to the copyist was not in order, i.e. some pages of the original text were either displaced or misplaced at the time of the copying which may or may not have been noticed by the copyist. Another possibility is that the copyist while , knowing the inadequacy of the text, worked out his own version to make it read like a complete poem.

There is in any case, some kind of disorder in the schemata of events of the 1819 skirmish as presented in our syair. The first 57 stanzas of the text, for example, cover the main sequence of the story. It begins with a reference to the 1818 Kandyan rebellion which shook the British administration of Sir Robert Brownrigg, who quickly despatched contingents of Malay and other troops from Colombo. The rebellion, or 'the war' as the author describes it, goes on for one year claiming many casualties. In the end, however, the British were able to quell it by obtaining reinforcements of troops from India. Just at the end of the war, further contingents of Bengali soldiers arrive at Colombo to fight the Sinhalese rebels, but instead they get locked up in a mini-battle with the Malay soldiers, their own colleagues in the British army. The author then goes on to describe the fierce street-fighting between the Malay soldiers and the Bengali Volunteers. The timely arrival of the British military officials brings the affray to an end saving further casualties. Initial enquiries are made to find the killers of two Bengali soldiers. In the trial at the military Court, the Malays are acquited for want of proper evidence. The Bengalis are said to have lied throughout the proceedings while the Malays present their side of the story in a convincing way. The author then express a great sigh of relief and offers his gratitude to the Almighty Allah for saving his people from a major calamity. Finally, he tenders his apologies as customary with other syair writers and, in V. 62, gives his personal details as the author of the work. Thus, up to this point, the story presented in the syair is sequential and unfolds itself in a logical order.

Beginning from V. 62, the syair again returns to a point when a military sergeant arrives at the scene of the fighting in order to compile a report, but finds everything has been in order as no Malay soldiers are missing from their homes. Then follows a few verses in which the author chides the Bengali soldiers for their unbecoming character,

and claims that he has attempted to present a true description of events as against many wild and exaggerated accounts going round at the time.

Again in V.76 and V.77, the syair returns to the scene of events. This time it is told that the British soldiers who arrive at the scene of the fighting ask the Malay troops to remain at home, of whom a roll-call was taken on the following day. The narration then ends abruptly, followed by details of the place and date of composition.

Tamatlah sudah kukarang sangir
sembilan hari bulan rabi'ul akhir
di negeri Selon terlahir
kisahnya khabar orang Wolenter.

V.83

Seribu dua lapan ratus nasrani hijrat
di bandar Kelumbu habis tersurat
daripada hati sangatlah ngerat
duduk mengarang dengan sengsyarat

V.84

In the following two verses the author again offers his customary apologies. As mentioned earlier The last four verses beginning from 88 to 91 seem to have been added by the copyist to serve as it's colophon.

Spelling, Language, and Style

Our Ms. exhibits many divergencies in its method of Jawi spelling when compared with either the system of Munshi Abdullah's edition of Sejarah Melayu or the modern spelling practised in Malaysia, (e.g. in the Jawi daily newspaper of Utusan Melayu). Also, as is common with other old Malay Mss., our Ms. has its share of inconsistencies in spelling. It is not certain at this stage to conclude whether our copyist adheres to a system of spelling adopted commonly by other Sri Lankan Malay copyists.

Furthermore the copyists exhibits some confusion in rendering words of foreign origin: e.g. J-b - l or Jeneral

(6c), p-l-n-t-r for Wolenter and so on. Even in the case of Arabic words, especially a word like d'aif, (a familiar word used often in other Malay syairs), is spelt as l -an-g-p, which suggests that the copyist was merely doing some guess work in places where he was not able to read original spellings perhaps spelt rightly in the original text.

Despite such shortcomings, the Ms. has some value, as the only extant copy made of the earliest known locally-produced Malay, reflects to some extent the usage of the literary language as practised in the early part of the 19th century among the Malay community in Sri Lanka.

Vowels:

The copyist had been somewhat parsimonious in the use of vowels, especially with 'alif'-a.

i.e. k-r-ng for Karang (1c)

m-n-j-d-y for Menjadi (3a)

S-r-b for Serba (13b)

W-y for Waya (16b)

and at other instances an extra 'a' is introduced in place of 'é', the initial pepet sound.

paperangan for peperangan (28c)

sapanjang for sepanjang (29d)

malihat for melihat (63a).

(Insertion of alif in places of pepet in the initial syllables is characteristic of certain dialects especially Minangkabau as shown by Skinner (1963:53) Kathirithamby - Wells and Yusoff Hashim (1985:xiii), and in Banjarese dialect as shown by Ras (1968:9)).

Our Ms. substitues alif for pepet-sound only occasionally, although the conjunction word dengan is spelt

throughout as dangan, a feature common to almost all Malay Mss. of Sri Lankan origin. It may be noted here that in the recently published Syair Muko Muko by Kathirithamby-Wells and Yusof Hashim (1985), its editors have opted to retain the spelling dangan in their romanized version, because of its consistency and the Minangkabau dialect's influence in the language and spelling used by its author.

Another notable feature in the use of vowel 'a' is, that when a word has both an open 'a' in the penultimate and in the final syllables, here it is inserted in the final syllable only, which is usually the opposite to the accepted norm of Malay spelling.

i.e. b-h-s-a for bahasa (1b)

t-n-a- for tana(h) (2b)

r-y-a for raya (3c)

b-h-y-a for bahaya (3d)

Insertion of the letter 'y' in some words like 'pegang' as p-y-g-ng, which renders the pepet sound 'é' in the initial syllable as long 'e', and in the final syllable of boleh as b-w-l-y - i.e. boley (10d) are perhaps indications of the influence of the copyist's spoken dialect.

Consonants:

Very often no graphic distinction is made between:

i. Kh for h-

Khabar is always written as habar.

ii. K for g:

sekenap instead of segenap (12d)

kempit instead of gempit(a) (29b)

kerbang instead of gerbang (33c)

iii. Sy for s.

bahasya (1c) for bahasa

desya (1d) for desa

merasya (22c) for merasa

syayang (22d) for sayang

iv. 'ain becomes ng - with three dots placed on top of the letter ain.

i.e. Sangir for Syair (1c)

Sangat for sa'at (8d)

This feature is typical of Javanese mss., letters that are used to represent Arabic sounds unknown in Javanese sometimes have three dots placed over them (Drewes: 1969: 5)

i.e. Shin as S, ain as ng, qaf as K. Also letters s, sh, and s are used interchangeably in Javanese.

v. Glottal stops represented by ڤ Kaf- K is virtually absent in the Ms.

Thus henda for hendak (37a)

tida for tidak (6b)

vi. Another interesting aspect of the influence of Javanese writing is absence of 'h' especially in final syllables.

tana for tanah (2b)

datangla for datanglah (3d)

apala for apalah (17a)

musu for musuh (11c)

jatu for jatuh (32c)

The same is the case in word initial an medial positions, as well.

abis for habis (10a)

jumlanya for jumlahnya (2a)

perintanya for perintahnya (6c)

rumanya for rumahnya (20b)

but there are also exceptions, an indication perhaps to show that the copyist was aware of the 'h' sound in word initial, medial and final positions.

hari (3c)

hati (8d)

berbilang (23c)

darah (32b)

vii. Nasals:

These is some confusion in rendering the nasals of m - and n; frontal nasals (dental and bilabial) tend to become velar nasals.

bohom for bohong (53b)

turung for turun (14c)

belakan for belakang (41d)

viii. d is occasionally spelt with a dot underneath, to represent perhaps a dental ḍ sound (again influenced by Javanese spelling).(30)

sendiri 4b

kejadi 4c

dan 12c

debu 12c

Language and Style

On the whole, as a traditional Malay syair, the SKKOWB rates reasonably well from the points of view of style and language despite the influence of some localisms. It is written in a clear and straight forward language sufficient to be understood and appreciated by a an audience who are adept in listening to or reading classical syairs.

The writer exhibits his command of the language, besides being able to communicate in an effective manner his feeling of awe, suprise and fear deriving from his eye witness account of a fierce - street battle in which his people nearly perished as a result of the might of their opponents. Although confined only to few verses, his description of the mini-battle is full of vitality and imagination.

pedang-memedang berlompat-lompat
tembak menembak terlalu gempit(a)
ada yang lari terbangkit-bangkit
sepanjang jalan tida(k) bersempat

v.29.

and

ada setenga(h) berlari-larian
darah mengalir sepanjang jalan
jatu(h) terlolong reba(h) pingsan
setenga(h) ingat terkejut-kejutan.

v.32

He even laces his account of the battle with a streak of humour by making a pun at his own status as a civilian Malay who did not want to place himself in a a position to exhibit his bravery in a dreadful situation like that.

kerana hamba bukan orang kompeni
henda(k) berperang menunjuk berani
sebabnya aku orang primani
makanya itu hendak sembunyi.

v.24

The author thus writes with comparable ease, having at his command a reasonably good vocabulary which he is able to make use in conformity with the accepted traditional form of syair which as Skinner (1963: 6) explains; "The syair metre, very briefly can be summed up as follows: four 'full' words (as 'minimum free forms', i.e. including bound morphemes) per line and with an end-rhyme of A-A-A-A. "Considering the fact that virtually all narrative verse in Malay is written in the syair metre it is left to the authors to show their ingenuity in handling a metre of such simplicity so that they do not bore their audience." In effect several Malay syairs falter in this regard, because it is not always possible to adhere to a uniform end rhymes with the limited vocabulary at hand. In practice however, "the Malay syair writer is in a position to make light of a requirement that would cause considerable difficulty in a language in which the phonemic structure of the morphemes was less restricted than it is in Malay." A good syair is characterised by a good techniques in variation in the choice of words particularly in the end - rhymes. Ince Amin's Syair Perang Mengkasar (ed. Skinner, 1963) and Syair Ken Tambuhan (ed. Teeuw, 1966) are examples of good Malay syairs.

By comparison, in his bid to keep up the limitations posed by end-rhymes, our writer at times resorts to easy way out by repeating the same words in the end of lines in a same verse.

ada kepada suatu nan hari
waya ham tiga petang hari

v.16

and

apala(h) lagi hendak bicarah
di dalam negeri empunya cederah
sebab Melayu orang angkarah
sedikit terbole(h) menjadi cederah.

v. 17

In other instances he uses words ending with somewhat related phonetic sounds, such as laterals r, and l as in Wolenter, and R(a)ifel, (v.18) and voiceless stops t, and p, as in terkejut and ditutup (v.19) which are rendered by different graphemes in (Arabic-Jawi spelling; some modern day editors of syairs, would consider such cases as examples of bad rhyme (Raja Iskandar: 1964).

Obviously SKKOWB is not written in the standard Riau-Johore Malay. There are number of examples to show influence of localisms in the poet's language. This is to be anticipated in a person whose ancestors belonged to Peranakan China Chinese-born family once domiciled in Semerang, a north-coast city on the island of Java. As in the city of Batavia, where the Malay/Indonesian language grew out of a 'trade-language' or bazaar-Malay, the Malay spoken in cities like Semarang had its own characteristics. One such characteristic typical of bazaar-Malay is the use of simple verbal roots in preference to affixial forms of the verb.

