

THE WILD TRIBES OF THE MALAY PENINSULA.

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IN addition to the civilized brown-skinned Muhammadan Malays, who are a distant offshoot of the Mongolian stock, there are at least three groups of savage and heathen tribes in the Malay Peninsula, which may be roughly distinguished as follows, according to the character of their hair:—

1. Woolly-haired Negrito Tribes called Semang.
2. Wavy-haired Tribes called Sakai.
3. Straight-haired Tribes called Jakun.¹

Of these the Negritos (Semang) are found in northern Pērak, Kedah, Kēlantan, Trengganu and the northern districts of Pahang (Plate IX, 1) the Sakai in southern Perak, Selangor and Pahang (Plate IX, 2) and the Jakuns (mixed with other tribes) in all districts south of the States mentioned down to Johor and Singapore, and also generally speaking along the coasts (Plate IX, 3.)



SEMANG WITH SHAVED HEADS, ULU PERAK. *By F. W. Douglas.*

¹ This classification is practically based upon that of Professor Rudolf Martin of Zurich, who for some years past has been preparing an important monograph on the very difficult anthropology of these tribes. It differs solely in the isolation of the third (Jakun) type, which is included in Martin's third group under the heading of "Mixed Tribes."

The first of these groups—the Semang—is a fairly pure branch of the Negrito race, which includes the natives of the Andaman Islands in the Bay of Bengal, the Negritos of the Philippine Islands in the China Sea, north of Borneo, and the Semang of Malaya.

A curious point about this group is that it still remains a moot question—as our most recent authorities declare—whether any Negritos occur in Borneo, which would naturally be the connecting link between the Malay Peninsula and the Philippines.

Some day it may be possible to answer this question, but meanwhile it is no less difficult to say who the Negritos really are. They seem to have received their name from the Spaniards, who regarded them as a sort of dwarf Negro race, although they have nothing in common with the true Negroes but their woolly hair and black skin. The old idea seems to have been that they were the offspring of African Negroes who had escaped from slave-dhows which had been wrecked in the Eastern Archipelago; indeed I have heard of one widely recognized authority who maintained that the Negritos were the descendants of African slaves brought over by Alexander the Great when he visited India.

Nowadays, however, anthropology takes a more sober view of racial relationships, and it is pretty generally acknowledged that the Negritos are not Negroes, nor even a branch of the Melanesian or Papuan race, as others have held, although if there is to be guessing, the hypothesis that would appear to have the most likelihood of being some day substantiated is the brilliant suggestion of Sir William Flower, who thought that the Negritos might possibly represent an infantile type of a woolly-haired race, of which the Negro on the one hand and the Papuan on the other were highly specialised derivatives. Even this, however, as I have said, is but guess-work, and for our present purposes we must be content to regard the Negro, the Negrito and the Papuan as the representatives of three very different and separate racial types.

It may, perhaps, be of interest to add that for many years, perhaps on account of the tree-dwelling habits of some of these tribes, it was hoped that the Semang might possess some ape-like attributes. Though these expectations have been shattered, and the Semang cannot henceforth be regarded as possessing an abnormally pithekind character, he still retains the interest which attaches to him as a representative of one of the wildest races of mankind now extant.

The second type of which these races are composed is represented by the Sakai tribes, who offer if possible a yet more difficult problem. An attempt has recently been made to identify them, mainly, it seems, on the strength of linguistic evidence, with what is called the Mon-Annam group of races, *i.e.*, with the tribes who possessed till about 600 years ago the country which is now Siam, and some of whom still occupy Pegu and Camboja.

Linguistic evidence has, however, repeatedly proved a blind guide in the elucidation of racial problems, and I do not think we can depend upon it in the present case. Racial classifications must be based on racial facts, and in the

present case we have the more credible alternative suggested by Professor Virchow for what appears to be a very different grouping.

Virchow's theory is simply that the Sakai may quite possibly belong to what he calls the Dravido-Australian race, the chief representatives of which are the Veddas or wild Tribes of Ceylon, the civilized Tamils of Southern India, the Australian black-fellows and the Sakai of the Malay Peninsula.

In the essential characters of the hair and head, there is certainly a remarkable agreement, and the only great difficulty about this grouping seems to arise from the colour of the skin, which among the Sakais often approaches a light shade of yellowish-brown, whereas among the Tamils black skins commonly occur. Professor Virchow meets this difficulty by pointing out that the Sinhalese of Ceylon, although admittedly Aryans, are frequently so dark in colour as to be called quite black.

