

**AN ACCOUNT OF THE WILD TRIBES
INHABITING THE MALAYAN PENINSULA,
SUMATRA, AND A FEW NEIGHBOURING
ISLANDS: WITH A JOURNEY IN JOHORE
AND A JOURNEY IN THE MENANGKABAW
STATES OF THE MALAYAN PENINSULA**

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An account of the wild tribes inhabiting the Malayan Peninsula, Sumatra, and a few neighbouring islands: with A journey in Johore and A journey in the Menangkabaw states of the Malayan Peninsula by Pierre Étienne Lazare Favre

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BY THE R^P FAVRE

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These wild tribes are divided into three principal classes, which are subdivided into many others. The first of these divisions includes the Battas, who are said to inhabit the interior of Sumatra and a few neighbouring islands. The second is that of the Semangs, who are found in the forests of Kedah, Tringanu, Perak and Salangor. Under the third head are comprised many tribes, known under the ordinary term of

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AN ACCOUNT OF THE WILD TRIBES

JAKUNS, which inhabit the south part of the Peninsula from about Salangor on the west coast and Kemaman on the east, and extending nearly as far as Singapore.

All these various wild tribes are ordinarily classed under the general and expressive appellation of ORANG BINUA¹, which signifies *men of the soil*; this will be the expression I will use when speaking of these tribes generally and without intending to refer to any one in particular.

ORIGIN OF THE BINUAS.

Several opinions have arisen respecting the origin of the wild tribes, or Orang Binuas; but these opinions are based only upon conjecture, more or less probable, and until now no certainty, and even nothing really satisfactory, has been discover-

¹ ادرغ, *orang*, "man, person;" بنو. *binua*, "claud, country."

ed on the subject. It is more than probable that the residence of the Missionaries, who are now about establishing themselves in the Peninsula in order both to civilize and to christianize these wild tribes, will prove a source of some interesting discoveries in different branches of learning, and chiefly in whatever refers to the people to whom we now direct our attention. In the mean time I will, for the solution of the several questions which can be raised on the origin of the Binuas, direct attention to several facts, and while I will recapitulate the various opinions which have heretofore been offered upon the subject, will finally say what appears to me most probable both from these sources of information and from what I obtained from the Binuas themselves in the numerous sojourns I made amongst them.

The first question which naturally presents itself to our mind on the subject is

this : Are the Binuas to be considered as the aboriginal inhabitants of the land where they are found, chiefly in the Malayan Peninsula? Such a question will remain a problem for some time yet, and perhaps for ever : nevertheless I must say that many facts seem to prove much that is in favour of an answer in the affirmative.

Among the Binuas whom I have interrogated on the matter, many answered that the Malays were descendants in great part from them, who were, without any doubt, the first inhabitants of the land.

Many Malays are of the same opinion, and upon it is based the appellation of ORANG BINUAS, *men of the soil*, by which the Malays designate the wild tribes.

A fact which is related in *the Malayan traditions and history*, and quoted by Lieut. Newbold (vol. XI, p. 77), proves much in favour of that opinion.

It is said, " after Sri Iscander Shah fled

from Singapore to Malacca in the seventh century of the Hejira, that is in the thirteenth century of the christian era, a Menangkabaw chief, named *Tu Puttair*, came over to Malacca, attended by a numerous retinue. He ascended the river to Naning where he found no other inhabitants than the Jakuns, and settled at Taba and took for wife one of the Jakun damsels; an example speedily followed by his vassals. The tradition says also that this colony gradually increased and spread itself over Sungei Ujong, Rumbau, Johole, and other places then inhabited chiefly by aborigines, or Jakuns. From whence we may infer, that if the aborigines or Binuas (Jakuns) were already spread over so many places, they must have inhabited the Peninsula from a remote period of time, an inference which is strengthened when we consider that the manners and customs of this people must be a great obstacle to a swift increase in the popula-

tion, and again that the Malays, at that time (in the thirteenth century), had but a short time inhabited the Peninsula, since we are informed by the *Sejara Malayu*¹, that Singapore, so celebrated in Malayan history, as having been the first place of settlement of the early Malay emigrants from Sumatra, and the origin of the empire of Malacca, received her first colonists only in the twelfth century, when Sang Nila Utama, supposed by Mohammedan historians to have been a descendant of Alexander the Great, settled on the island with a colony of Malays originally from Sumatra, and founded the city of Singapore, A. D. 1160, that is about one hundred years before the arrival of the Tu Puttair at Naning; where the Jakuns, who were then already numerous, as well as in the other places before

¹ *سجارا ملايو*, *Sejara Malayu*, «Malay chronicle.» This book has been printed at Singapore, under the direction of Abd-Allah ben Abd-el-Kader Munschy.