This we see in several places in the syair. For eg. in v.7 the last line has bantu as a verbal noun which in the normal practice would have a suffix particle - an. i.e. bantuan. This is also the case with the word bisa in v.34.

In v.48,the verb dapat is without any affixation. Perhaps an interesting example of colloquial Malay can be seen in strings of verbal roots such as berlari datang (41a), di suruh cari (47d), and Ku pandang-pandang (25b) etc.

It must be admitted, however, that such deviant linguistic expressions are relatively minimal as compared with certain other syairs written subsequently in Sri Lanka, and particular reference can be made to Syair Shaikh Fadlun. One of its copies made in 1886 by Ahmad Sallay Lye, probably a descendant of our author, has quite a higher quota of 'localisms', than what we come across in our syair, possibly because the former was written down somewhat in a later period when the standard of literary Malay in Sri Lanka was declining fast.

By comparison, SKKOWB can be considered as one of the reasonably well - written Sri Lankan syairs, though not equal to any other syairs writen in Riau-Johore language and tradition.

Synopsis of the Syair

Stanza No.

1. Introducing the syair.

2. Listen to the tale of the scandal about the (Bengali) Volunteers.

3. Uproar in Colombo over the news (of the outbreak of rebellion in the hill country).

4. General (Robert) Brownrigg is taken by surprise.

5-6. The Malay (soldiers) receive orders to march to Kandy; hardly anyone left behind in Colombo.

7. The fighting rages on, and the English authorities receive quick reinforcements.

8. The war goes on for almost a year, with growing casualties.

9. The war ends and the soldiers return from the hill country.

10. As the war ends, the (Bengali) Volunteers (from abroad) arrive at the Island.

11. Soldiers from Bengal brought to fight the (Sinhalese) rebels, instead they quarrel with Malays.

12. Five hundred Benggali soldiers in Colombo.

13. They are divided into four. They are asked not to move until further orders.

14. First Ceylon Volunteers return from Kandy and take up their residence in Kertel in close proximity, to quarters of 'Ceylon Rifle' soldiers.

15. As the Malay soldiers return to their residences, a disaster was to strike them.

16. On the first day of the month of January, at 3 in the afternoon, a calamity strikes the town (of Colombo).

17. Since the Malays are an arrogant people, even a slightest provocation can cause a confrontation.

18. Volunteers and Rifle company men clash with each other.

19-22. Commotion and uproar break out. Abuses are hurled at each other, and guns are fired. The frightened onlookers lock up their doors, and others run for cover.

23. Author admits that any person like himself would certainly vanish from the scene of fighting when faced with so many swords and weapons.

24. Author says that since he does not belong to the Regiment, and because he is a civilian, he chose to hide himself away from the scene of fighting.

25-27. The author expresses his fear and as the fighting worsens. "Better to stay at home than running down the street."

29-33. Description of the fighting.

34. The Volunteers who came to show their might ultimately gets routed.

35. There is a Bengali Quarters across the Kampung Kertel towards the (southern) city of Galle.

36. The Bengali Regiment soldiers in the Kampung Bengali hear about the Malay fighters.

37. The Bengali Regiment arrives to attack the Malay soliders.

38-40. A further description of the new outbreak of fighting.

41. I saw a deep wound on the back of a fallen sepoy.

43-44. The English (authorities) arrive at the scene of the fighting and they quickly separate the parties.

45. The Malays are told to hide their weapons.

46. As the fighting reaches its end, the soldiers are lined up for inspection.

47. On an order given by General Brownringg, Bengali Volunteers come to look for the killers.

48. General Brownrigg did not know how to punish the offenders.

49. After a thorough search, they could arrest only two or three persons.

50. The offenders are brought before Military court.

51-52. The Malays present their side of the story in a humble manner.

53. Bengali Volunteers were not telling the truth and falter in the witness box.

54-55. Through the will of the Almighty god and the blessings of the Prophet Muhammad, Malays are acquitted in the trial and saved from a great disaster.

56-62. Author's apologies, "I am locally born Malay and 'My name is Borhan Lay, son of Captain Lay."

63. (English) Sergeant arrives at the scene of the fighting and finds that the Malay soldiers stay in their places.

64-69. Although the Malay soldiers were weak, the strong (contingent of) Bengali Volunteers could not overpower them, because the latter were not a god-fearing people.

70-71. The author expresses a sigh of relief and thanks the God for saving the Malays from the disaster.

73. "I have not told everything in this syair as others do about the exaggerated number of deaths (on the side of the Volunteers) and so on."

74. People exaggerate the number of deaths etc.

75. "If I choose to follow them, my syair would also become a pack of lies."

76. "I have refrained from relating the incidents which I did not see myself".

77-78. The English company arrives at the end of fighting and ask soldiers to line up.

79. Only then the Malays start to ponder over their action.

80-81. Both the Malays and the Volunteers are asked to go home and required to assemble on the following day for enquires.

82. "Not that the Malays only can fight, but through God's help, they were saved from a great calamity".

83. "I complete my syair on the 19th day of Rabiul akhir; I was born in Ceylon, and my syair is kisa(h)nya Khabar Orang Wolenter (Benggali)."

84. The syair was written in 1820 in the town of Colombo.

86. Author's apologies.

87-91. Owner/copyist notes.

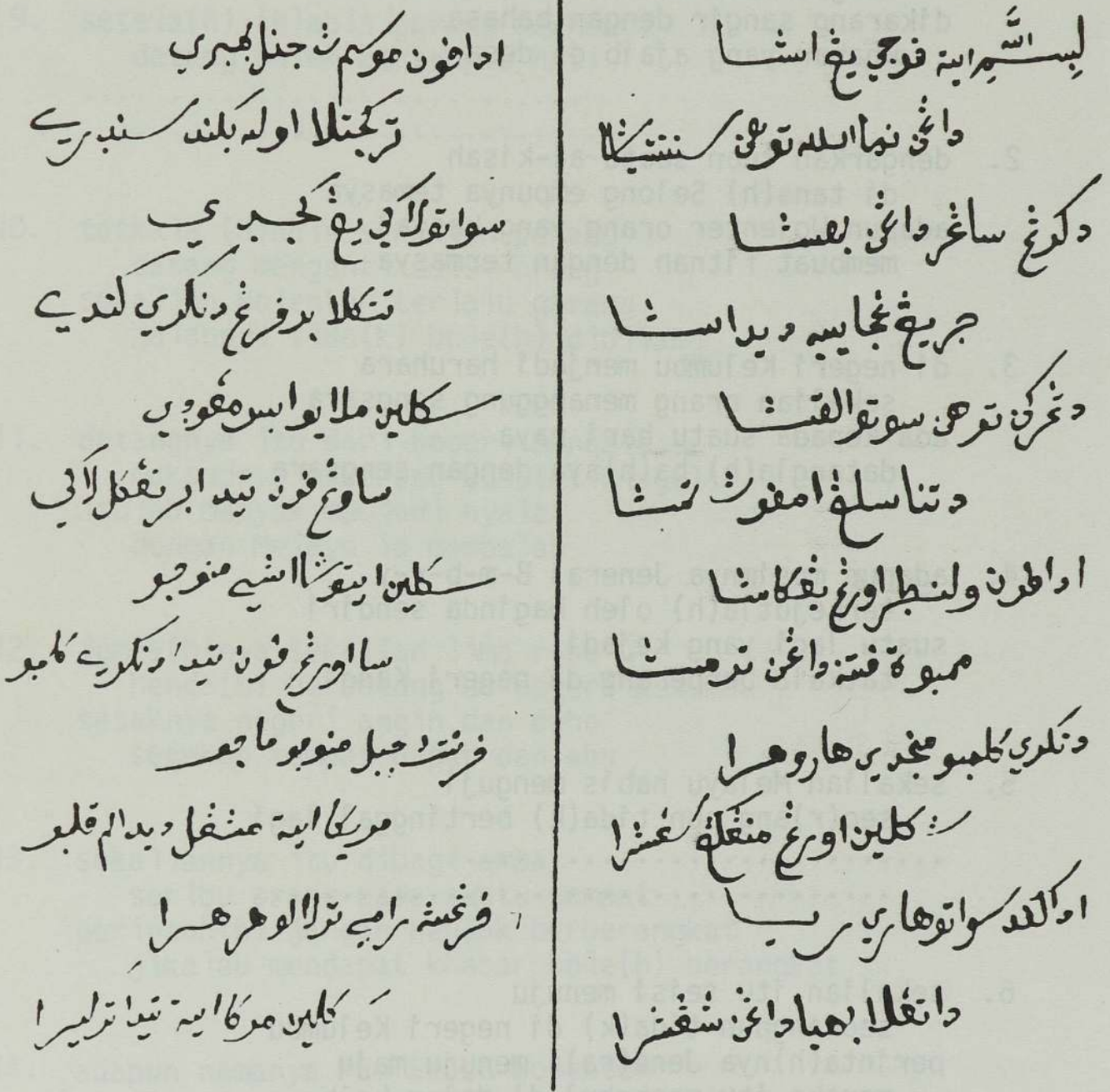
Method of Transliteration

This transliteration of SKKOWB is based upon the principle adopted by Teuku Iskandar (1970). It has been found unnecessary to adhere exactly to the many idiosyncracies in the original Jawi spelling of the ms. For example, it has a very high quota of 'sy' spelt instead 's', and furthermore, as mentioned before, the copyist is not consistent in his spelling-a feature common to many old Malay Mss. Therefore, the romanised transliteration has been standardised here (some glaring examples of deviant spellings are mentioned in the note on spelling and language).

Words of Arabic origin used in the Malay/Indonesian lexicon are spelt in accordance with the spelling rules as found in Poerwadarminta's Kamus Bahasa Indonesia (1976). Arabic words and pharases are spelt according to the system employed in The Encyclopaedia of Islam, but without the use of dots, the hamza, and vocalization.

Brackets indicate material inserted by the editor. Missing words and lines are represented by....

Facsimile of page one of SKKOWB



(Reduced size)

SYAIR KISAHNYA KHABAR ORANG WOLENTER BENGGALI

1. Bismillah itu puji yang esa
   dengan nama Allah tuhan senantiasa
dikarang sangir dengan bahasa
   khabar yang ajaib di desa

2. dengarkan tuan suatu al-kisah
   di tana(h) Selong empunya temasya
adapun Wolenter orang yang kesya?
   membuat fitnah dengan termasya

3. di negeri Kelumbu menjadi haruhara
   sekalian orang menanggung sengsara
ada kepada suatu hari raya
   datangla(h) ba(h)aya dengan sengsara

4. adapun musimnya Jeneral B-m-b-r-y
   terkejutla(h) oleh baginda sendiri
suatu lagi yang kejadi
   tatkala berperang di negeri Kandi

5. sekalian Melayu habis menguji
   seo(r)ang pun tida(k) bertinggal lagi
.....
   .....