This point let authorities decide; all that can be said at present is that it appears an eminently sane and arguable hypothesis; and that it seems to have already found some acceptance. If it is correct, we may, perhaps, suppose that these aboriginal Dravidians once extended far north into Indo-China and there acquired the dialects of the local (Mon-Annam) tribes—an idea about which there is at least nothing fantastic.

The third racial group to which I have referred consists of the Jakuns, an aboriginal race closely related to the Malay, and which, in its pure type, possesses markedly Mongolian features. They belong to what the Germans would call the "Ur-Malay" race, but which we, in the absence of any such convenient prefix, are constrained to call by some such clumsy substitute as Præ-Malay or Proto-Malay—the "savage Malays" of Alfred Russell Wallace. The simplest name to give them is perhaps "Malayan."

This "savage Malay" or Jakun race, or whatever we prefer to call it, is divided into two main groups, (1) the Jakuns of the Jungle or Hill Jakuns and (2) the Jakuns of the Sea or Orang Laut. The latter set of tribes now consist of the broken remnants of the Pirates or Sea-gypsies of the Straits of Malacca, who for so many years were the scourge and terror of those far Eastern seas.

From what I have said it will, I think, be evident how important are the issues which may depend for solution upon our proper study of these tribes. Before closing these notes on the general relationship between these three races and their neighbours, I will therefore give a few more details concerning each of the several types described.

The physical contrast between all three races is most fortunately sharply drawn.

The men of the first-mentioned race (Semang or Negritos) are about 4 feet 9 or 10 inches in height, their women being about $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches shorter. The colour of their skin is very dark brown or black; among the purest-bred Semangs I have seen it a glossy jet-black, not unlike the colour ascribed to the Andamanese, viz., that of a newly black-leaded stove. The shape of the head is mesocephalic and brachy-

cephalic (*i.e.*, either rounded, or intermediate between the long and round types). The forehead is low and rounded, and projects over the root of the nose, which is short and depressed and pyramid-shaped. The eyes are round and wide open and show no trace of obliquity, the iris being of a very rich deep brown colour. The lips vary from moderate to full, the mouth is rather large, the chin but feebly developed, and a side view of the face sometimes shows some prognathism or projection of the lower part of the facial area.

The hair is of a very dark brownish-black (never blue-black, as among Chinese and Malays). It grows in short spiral tufts curling closely all over the scalp, if not shaved off, as it very frequently is.

The height of the Sakai does not materially differ from that of the Semang,¹ but the colour of the skin is very much lighter than that of the Negritos, and sometimes shows a reddish tinge about the breast and extremities. The head is dolichocephalic or long-shaped. The face is inclined to be long and would be hatchet-shaped but for the breadth of the cheek-bones, which help to give it rather an elliptical outline. The chin is commonly long and pointed; the forehead rather high and flat but brows often beetling, the notch above the nose being very deep; the nose small, often slightly tilted or rounded off at the tip, but at the same time broad, and with very deep-set nostrils. The beard usually consists of a few long and frizzly chin-hairs, remarkably like that of the Veddas of Ceylon, but in some cases it certainly grows long and bushy.

The third class (the savage Malays or Jakuns) is hard to identify, as it has received a large admixture of Semang and Sakai blood. Nevertheless the pure type is, I think, recognisable, and will be found to differ widely from both of the two types already mentioned.

They (the Jakuns) are a little taller than the Sakais or Semangs. Their head is brachycephalic or rounded, their skin olive-brown to dark copper. Their face has a flattened appearance and their lower jaw is inclined to be square. Their nose is somewhat stumpy, *i.e.*, thick and short, but with wide-open nostrils. Their cheek-bones are high and well-marked, like those of the Malays and Chinese. Their eyes are black and of moderate size. Their mouth is large and broad, their hair straight or lank and with a bluish-black tinge to it, not unlike that of the Malays themselves. Their beard is scanty.

In addition to the foregoing three main types we have, perhaps naturally in spite of their antagonistic elements, a good many instances of mixed tribes, most of which can, if the purest types be taken as standards, be resolved with a fair amount of certainty into their original ingredients.