6. sekalian itu seisi menuju
   seorangpun tida(k) di negeri Kelumbu
perinta(h)nya Jene(ra)l menuju maju
   mereka itu mashghul di dalam kalbu

7. perangnya ramai terlalu huruhara
   sekalian mereka itu tida(k) terkira
sebab Inggeris banyak sentera
   datangla(h) bantu dengan segera

8. perangnya ramai sahaja yang pasti
   sangat? setahun tida(k) berhenti
senantiasa mendengar khabar yang mati
   demikian bergendang di dalam hati

9. setela(h) (h)abis perang berhenti
   datang balek bersangka hati
.....
   .....

10. tatkala (h)abis sekalian perang
   datang menganti seisi orang
sekalian Wolenter terlalu garang
   jalannya tida(k) bole(h) dibilang

11. datangnya itu dari negeri Bengela
   maksudnya memerang musu(h) Cingela
itulah banyak menjadi nyala
   dengan Melayu ia membalah

12. jumla(h)nya sekalian lima ribu
   henda(k) berdatang di negeri Kelumbu
sesaknya negeri angin dan debu
   segenap tempat dapur dan abu

13. sekaliannya itu dibagi empat
   seribu orang pada suatu tempat
perintah(h) jangan hendak berberangkat
   jikalau mendapat khabar bole(h) berangkat

14. adapun namanya Pas Selon Wolenter
   diberinya tempat di Kampung Kertel
maka diturung dari negeri Kandi Selon R(a)ifel
   itu pun menghampir di tempat Kertel.

15. beberapa hari antara lamanya
   duduk Melayu pada tempatnya
datang musim dengan kutikannya
   menjadi bencana dengan sendirinya

16. ada kepada suatu nen hari
waya jam tiga petang hari
kepada tahun bulan Januari
datangla(h) bencana di dalam negeri

17. apala(h) lagi hendak bicarah
di dalam negeri empunya cederah
sebab Melayu orang angkarah
sedikit terbole(h) menjadi cederah

18. adapun Pas Selon Wolenter
henda(k) berperang dengan Kampeni R(a)ifel
perangnya itu maka diambil
dibongkar sekalian pagar kayu diambil

19. dengan Melayu terlalu berkalut
sepanjang jalan dimaki bencut ?
sekalian mereka itu tela(h) terkejut
pintu ruma(h)nya sekalian ditutup

20. sekalian mereka itu semuanya terkejut
pintu ruma(h)nya (h)abis tertutup
setenga(h) berkata ter m--y-a-c-w-t
sambil berjalan sekalian dikincit

21. datangnya itu terlalu luput
ku pandangla(h) hamba terlalu takut
berlompat-lompat dimaki bencut?
hati di dalam terkejut-kejut.

22. lakunya itu terlalu garang
sepanjang jalan dibedili orang
sedikit pun tida(k) merasa sayang
siapa bertemu melar(i) pulang

23. pedang dan p-ng tida(k) terbilang
Ilahi nen bukan kepalang
jikalau laksana hamba seorang
kulenyap diberi henda(k) berhilang

24. kerana hamba bukan orang Kampeni
henda(k) berperang menunjuk berani
sebabnya aku orang primani
makanya itu hendak sembunyi

25. bagaimana hatiku tida(k) takut
ku pandang-pandang sangat terkejut
berlari hamba pada suatu pucok
itupun ditengo(k) makiannya bencut?

26. bagaimana hatiku tiada(k) takutkan
sambil berjalan dipalu-palukan
laku(a)nya seperti diharu saitan
sekalian kedai dirombak-rombakkan

27. sebab inila(h) sangat ngeri
bukannya patut melawankan diri
baikla(h) duduk di ruma(h) sendiri
mengapa bersama menurut lari

28. sampaila(h) suda(h) sekalian itu
tempat peperangan di pagar batu
adapun Melayu orang yang tentu
tempat mengamuk seperti hantu

29. pedang-memedang berlompat-lompat
tembak-menembak terlalu gempit(a)
ada yang lari terbangkit-bangkit
sepanjang jalan tida(k) bersempat

30. ada yang memalu dengan batu
jikalau kena nescayalah jatu(h)
tida(k) memandang sala(h) suatu
siapa bertemu segera membantu

31. adala(h) setenga(h) memecah hulu
rasanya sangat terlalu malu
ada sedikit orang yang malu
tempat melawan sambil berpalu

32. ada setenga(h) berlari-larian
darah menga(l)ir sepanjang jalan
jatu(h) terlolong reba(h) pingsan
setenga(h) ingat terkejut-kejutan

33. setenga(h) lari-berlari pulang
kanan dan kiri tida(k) memandang
jalannya itu tergerbang-gerbang
lalai dan rindu bukan kepalang

34. tersebutla(h) perkataannya suatu al-kisah
daripada orang empunya kesya
datangla(h) ia menunjuk bisa
akhirnya sekalian menjadi binasa

35. ada sebuah kampung Benggali
jalannya penuju di negeri Gali
seberang Kertel tempatnya sali
ruma(h)nya lagi di pinggir Gali

36. ada sesuatu Rejimen Sy-m pe-t-l-n
di kampung Benggali duduk berhimpun
didengarnya Melayu Pas Selon
terlalu sangat hendak melawan

37. bangkitla(h) sekalian henda(k) mendatang
sebagai rimau memandang orang
sedikitpun tida(k) meniru pandang
tempat berm(eng)amuk tempat berperang

38. ramaila(h) mengamuk tikam-menikam
rasanya retak bagaikan alam
laksana siang menjadi malam
mati banyak di tenga(h) kolam

39. perangnya ramai bukan kepalang
mati dan luka tida(k) terbilang
ada yang reba(h) di tengah padang
ditentengla(h) orang dibawa pulang

40. ada setengah berlari-larian
darah mengalir sepanjang jalan
sambil memegang b-k- di tangan
ditentang orang kiri dan kanan

41. ada suatu Sipai berlari datang
sebela(h) tangan pedang dipegang
setengah jalan jatu(h) telentang
ku pandang lukanya terus kebelakan(g)

42. ada yang menikam berlompat-lompatan
bedil dan senapan berkilat-kilatan
dipalunya tambur berhentikan
itupun tida(k) jua didengarkan

43. kerana Inggeris orang yang esa
memerintah orang terlalu bisa
dilihatnya Wolenter (h)abis binasa
segerala(h) hendak di bawa pisa(h)

44. beberapa tuan-tuan yang indah-indah
di negeri Kelumbu hadir berada
sekaliannya datang bertunggang kuda
itupun Melayu ber(h)entinya tida(k)

45. katanya tuan-tuan apakah nisanya?
baikla(h) berhati teman-teman kitanya
jikalau ada yang empunya senjatanya
jangan terpandang dengan matanya.

46. setela(h) (h)abis sekalian perang
dihimpunkan masing-masing empunya orang
segera di pagar sekalian orang
me(ng)ambil tipu salba sekarang?

47. datangla(h) Wolenter orang Benggali
siapa yang membunu(h) henda(k) dicari
karena perinta(h) raja Jene(ra)l B-m-b-r-y
siapa yang membunu(h) disuru(h) cari

48. jikalau dapat bawa kemari
apa hukuman aku nen beri
dari kanan sampai ke kiri
tida(k) bole(h) ia mahu dipikiri

49. dicari itu berulang-ulang
seorang pun tida(k) hendak dikenang
fikirnya khabar tida(k) yang membilang
dipegangnya lalu dua tiga orang

50. dibawanya kepada tempat pengaduan
dudu(k) berhukum segala tuan-tuan
ditanyakan khabar sekalian demikian
apakah kamu mulanya sekalian

51. berkatala(h) Melayu sambil bertitah
senda menye(m)bah di bawa tahta
ku minta ampun barang dikata
tida(k)lah patek melawan perinta(h)

52. diceritakan segala hal ehwalnya
daripada permulaan datang kesudahannya
didengar tuan-tuan sangat rasanya
terlalu kasihan pada hatinya

53. adapun Wolenter sekaliannya
menjadi bohong sekalian khabarnya
sebab tida(k) dengan sunggu(h)nya
tida(k) bertentu segala katanya

54. adapun Melayu orang yang hina
menanglah segala kata semena
berkat mu'jizat tuhan yang ghana
dijau(h)kan oleh sekalian bencana

55. ditolongnya tuhan seru(a) sekalian alam
sekalian Melayu orang Islam
daripada berkat nabi akhir alam
ditana(h) Selong empunya dalam

56. bukannya hamba menunjuk bisa
mengarang orang empunya kisa(h)
kukarang menduduk senantiasa
akan penghibur hati yang susa

57. hambala(h) bernama Borhan Lay
anaknya tuan Kapitan Layu
daripada peranakan anak Melayu
dudu(k) mengarang rasanya payu

58. karena hamba anak piatu
budi bicara kurangla(h) mutu
senantiasa duduk seperti hantu
tempatpun tiada lagi yang tentu

59. Inila(h) tanda saya yang kUrang?
badan da'if di negeri orang
sesalnya hari rasaku walang
tida(k) seakuan? zaman sekarang

60. janganla(h) tuhan di'aibkan hamba
jikalau kurang baik ditambah
karangan sangat teraba-raba
kerana hati sangatla(h) g(h)ulabah

61. bukannya hamba apa susa(h)kan
badan piatu indah pikirkan
kepada siapa lagi dikatakan
suda(h)lah nestapa mahu diapakan?

62. tamatla(h) perkataan segala ehwal
karangan hamba orang yang bebal
di kereka hamba rasanya sebal
pencarian miskin dagang terjual

63. datangla(h) Syerjen melihat bilangan
seorang Melayu pun tida(k) yang kurang
sekaliannya itu dengan ke(le)ngkapan
berhenti berdiri dengan aturan

64. adapun Wolenter orang utama
meng(h)ilang budi terwastu? nama?
sunggu(h) perbuatannya menjadi terima
dengan Melayu tida(k) bersama

65. sunggu(h)pun Melayu orang kecil
berbuatannya tida(k) lagi dimungkir
sunggu(h) tinggi orang (Wo)lenter
sediki(t)pun tida(k) menaru(h) pikir

66. apatah gunanya serba besar
maksu(d) kurang menaru(h) akal
pikirannya itu terlalu gusar
akalnya pendek kemudian men(y)esal

67. lakuannya seperti mempadam dunia
tidak dipikir Tuhan yang mulia
kurunia tida(k) sebagai dia
makanya berani berbuat gaya

68. apata(h) gunanya serba besar
maksudnya kurang menurut akal
serupa syaitan tida(k) menyambar
makanya lenyap tida(k) berkekal

69. lakuannya seperti mempadam dunia
tida(k) pikir Tuhan yang siya
kuruniya tida(k) sebagai dia
makanya berani berbuat gaya

70. adapun Melayu orang tersiya?
dibawakan oleh segala merbahaya
berkat Muhammad pe(ng)hulu yang sedia
dipiarakan segala hamba dan saya?

71. kita ini hambanya Allah
barang sesuatu dijahukan balah
jikalau hendak tida(k) bersalah
sejalannya tida(k) menjadi celah

72. ba(i)klah hendak kita berta'lim
kepada tuhan rabbul a'zim
memuji segala orang mu'min
yang memerinta(h)kan segala Muslim

73. tatkala lagi hendak berperang
matinya Wolenter tida(k) terbilang
banyakla(h) khabar menyatakan orang
di dalam sangir tida(k) kukarang

74. jikalau sepuluh ada yang mati
mengatakan orang berketi-keti
bagaimana ku bole(h) mengambil di hati
perkataan orang tida(k) pasti

75. jikalau ku karang khabar begitu
nescaya berbohong syairku itu
ku karang khabar supaya tentu
jangan bersala(h) khabar suatu

76. sebab hamba tida(k) terpandang
makanya itu tida(k) ku karang
jikalau bohong kataku te(r)bilang
tida(k)la(h) menerima kepada orang

77. tatkala perang sekalian (h)abis
datangla(h) berkawal Kampeni Inggeris
sekalian jalan berhimpun berbaris
tinggallah Melayu bagi diiris

78. tida(k)la(h) bole(h) ke sana ke mari
sekalian jalan berkawal dan Santeri
tinggallah baharu di ruma(h) sendiri
menyesal terpugar sehari-hari

79. baharula(h) merasa berbuat pekerti
menyesal sunggu(h) di dalam hati
sedikit bole(h) peramat-amati
segerala(h) Melayu membela hati?

80. tatkala suda(h) keesokan hari
sekalian Melayu disuru(h) berdiri
memanggil nama perinta(h) dari
serta membilang suru pe(r)gi

81. sekaliannya disuru(h) pulang keruma(h)
perkataannya baik menunju(k) terima
adapun Wolenter orang bernama
sedikitpun Melayu tida(k) umpama

82. bukannya Melayu sahaja yang bisa
henda(k) berperang dengan perkosa
dikurunia tuhan esa
supaya tida(k) menjadi binasa

83. tamatla(h) kukarang sangir
sembilan hari bulan rabi'ul akhir
dinegeri Selon yang terlahir
kisa(h)nya khabar orang Wolenter

84 seribu dua lapan ratus 20 nasrani hijrat
di bandar Kelumbu habis tersurat
daripada hati sangatlah ngerat
duduk mengarang dengan sengsyarat

85. banyakla(h) khabar ku tida(k) karang
kehendak hati rasa tersenang
duduk mengarang rasaku (w)alang
sakitnya sangat di dalam tulang

86. janganla(h) tuan gusar berbahana
sebab karangan tida(k) berguna
daripada hamba orang yang hina
makanya sangir tida(k) sempurna

87. dengarkanla(h) sekalian sudarah
janganla(h) tuan henda(k) bermarah
bukannya sangir tedapat setara
ku karang dengan gunda sengsarah

88. menurunkan sangir ini
daripada duduk di sini
dengan merindu hati ini
meminta ampun pada tuhan ini

89. Ilahi tuhan rabbil 'alamin
pinta diampun pada segala muslimin
supaya di'ayatkan bertamba(h) angin
daripada tuhan rabbal 'asrul 'azim

90. tamat syair ini pada hari selasa
daripada menurunkan kurang bisa
dengan hati yang sentosa
hendak membaca senantiasa

91. yang punya ini anak tuan Kapitan Husain
di dusun Kegalai (s)eteson
di tempatnya polis istasin
henda(k) membaca jikalau perizin.

TAMAT

Commentary

1c. The original Javanese term for syair is singir (Teeuw 1966: 434). Three dots have been placed on the Arabic letter ain, rendering it to sound as ng. - a practice common to Javanese Mss., and it reads s-a-ng-r (sangir).

2b. Selong or Selon, the name by which the island of Ceylon (later Sri Lanka) was famous in Malay literature. (In Indonesian language 'diselongkan' also has a special meaning of 'to be exiled', indicating perhaps the frequency with which the Dutch banished the Indonesians to Ceylon during their rule in 17th and 18th centuries.)

2c. The copyist seems to distinguish clearly the word Kisah; spelt q-sy-a, i.e. K-sy-a (story) in line 2a from K-a-s-ya (in line 2c). If the latter is the case, Wilkinson's dictionary gives the meanings kesah as restless (W. Sumatran dialect) or if in Javanese as gesah or Kasa, meaning different. The first meaning seems more suitable in the context.

3a. Local Malays still pronounce Kelumbu or klumbu to refer to the city of Colombo.

4a. Lieutenant-General Sir Robert Brownrigg, British Governor of Ceylon from 1812-1820. A person of Anglo-Irish origin, he was lucky enough to catch the eye of the Duke of York during the disastrous campaign of 1794 in the Netherlands, and he became the Duke's military secretary the following year. In 1803 he exchanged that appointment for Quarter Master-General at the Horse Guards, a position analogous then to Chief-of-Staff. He arrived in Sri Lanka on 11th March 1812, and within three years by annexing the Kandyan kingdom, he completed the conquest of the whole island for the British.

4d. Kandi, i.e. the hill - capital Kandy.

4d. Perang in this instance refers to the famous Uva or Kandyan rebellion which broke out in the month of September 1817 and was suppressed by the end of the following year. A modern English author, Geoffrey Powell (1973) refers to this as the third war, (the first war between the British and Kandyans in 1803, and the second one in 1815).

7c. English - sentry, i.e. soldier-guards.

7d. Refers to various reinforcements received by the British in Ceylon from the Presidencies of India and Calcutta in India, i.e. the arrival of the 1st Battalion of the 15th Madras Native Infantry on 20th March 1818, and 3 weeks later the 2nd Battalion of the 73rd Regiment, to combat the rebels in the Kandyan hills.

8b. The Kandyan rebellion of 1817/1818 nearly took one year to be quelled. For these events see Powell, (1973).

11a. Refers to 2nd Battalion of the Bengal Native Infantry alias Ceylon-Bengali Volunteers which arrived on the island when the suppression of the rebellion was nearly over in November 1818.

11b. Local Malay rendering of the words Sinhalese, the majority population group in Sri Lanka.

13a. Refers to the company formation in the British Army. Each company consisted of one hundred soldiers.

14a. A detachment of the 2nd Battalion also known as Bengali-Ceylon Volunteers in the official literature.

14b. Kertel, (Portugese Kartel = Barracks) was the name used by the Malays to refer to the area of Slave-Island in Colombo, which became a main Cantonment under the British rule, housing the headquarters of the Ceylon Rifle Regiment, and its auxillary establishments.

14c. At this stage only the Malay soldiers of the 1st Ceylon/Regiment were equipped with the Rifles. Sepoys in the same Regiment received Rifles in 1842, followed by Kaffirs in 1848.

15c. K-w-t-y-k-nya: Inserting a 'waw' here is an example of an old form of Malay spelling.

16b. Waya is derived from Javanese for time/period - used frequently in Batavian/(Jakartan) Malay dialect, (Chaer, 1976) and also by many Sri Lankan Malay writers.

16b. It must be noted here that English sources, i.e. G.O. of 2nd January 1819 states that the fighting broke out at 2 p.m. in the afternoon.

19b. Javanese word for bullying? The word bencut may be still in use as a form of swearing in the community.

24c. Primani, is actually the Malay ('i' - added for rhyme's sake) rendering Priman, which stands for Freeman; (civilian) one who is not attached to the Government service. In Sri Lanka, this word was specifically used by the Malays to refer to those who were not serving in the army.

26d. According to the British sources, the attack took place near the market place in the Slave-Island cantonment. Kedai here refers to the shop-houses in the Slave-Island Bazaar.

35b. Kampung Bengali was situated at the southern-corner of Slave-Island, and was on the way to Galle, an important Southern Coastal town. Here were housed the regular Sepoys or Bengali soldiers (as they were known in the common parlance).

36. Battalion; at this time, the military units of the Regular sepoys of the 2nd Ceylon Regiment were camped in Kampung Bengali. The first part of the word 'sy-a-m' may be a corruption of camp in English?

41a. Sipai is Sepoy, originally from Sipahi, an Urdu word for soldier.

46d. Salba, could be from Portugese Salvare - to save. Even now this word is used by the local Malays with the meaning, to escape.

50. Military court proceedings started immediately on the following day of the outbreak of the Malay-Bengali skirmish and went on until 8th of January 1819.

63a. Sergeant, a rank in the military.

65. Kecil, or small here must be meant by the author in relation to the smaller numerical strength of the Malay soldiers in town, when compared with the added number of Bengali Sepoys camped at the time in Colombo as part of reinforcements of the British native military force.

66-69. The repetition of the 2 lines in these four verses reminds one of the Pantun berkaitan, technique used by some syair writers of the old order.

88-91. Verses added by the owner/copyist.

Appendix 1

General Orders

Colombo, 15th January 1819

The Commander of Forces publishes for the information of the Army, the opinion of the Court of Enquiry of which Brigadier Shuldham was President, assembled to investigate the causes of an unfortunate Affray which took place between the soldiers of His Majesty's 1st Ceylon Regiment, cantoned on Slave Island, and the Division of the Honble Company's 2nd Battalion of the 20th Bengal Sepoys, quartered near to that Cantonment - and the Lieut. General desires to express His thanks to the Brigadier and the Court for their patient and attentive investigation of the subject referred to them - which commenced on the 2nd and continued by adjournments to the 8th Instant.

Opinion

"The Court having given a patient hearing to such witnesses as have been brought forward from the respective Corps, in addition to those summoned by themselves, whose testimony might lead to elucidate the origin and circustances of the Affray and enable them to carry into effect the instructions of His Excellency the Commander of the Forces, as communicated in the Deputy Adjutant General's letter, are of opinion as to the primary cause, that it originated in a quarrel in the vicinity of the North Esplanade, between some serjeants of His Majesty's. 1st Ceylon Regiment, and one or more Privates of the Honble Company's 3rd Ceylon Volunteer Battalion - the precise nature of which, or the degree of culpability attaching to the individuals concerned in that affray, it is almost impracticable to determine, from the contradictory statements of those who were present: although they are of opinion that the Malay serjeants were aggrieved on this occasion. But it is sufficiently obvious to the Court that the irritation, excited by this circumstance very soon extended to Slave Island, previous to the arrival of the Malay serjeants, and produced the affray which ensued: where in it does appear to the Court that the Malays were the aggressors in the assault committed in the Bazar on the Sepoys of the 20th Bengal Native Infantry."

"The consequences of this affray have been the death of two Sepoys, the number of men wounded in the two Corps, and the nature of the wounds, are denoted by the return of the medical officers in charge, which are annexed to the Proceedings".

"The Court conceive it a duly incumbent on them to express their opinions that every exertion was made by Lieut. Colonel Moffatt, Lieut. Colonel Weston, and the Officers of the different Regiments, to allay the irritation which had been excited and restored tranquility; that after the appearance of their Officers, a commendable spirit of discipline and subordination was speedily manifested by the return of both Parties to order, and that the unguarded assertion to the contrary, which proceeded from Lieut. Crooke, inspecting H.M. 1st Ceylon Regiment, is not borne out by any concurring testimony."

"At the same time the Court are willing to admit that Lieut, Crooke may have been led into this error at the period of the alarm of fire having been given in the Malay lines, as stated in Captain De Bussche's evidence."

"With reference to the accusations contained against Lieut. Crooke in the course of yesterday's examination, the Court in justice to that Officer, observe that the charge has been positively denied by him; by the embarkation of Lieut. Crooke and the evidences whom he had intended to have adduced in contradiction to that statement, has prevented his appearing before the Court for that purpose".

The Commander of the Forces in notifying to the Army under His Command the foregoing, as the result of the investigation of the Court into the causes and origin of the tumult alluded to, has to express his deep concern that an occurance so directly contrary to military discipline, and so fatal in its consequenes, whould have taken place between the two Corps,who had prior to this event lived in that harmony, which ought always to mark the conduct of troops belonging to the same power however differently composed.

To that previous harmony however, and the general habits of good order, and to the strict attention of the Officers of both services, the Lieutenant General confidently trusts, to prevent any future altercations or misunderstanding between the auxiliary Troops of the Hon'ble the East India Company, and the native Corps of this Establishment.

Where so much confusion had prevailed, and where the provocations which led to the affray are so difficult to be traced to their origin. The Commander of the Forces does not think it in any degree useful or advisable to direct any further proceedings that have already taken place, in the instance of the Sepoy of the 3rd Volunteer Battalion accused of attacking the Malay serjeant, by order of Brigadier Shuldham and in so far as any of the 1st Ceylon Regiment are charged with being concerned in occassioning the death of two Sepoys of the Hon'ble Company's 20th Regiment, which charges will stand for investigation before the regular civil Tribunal.

The Men of the 1st Ceylon Regiment have been too long under the Lieutenant General's Command, and too well trained by their Officers not to know how much any irregularity or excess, besides casting discredit on the Corps, must afflict and displease him. He has only therefore to appeal to their own feelings as gallant and faithful soldiers, to make them sensible of the impropriety of what had occured and he is equally satisfied that as the same notions of discipline, and the bad consequences of any breach of good order, must be strongly impressed on the soldiers of the Bengal Army, it is unnecessary for him to enlarge further on a subject so painful; but to exhort the troops of the different nations serving His Majesty in Ceylon, to consider each other as brother soldiers, and live together in that state of cordial friendship, which is so necessary to their mutual comfort, and which will be so creditable to them in their military character.

This Order to be translated into the different Languages spoken by the native troops, and to be read at the first parade, each Corps being under Arms, and all the Officers present.

FOOTNOTES

1. The term 'native' soliders is retained here to refer to non-Erupoean or non-British soldiers serving in the British army. It is true the use of this term may sound 'colonialistic', but in the context of the times we are dealing with, i.e. 19th century, it brings to mind vividly the situation of Asian people attached to colonial military establishment.

2. See chapter 3 for the role of Malay soldiers under the Dutch colonial rule in Sri Lanka. A detailed study based on the Dutch archival documents on the Malay soldiery in Dutch times is yet to be made.

3. For details see Hussainmiya (1984) which is due to be published soon by the Universiti Kebangsaan Press.

4. See Tylden (1952) and Cowan (1860).

5. For details see De Silva, Colvin R. (1953) and Powell (1973).

7. For a better account of the rebellion, see Powell (1973) pp. 235-270.

8. Powell (1973) p. 252.

9. Powell, (1973) p. 260.

10. Cordiner (1807) Vol. 2, p. 37. Brohier (1984) p. 33 states that in the old maps of the area of Slave-Island, which was then a jagged peninsula, was designated as Ije, meaning island, and that name was stuck to it.

11. Cordiner (1807), p. Vol. 1. p. 42.

12. W(ar) O(ffice) 133/14, Brownrigg to Major General Henry Torrens, 96h July 1819, Brownrigg Papers, Despatches relating to Military Matter in Ceylon, pp. 54-56.

13. As above.

14. What is now known as the Wekande Jumma Mosque in Slave Island was founded in 1786 on a grant made by one Free Javanese, Pandan Balie, and was the only mosque at that time in Slave Island for performing Friday congregational prayers. (See Map of Slave Island).

15. Ceylon Government Gazette, No. 902, Colombo, 2nd January 1819, and General Orders (Colombo) of 15th January 1819 (See Appendix).

16. General Orders (Colombo) 15th January 1819.

17. Governor Brownrigg's despatch of 9th July-1819 to Horse Guards in London describes the mood of this embarassment. See note 12, for the source.

18. As above.

19. I have in my possession a Jawi ms. consisting of a collection of syairs and religious notes (still uncatalogued) donated to me by late Mas Ghaise Weerabangsa. This particular ms. has a syair (untitled) which deals with several unrelated themes such as the appearance of Mahadi in Sudan, on Salvation army, respect for elders and so on. There is also a reference to this 1819 clash in the same text that gives the cause of the fight as an insult suffered by an old Bengali man who was having good relations with his neighbourly Malays in the Slave Island. The handwriting of the ms. seems to be that of Mas Anum Weerabangsa, the copyist of owr Syair KKOWB. The former syair give the impression that the story of 1819 clash was still related in the late 19th century.

20. From the context, it would appear as if these stories to which our poet refers are themselves circulated in the form of syairs, and hence the need to counter them in his own syair. Perhaps, it may be conjectured that there were several others in the community who wrote on the same theme which are now lost.

21. Abdul Kadir Munshi's syair is edited in Skinner (1973) p. 22-55.

22. Information from Colophon of ms. 1 of Syair Syaikh Fadlun, which is in my possession.

23. The copies of this newspaper could not be traced until now.

24. These mss. are deposited under Hussainmiya collections Sri Lanka National Archives (Lot. No. 25.50).

25. Weera Wanxa, Captain, Date of Commission 9-12-1802 Date of Rank 30-04-1801 The Ceylon Government Gazette No. 45 of 12th January 1803.

26. Mss. once belonged to Mas Ghaise's grand father Mas Anum Weerabangsa got disbursed in the collections of

latter's daughter Mas Merbani Salim, his son-in-law Cuncheer of Kandy, and son, Mas Dameel Weerabangsa. In my estimate most Mss. I have come across were in possession of Weerabangsa family.

27. Baba Ounus Saldin was perhaps one of the better 'calligraphic' copyist of Mss. His Mss. (nearly 10) are now in the possession of his great grandson Mr. Durham Saldin.

28. He has copied, in my estimate big volumes of Mss. such as the bulky Hikayat Kobad Syah Ariffin, Hikayat Amir Hamza and several lengthy religious kitabs. Some of which were kindly donated to me by late Mrs. Merbani Salim Nee Weerabangsa.

29. For example, Abdul Kadir Munshi's Syair Kampung Gelam Terbakar, ed. Skinner (1973).

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6

'MELAYU BAHASA': SOME PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS ON THE MALAY CREOLE OF SRI LANKA

Introduction

The Malays of Sri Lanka are proud of the fact that they still speak the 'Malay' language. It is widely used as a language of communication in their homes, among their relations, friends, peer groups and elders and children. Until recently Malay had been in use even in formal occasions such as public meetings and during sermons held in the so called Malay mosques(1). Even now regular weekly programmes in the Malay language are broadcast through the Sri Lankan radio broadcasting corporation for the benefit of the local Malay listeners. The continued used of Malay in Sri Lanka is both a cause and effect of the strong cultural identity of the community which the Malays are trying hard to maintain.

Until now little scholarly attention has been paid to analyse the Sri Lankan Malay language (SLM) which is spoken by a community of more than 50,000 strong at present.(2) By contrast, it may be pointed out that several scholarly studies have been carried out in other similar creole dialects such as Sri Lankan Portuguese,(3) and the language of the Veddas which are spoken by only a few people in Sri Lanka.(4)

The present SLM, although perceived by the local Malays as 'Bahasa Melayu', is but a heavily creolised language and therefore widely divergent from the standard Malay spoken in the Malay Peninsula and the Archipelago; A speaker of Sri Lankan Malay may not understand the standard Malay and vice versa.

The SLM had undergone a complete transformation in syntactic structure and grammatical categories. While the standard Malay (SM) belongs linguistically to the group of Austronesian languages, Sri Lankan Malay can be said to belong more to a Dravidian type of language as will be discussed in this essay easy. It betrays many characteristics of a South Asian creole, influenced by either Tamil, or Sinhalese or both viewed from context of Sri Lanka linguistic situation.

The Origins

Historically speaking, the Sri Lankan variety of Malay language is more than 350 years old.(5) Earlier we have seen how The early Malay settlers, a majority of whom originated from the Indonesian Pasisir (coastal) areas, particularly the city-dwellers of Batavia had formed a group identity among themselves through the medium of Malay language.(6) At the time Malay was spoken not only among the native people of the Archipelago, but also among the foreigners who happened to come into contact with the Malay speakers. This variety of spoken Malay had been commonly known as 'Batavian Malay' (Omong Jakarta), 'low Malay" or 'Bazaar Malay' etc. and considered to be a pidgin language in its origin.(7) Since the foreigners had to be talked down to, the language underwent certain system of simplification by way of dropping elaborate inflexion of case and agreement markers. Thus the SLM itself can be said to have been pidginised at the time of its introduction to Sri Lanka. As time went on through a contact situation with the local languages, chiefly Tamil language, SLM underwent further transformation, and realignment.

There is another reason why the spoken SLM was able to survive for so long - a strong written literary Malay tradition among the earlier generations when works of classical Malay were copied and written by the members of the community in Sri Lanka.(8) Samples of this literary Malay can be collected from not only Malay manuscripts copied locally, but also through Malay newspapers such as Alamat Langkapuri published in Sri Lanka as far back as 1869.(9) A Sri Lankan newspaper Wajah Selong was in circulation in the Malay Peninsula and the Indonesian Archipelago in latter part of the 19th century.(10) The language of the newspapers, despite being marked with localisms, nonetheless remained as 'standard' Malay to be sufficiently understood, read and appreciated especially by the foreign Malay readers. Even in their private correspondence the local Malays used a highly classicalised language as can be seen from few extant letters which have survived.(11) Thus it becomes clear that there was a diglossia situation that existed when written Malay was practised until the early part of the century. Until such time when the Jawi script was in wide and popular use, the literary language could survive because of the availability of large number of texts written in the script. On the other hand those who did not learn Jawi, but still showed keenness

in written Romanised Malay was not able to write 'good' Malay as the earlier 'Jawi' educated generations. This was evident in the booklet of poetry published by C.H. Mantara in 1906 which carried the title of 'Panthong Orang Mooda'.(12) The samples of poetry contained in his booklet of pantuns betray the degeneration of Malay language in a written romanized text. Mantara's poetry, if it had any value, was to serve as a documentary proof to point out seepage of a heavy creolised Malay in a published text.(13)

In the early part of the present century there were some attempts to keep up the teaching of Malay by some interested people who published Malay instruction booklets.(14) The examples enumerated in these booklets too exhibit clear traces of creolization of the language. There seems to be an artificial attempt to inject a semblance of standard Malay into the local speech as can be seen from some of the following examples from this booklet:

Bolehkah engkau berbuat itu
(Can you do it)

Jangan benci kepada orang
(Don't hate people)

Anjing itu sudah gigit pada dia orang
(The dog bit them)

Ini rumah sapa punya
(Whose house is this)

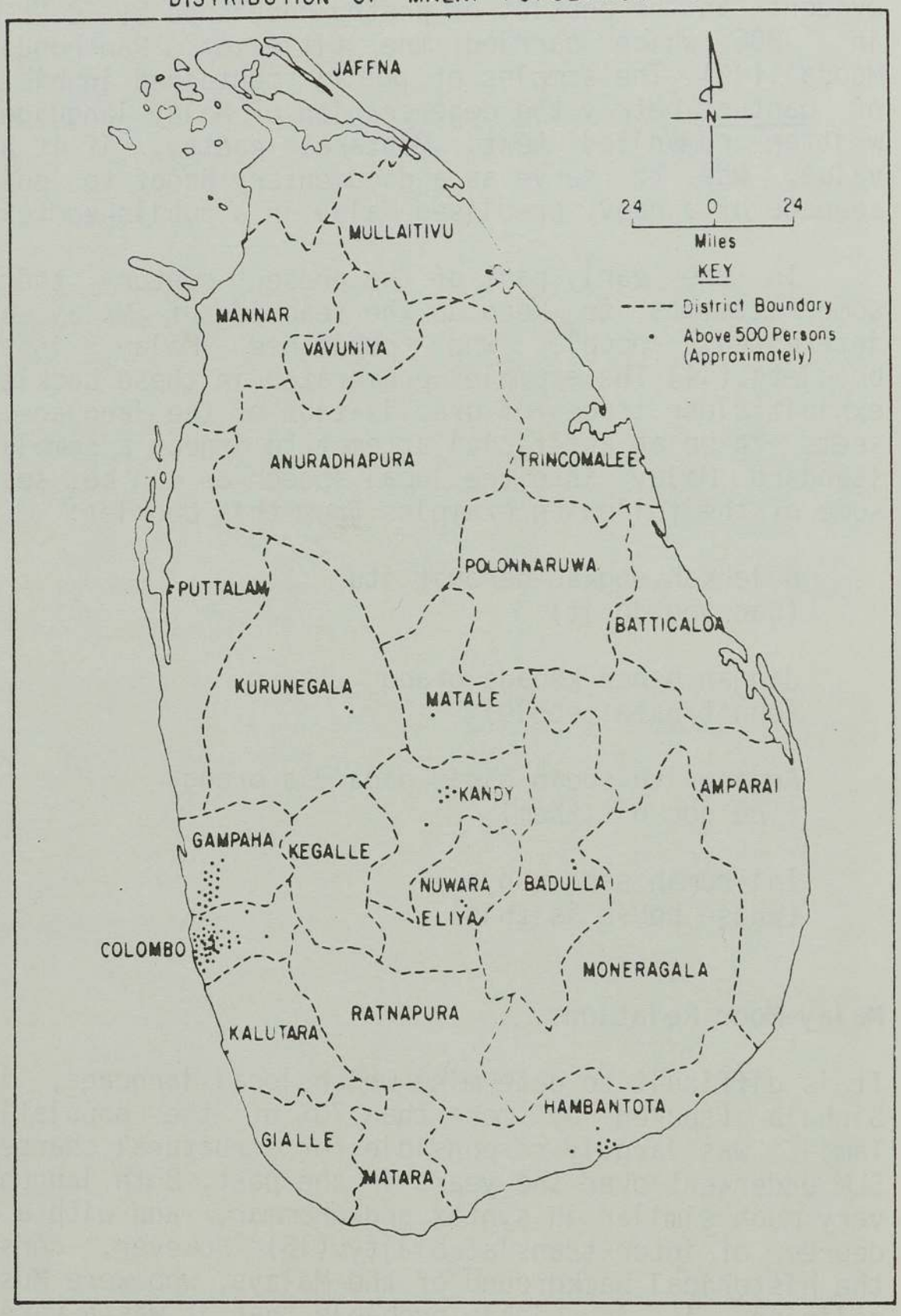
Malay-Moor Relations

It is difficult to determine which local language, if it is Sinhala (spoken by more than 70% of the population) or Tamil, was largely responsible for structural changes which SLM underwent over the years in the past. Both languages are very much similar in syntax and grammar, and with a greater degree of inter-translatability.(15) However, considering the historical background of the Malays, who were Muslims by religion, it is highly probable that it was a variety of Tamil spoken by the Sri Lanka Moor community, their religious counterparts, which was responsible for many of these changes.

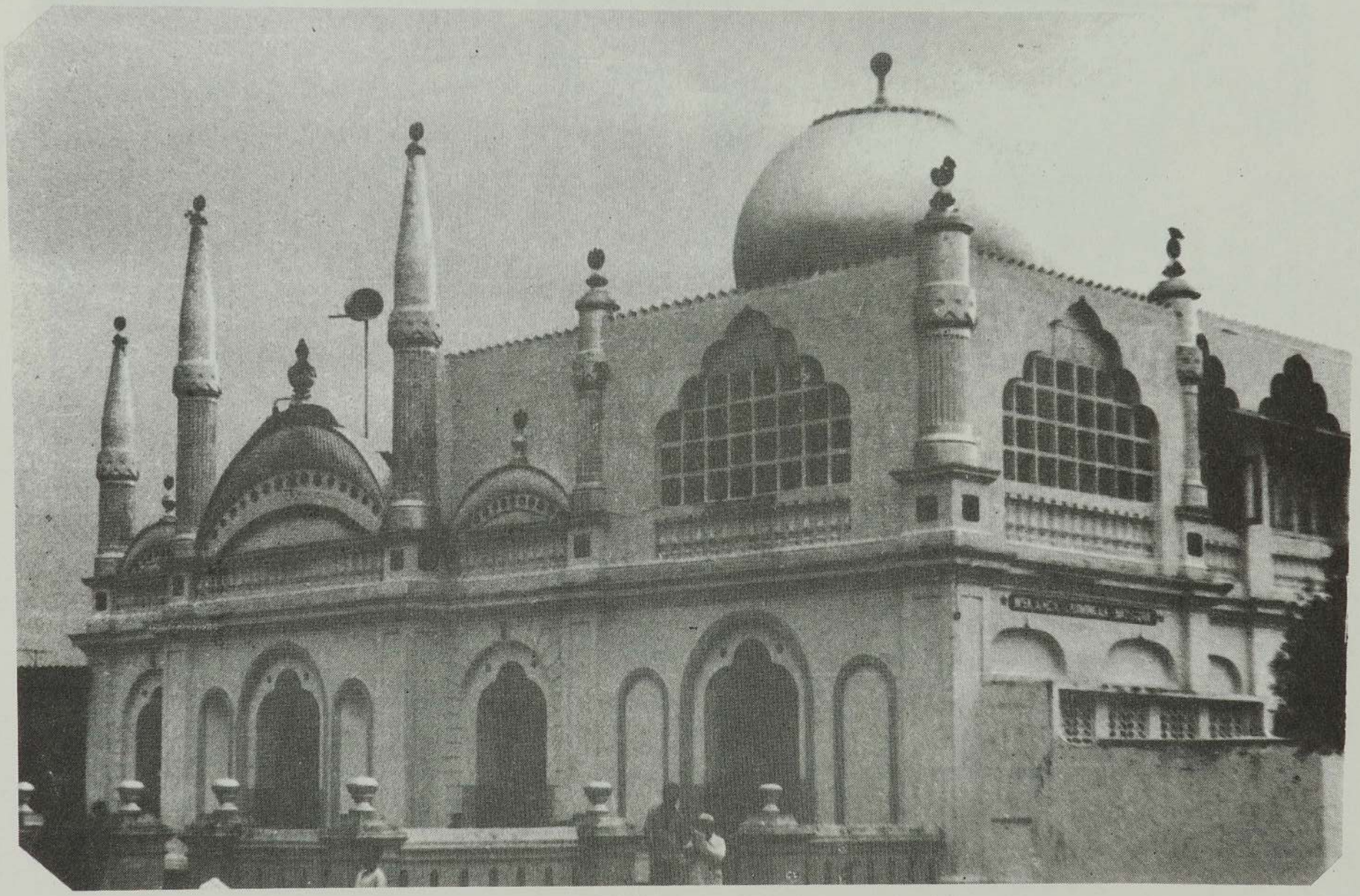
The Malays had been living mostly in the neighbourhood of the Tamil-speaking Moors in the townships of Colombo,

MAP OF SRI LANKA

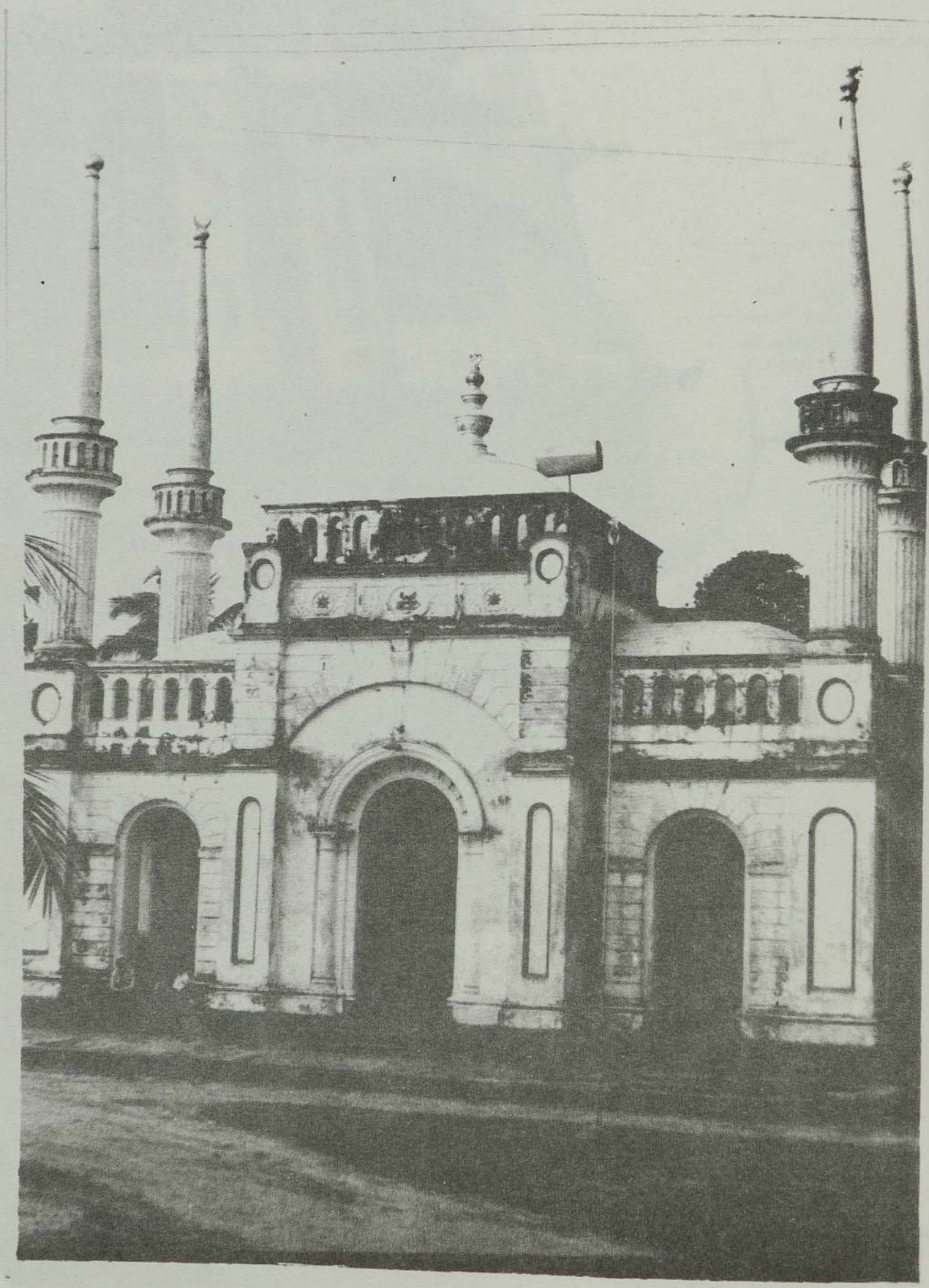
DISTRIBUTION OF MALAY POPULATION - 1981

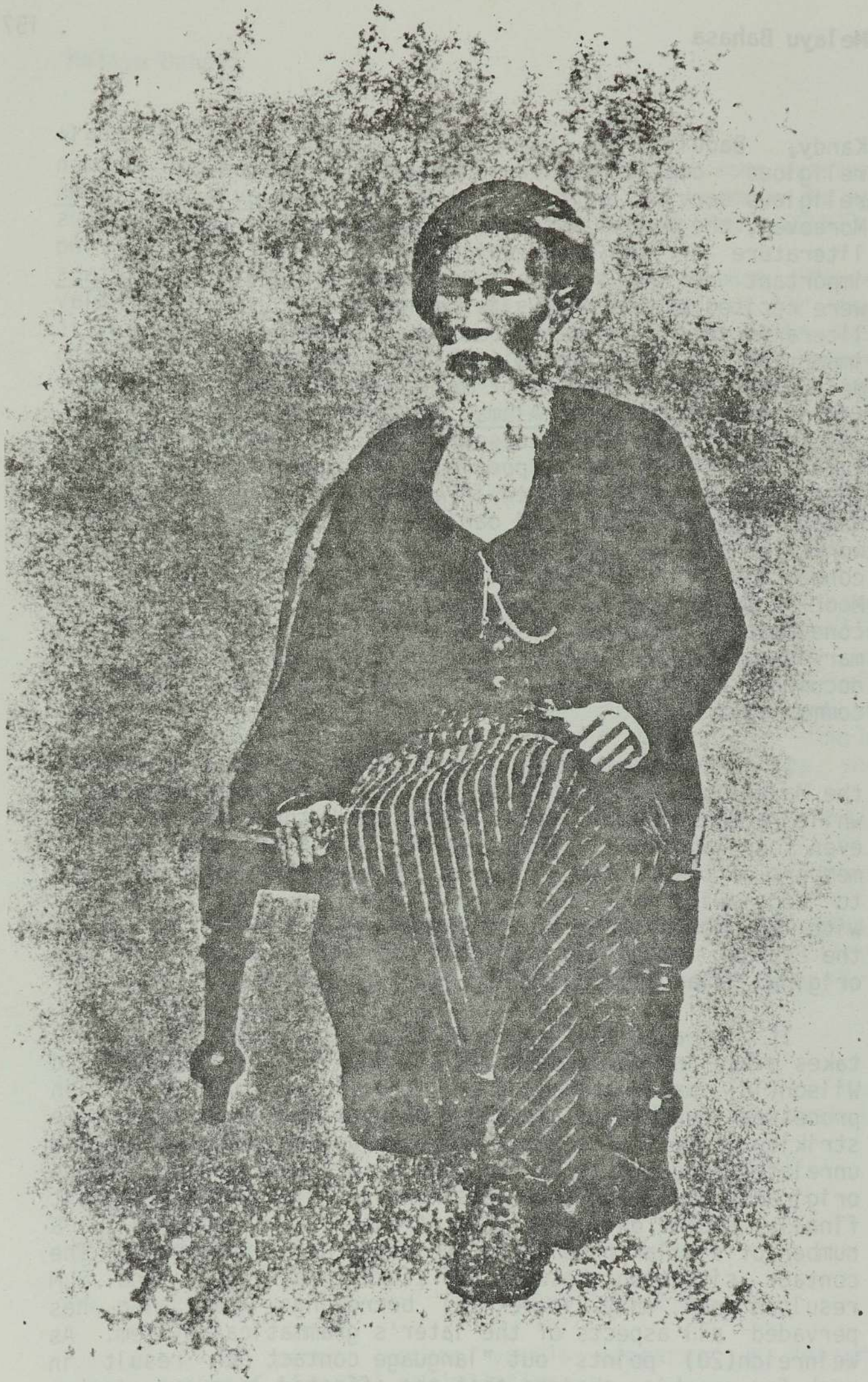


Malay Mosque in Wekande, Slave Island
Built on a land donated by Pandan Balie
1786 A.D.



Masjid al Akbar, Kew Road, Slave Island
Built by Malay Philanthropist, Talip Akbar 1869





Baba Ounus SALDIN

1832 – 1906

Kandy, Badulla and Hambantota. Living close to their religious compatriots was necessary because of common religious services performed by the Moor Moulavis and Imams Moreover, the Malays were much conversant with the religious literature of the Moors which were all in Tamil. During important religious occasions such Tamil religious kitabs were recited by the Malays in their homes. Even those Malay literary savants like Baba Ounus Saldin considered it important to render certain religious works in Tamil into Malay for the benefit of Malay readership.(16) In his fortnightly newspaper, Alamat Langkapuri mentioned earlier, Ounus Saldin even devoted some pages for news and views in Tamil. This was partly possible, because both Malay and (Muslim) Tamil were written in Arabic script. Therefore, any Malay who could read Jawi can also read and even understand works written in Arabu-Tamil. Such was the close literary connection which existed among the members of the Malay and Moor communities in Sri Lanka. Above all, there was a considerable mixture of Malays and Moors through inter-marriages. The early Dutch Thombos (Head and land registers) document a number of such inter-marriages between these two communities.(17)

It is not surprising, therefore, to see most members of the Malay Community have been bilinguals in Malay and Tamil, while a considerable number could speak three and at times even four languages, inclusive of Sinhala and English. As members of the Islamic religion, Malays were often required to code-switching from Malay to Tamil in public dealings with the Moor-Muslims, and therefore, the Tamil spoken by the latter exercised influence in the evolution of the original Malay speech introduced to the island.

It is a common knowledge that language convergence takes place in proven cases of bilingualism. As Gumperz and Wilson(18) have stated that "studies of such diffusion processes during the last few decades have revealed some striking cases of grammatical borrowing among otherwise unrelated languages." In the case of Sri Lanka Malay, though originally belonging to an Austronesian linguistic group, it finally rested on a Dravidian structure, as happened to a number of similar creoles in the South Asian region.(19) The contact situation between Sri Lankan Moor-Tamil and SLM resulted not only in lexical borrowings, but also has pervaded all aspects of the later's grammatical system. As Weinreich(20) points out "language contact can result in such far reaching changes that the affected language assumes a different structural type."

In what follows, I have attempted to show some extreme examples of such far reaching changes in Sri Lankan Malay (SLM) through the influence of Sri Lankan Moor Tamil (SLMT).

Unfortunately, even in the case of Sri Lankan 'Moor-Tamil', hardly any research has been carried out for any documentary comparison with SLM. However, Ian Smith has compared a somewhat similar variant of a Sri Lankan colloquial Tamil, namely Batticaloa Tamil with Batticaloa Portugese for his doctoral research on Sri Lanka creole Portugese. The examples shown in his thesis are very helpful in comparing SLM with the Batticaloa Tamil colloquial; of course, unlike in the case of phonology, Baticaloa Tamil does not differ much with SLMT in aspect of grammar.

This exercise is not undertaken with any formal training in linguistic techniques - in the absence of any worthwhile study on the subject, the following description may be considered only as a bench - mark study on SLM. It is left for the trained linguists to carry out further field work to elucidate some of the assertions arrived through the simple examples shown in the areas of phonology, morphology and syntax of SLM.

1/ Phonological Changes

Some of these changes are common to other Malay creoles, such as Ambonese Malay, while certain changes are peculiar to SLM, influenced by local Tamil dialects especially Sri Lankan Moor Tamil.

i. Vowels

a/ There is no (é) pepet sound in SLM. Omission of pepet in initial position:

SM / kepala	-	SLM / kpala,
SM / belajar	-	SLM / blajar
SM / keliling	-	SLM / kluling

In place of pepet, other vowels appears, a feature characteristic of vowel assimilation:

/ é / for / i /

SM / lekas	-	SLM / likkas
SM / lebih	-	SLM / libbi

In other cases

/ é / for / u /

SM / penuh	-	SLM / punnu
SM / delapan	-	SLM / dulapan
SM / sebab	-	SLM / subbat
SM / sebelah	-	SLM / subla

Vowel - Elision

Elision of vowels is quite marked in SLM speech.

siapa	-	sapa (who)
kerbau	-	kurbo (buffalo)
suara	-	swara (voice)
kalau	-	kalu (if)

ii. **Consonants**

b/ The deletion of / h / in word initial, medial, and final position is common in SLM.

Word initial:

SM / habis	-	SLM / abbis (finish)
SM / hati	-	SLM / ati (heart)

Word Medial:

SM / sahaja	-	SM / sajja (only)
SM / lihat	-	SM / liyyat (see)

SM / baharu - SLM / baru (news)

Word Final:

SM / seblah - SLM / subla (side)

SM / berkelahi - SLM / bukkulay (fight)

SM / sudah - SLM / suda, su (already)

c/ Absence of glottal stops:

Glottal stops so characteristic of SM is almost totally absent in SLM

SM / anak (glottal end): SLM / anak (final voiceless stop) (child)

SM / pendek : SLM / pendek (short)

d: Nasalisation - dental nasal becomes velar nasals.

SM / simpan - SLM / simpang (keep)

SM / bukan - SLM / bukang (no, not)

SM / tahun - SLM / tawong (year)

f/ Most words in present SLM are bi-syllabic, rarely one find a word with three syllables, and words with four syllables are certainly absent.

SM / belakang - SLM / blakang (rear, back)

SM / berlajar - SLM / blajar(study)

SM / kenapa - SLM / knapa (why)

(This can be seen as an influence of Omong Jakarta, a feature which has influenced modern Indonesian as well).(21)

f/ Gemination occurs frequently in SLM

SM / keras - SLM / kirras (hard, stiff)

SM / semua - SLM / samma (all)

SM / sebab - SLM / subbat (because)

g/ Where SM has mostly a syllabic structure of CVCVC, SLM can omit vowels between consonants resulting in consonantal clusters.

This is obvious from examples shown above. Due to omission of vowels leading to consonantal clusters, omission of / h /, and gliding and so on, usual SM with words having more than two syllables have been reduced to two syllabic words.

2/ The Morphology and syntax of SLM

SLM is totally at variance with SM in aspects of grammar. SLM has typical traces of a South Asian creole, in so far as the inflexional system is concerned. Whereas SM has a full complement of prefixes and suffixes in the formation of both nouns and verbal morphs, SLM has reduced it to a minimum; and several of these have been transformed into fixed or 'fossilised' forms.

Also typical of Bazaar-Malay, SLM prefers to use simple verbal roots in place of affixial forms. In fact, many of the SM inflexional forms for e.g., Men (Tr) Meng ... kan, (Tr) Meng ... i; memper ... i do never occur in SLM speech.

Despite the Tamil influence, SLM does not adhere to the inflexional system of SLMT. SLMT verbal morphs are marked only with suffixes whereas SLM uses both prefixes and suffixes.

Below is a table to show some aspects of verb morhpology of SLM. The verbal base, Makan is used as an imperative and used in the contexts of a second person - Dey (He) - SM Dia.

Table 1

CATEGORY	SLM	GLOSS
Imperative	Makan	Eat
Present	Ere-Makan	Eating

Past	Su-Makan	Ate
Potential	Ati-Makan (past Su. Makan-Abbis)	Can eat etc. Have eaten (finished eating)
Perfective	(Potential) ati Makan abbis	Would eat (and fiish)
Permissive	Ber-Makan	Let him eat
Negative	Ta-Makan	Not eating
Volitive-Negative	Tuma-Makan	Won't eat, wouldn't eat
Negative Imperative	Ta-Makan-Kalu	Don't eat
Conditional	Makan-Kalu	If eat
Infinitive	Me-Makan-na	To eat
Verbal Noun	Makan-an	'Eating'

The above inflexional system as practised in SLM can be understood only in relation to SLMT because of substantial correspondence between the system of semantic structures of both languages. This will become further evident in the examples of syntax shown below (using of course simple sentence structure).

Word Order

The usual word order in SM is SVO, or in terms of clause structure NP + V + NP.

SM - Amat makan nasi (Amat eats rice)

The word order in SLM follows exactly the SLMT. In non-copulative sentences it follows SOV structure.

SLM. Amat nasi makan.
(Amat rice eat)

In fact, this aspect of word order is quite common among speakers of Indian origin in Malaysia, especially the Tamil, and has a long tradition with Bazaar-Malay.

PP Order

SM has only prepositions whereas SLM has many variations of postpositions, typical of Dravidian languages.

SM : Dia tinggal di rumah
(He stays at home)

SLM : Dey ruma-ka ere tinggal (or duduk)

SLMT : Avan Vittu-le irikkiran

The question of postposition in SLM would become further clear by an inventory of its case markings. It is done through a set of suffixes as given below:

TABLE 2

CASE INFLEXION IN SLM

Nominative	-	(Morphologically & Semantically unmarked)
Accusative	-	Na Eg. Dey amat - na pukul (He hit Amat)
Dative	- Na -	Eg. Dey amat-na kasi (He gives to Amat)
Genitive	- Pe -	Eg. Itu Amat - pe ruma

Locative	-	dekkat or ka eg. Dey Amat - ka su pi (or) - dekkat su pi (He went to Amat)
Associative	-	Samma Eg. Dey Amat-samma su-pi (He went with Amat)
Instrumental	-	Dari Eg. Dey Amat-dari kena pukul (He got hit by Amat)

Plural Marker

A peculiar characteristic of SLM is its plural marker indicated by particle (pada) - in place of SM -duplication, eg. orang-orang (people)

SLM	-	Orang-pada (people) Negeri pada (countries)
SLMT	-	Manusar-kal, Nadu-kal

The Possesive in SLM possessed

In SM the noun that is qualified (possessed)precedes the possessor noun or pronoun.

SM	:	Rumah Amat = Amat's house
SLM	:	Amat-pei ruma (amat punya ruma)
SLMT	:	Amat-(u)da veedu

This sort of possessive construction is common in other non-standard kind of Malay, especially Baba Malay. The possessor precedes the possessed with an intervening form 'punya' - a genitive particle (standard in chinese).

SLM - pei is derivated from this genitive particle punya.

Tag Question Marker

In SM, a question to which an answer is sought is indicated by intonation or sometimes by the question word particle/kah/,

Eg. SM / Laparkah? - Are you hungry.

SLM / Laparsi?

SLM the question particle /si/ may be postposed to any constituent to mark information the speaker expect the hearer to agree to.

Adjective

SM adjective always follow the noun they modify.

Eg. SM - Rumah besar (a big house)

SLM it is the reverse situation - they always precede the noun they modify.

SLM - Besar rumah
(a big house)

SLM has a very restricted number of personal pronouns unlike SM. Furthermore SLM has borrowed most of the pronouns from Bazaar-Malay originating (from Hokkien Baba Malay?).

Some pronouns, for eg - third plural - Mereka is hardly used in SLM. So is Kami, - 1st person (excluding the hearer).

TABLE 3

1st person	-	/ sei / - / go /
2nd person	-	Singular-lu -
3rd person	-	Singular-dei /dia

1st person - plural - kitang

2nd person - plural - lorang, lorangpada /(lu orang pada)

3rd person - plural - derang, derangpada /(dey orang pada

Possessive Pronouns (Singular)

1st person - Seppei / (saya punya)

2nd person - Luppei / (lu punya)

3rd person - Deppei / (dia punya)

Possessive Pronouns (Plural)

1st person - Kitampei / (kita punya)

2nd person - Lorampei / (lu orang punya)

3rd person - derampei / (dia orang punya)

Linking Past Participle

SLM bears a definitive trait of a South Asian creole in the grammatical category of conjuctive participle, also known as 'gerund'. It is used to conjoin verbs in a temporal sequence which share the same subject all but the last of the conjoined verbs as past participle.

SLM : Dey ruma-na su-pi apa su-datang.
(He went home and came)

SLMT : avan uttukku poyi-ttu vantan.

In both SLM and SLMT, the participle takes the perfective suffix SLM - apa / SLM - (i) ttu - with little change in meaning. Thus the perfective past participle is a distinct form in both languages.

Conditional

SLM has suffix - Kalu (derived from kalu - if) as conditional, equal to SLMT -al. In SM the conditional particle precedes verb e.g. Kalau pergi

SLM - Dey ruma-na pi kalu (If he goes home)

SLMT - avan uttukku ponal

Emphatic: SLM attaches - Jo - to any elements of the sentence to give it emphasis. SLMT equivalent is - tan.

SLM - Dey jo ere datang

SLMT - Avan-tan varan (He himself is coming)

Conjunction

SLM, `ley´ has several function and could probably be treated as two or three homophonous Morphemes. It's SLMT equivalent is -`um.´ SM uses dan, as one of the conjuctive participles, which is never used in SLM.

SLM - Amat ley Hassan ley ere duduk.

SLMT - Amatt-um Hasan - um ukkaruranga.
(Amat and Hassan are sitting).

Another interesting verbal particle in SLM is kangnang, which marks information which the speaker attributes to someone else and the truth of which he takes no responsibility.

SLM - Dedang mara - kangnang

SLMT - avan-ukku kovam-am.
(He is angry, it seems).

Conclusion

SLM is different from any known Malay creoles, such as Amboinese Malay(22) or Pasar Malay spoken by the descendants

of Indians in the peninsula.(23) Perhaps it is only one of its kind to have undergone complete change along with other South Asian creoles, such as Batticaloa Portuguese studied in depth by Ian R. Smith.

There appears to be two main stages in the evolution of the present day SLM. It seems plausible that it grew out of a 'Malay pidgin' which arose in the coastal areas of Java since 16th century when European colonial powers became active in the region. The history of the Sri Lankan Malays further confirms this notion. The original Malay settlers, since the beginning of the Dutch rule in Sri Lanka were drawn from many East Indian nationalities domiciled in and around the Dutch port city of then Batavia (now Jakarta). Poedjosoedarmo(24) traces the origin of the 'Omong Djakarta' dialect to this early Malay pidgin.

It took different forms in different lands to which it was introduced. For e.g. in Amboina, it had its own form of development as documented in J.T. Collin's thesis. In Sri Lanka, a Malay Pidgin, a contact vernacular, (not a native language of its many non-Malay national speakers), and marked by a limited vocabulary, elimination of many grammatical devices such as inflexions etc., as well as a drastic reduction of redundant features transformed into a creole when it became a native language of a specific group, namely the Sri Lanka Malays.

Creolization means in the first instance - the nativization of pidgin - but in the Sri Lankan context, the Malay creole, in a situation of an extended use began to expand and converge dictated by the grammatical, syntactic, and phonological structure of Sri Lanka Moor Tamil with which it came into close contact. In the process, SLM diverged so much from its source language, Malay - that it took an entirely different shape - so much so it can even be described as a creole of Malay words with a syntactic surface structure of SLMT.

SLM, in other words, transformed itself from a typologically preposing language (characterised by SVO, prepositions, clause, etc.) to a typologically postposing language (characterised by a SOV, post-positions and case endings).

In this respect, therefore, SLM remains no more within the ambit of an Austronesian linguistic group. It is to be

classified along with other South Asian languages, as a creole which realigned itself with the Dravidian grammatical forms.

NOTES

1. The Malay Mosques came into existence in areas with a predominantly Malay population such as in the Kampung Kertel in Colombo, Kampung Pensen, (Pensioners' quarters) in Kandy and in Badulla and Hambantotte, where Kutba or Friday sermons and other public discourses could be made in the Malay language.

2. The total population of Sri Lanka according to the census and statistics of 1981 stood at 14,850,001. The Malays constituted 0.29% of the population.

3. See Ian Smith 1977.

4. See Dharmadasa 1974.

5. See Hussainmiya 1986: 279-309.

6. Referring to the then Batavian Community (Vlekke 1945:174) points out that "Gradually this heterogeneous population developed into a New Indonesian national group, distinct from the Sundanese of the West and the Javansese of the East of Java and with a simplified Malay language the lingua franca of the Archipelago as their native tongue".

7. See Lance Castles 1967: 153-204.

8. See Chapter 4.

9. Copies of Alamat Langkapuri, are available in the Sri Lankan Department of National Archives.

10. Copies of Wajah Selong are in the possession of Mr. Durham Saldin of Colombo.

11. I have in my possession several samples of private Malay correspondence carried out even as late as 1940.

12. The original booklet which carries the Sri Lankan National Arhives book registration number 6886 has been unfortunately misplaced.

13. See for example two verses which I had managed to copy down from the above booklet made available to me in 1975.

(37) Karang in bukan charita
pada Malayu dan mooda Java
pada siang tempo keeta
supaya panthong sandiri bahasa.

(38) Ada tersohor satu charita
mahu bawakan orang Java
ditipukan belang pada diya
membeli gaja seduwit dua

14. I have in my posession some samples of a lithographed Malay booklets of instructions datable to the early part of the present century. When compared with Ounus Saldin's efforts, these later booklets are of very poor printing quality.

15. See James Gair 1976.

16. I have sighted Saldin's Malay translation of the Tamil Gnanamani Malai, which is now in the possession of Mrs. Perlin Yahya Dole of Nawala, Sri Lanka.

17. For eg. See Sri Lanka National Archives 1/3758 (Thombu) pp. 63-71.

18. See Gumperz and Wilson 1971: 151-167.

19. See Ian Smith 1978.

20. See Weinreich 1953:1

21. See Hardjadibrata 1976.

22. See Collins, 1980.

23. See Kanagaratnam, 1971.

24. Poedjosoedarmo 1974.

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About The Series

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