There are many physiological points about all these tribes which would be of great interest if I had time to go into them. Their arm-stretch for instance is almost always greater, sometimes much greater, than their height. Their feet are usually short and stumpy and splayed, with a remarkable inward curve of the great

For the information about the Sakais (as well as for the type-photograph), I am very deeply indebted to my friend Rudolf Martin.

toe, the prehensile character of which enables them, when spoilt by domestication, to become very clever at stealing. I have seen Semangs run up trees by placing the flat of the foot against the trunk and putting their arms a good way round it. The eyesight of the Sakais, as tested with the army tests, though not abnormal, is distinctly good, and seems to compare very favourably with our own. The Jakun power of scent is exceptionally keen, and I was frequently astonished at the great distance at which they would notice the smoke of a camp-fire in the jungle, many minutes before I could detect the least trace of smoke myself. Their walk is very peculiar, the foot being lifted very high, almost as in dancing, and by this, and a certain restless expression about the eyes, even those Jakuns whose features are most like those of the Malays, can be immediately distinguished when they are met crossing open country.

The food of these jungle tribes—their first and most vital consideration—consists mainly of vegetable products, such as the roots and fruits which they dig up in the jungle, as well as (among tribes who have reached the first stage of agriculture) of the product of light crops such as yams, sweet potatoes, maize, sugar-cane and bananas; and at a later stage, of rice. Meat-food consisting of game brought down by the blow-gun or the bow is also largely employed for food, but this is mainly among the Semangs, some tribes of Sakais neglecting to go in pursuit of game until their supply of vegetable food is beginning to run out, though even among a good many Sakai tribes both hunting and trapping are energetically carried on. Some of the yams eaten are poisonous and require careful preparation to render them fit for human consumption; some kinds are buried for days together in a bag in the swamps of the jungle (or in running water), when they are dug up and have the juice squeezed out of them with a lever before being cooked and eaten; other kinds are grated on an ingenious natural grater made of the young growing shoot of a highly prickly rattan or calamus, the grated mass being kneaded with a spatula upon a banana leaf and mixed with slaked lime in order to destroy its poisonous properties, when it is wrapped up in a strip of green banana-leaf, inserted in a split stick and roasted over the fire. At meals, the Semang men, from the oldest to the youngest, all feed together before the females, the latter, who have done the cooking, looking on with hungry eyes until their lords and masters have finished their repast.

In the matter of animal food both Sakais and Semangs eat everything that comes in their way—monkeys, deer, wild pig, birds, fish, porcupines, lizards, squirrels, rats, and mice; not even snakes are excepted from the menu, which it will thus be seen is a sufficiently varied one.

In hunting and trapping, which are employed solely for food purposes, these tribes are, as might be expected, exceedingly expert. They have a marvellous knowledge of the jungle and its inhabitants, and seem to have an instinctive knowledge of the presence of animals, being able, when no one else can, to tell the exact whereabouts of a bird or animal moving a great way off in the forest. Their sight, as I have said, is naturally good, and through training becomes wonderfully

quick. The same is true of their hearing, and, as they are believed to be able to track snakes by their smell, it is evident that that faculty is in no way inferior. They know their way about the jungle better than anyone, and their intimate knowledge of the life-history of the jungle beasts is turned to account in the methods by which they hunt and trap their game.

Hunting and Trapping.

The chief weapon of the Semang (as among Negrito tribes elsewhere) is the bow, which closely resembles that used in the Little Andamans,¹ and with which poisoned arrows are used. That of the Sakai and Jakun is the blow-gun or blow-pipe. This latter is commonly a long slender tube, often 6 or 8 feet long, composed (whenever so long a piece is obtainable) of a single joint or internode of an exceedingly rare species of bamboo, which is found in the Peninsula on two or three high mountains only, and which is called *Bambusa Wrayi*.² This tube is protected and strengthened by being inserted in a similar bamboo tube or case of slightly larger calibre. The darts are made of fine slivers obtained from the mid-rib of the leaf of certain kinds of palm. They are about the size and thickness of a steel knitting needle, and are furnished at one end with a small, conical butt which is made to fit (rather loosely) the bore of the inner tube or blow-pipe. The point is about an inch or more long and as sharp as a needle, and just above it a nick is cut in the shaft of the dart, which causes the point to break off in the wound when the quarry attempts to escape through the tangled undergrowth. The point is, moreover, thickly coated with poison compounded from some of the most deadly poisons known, amongst which are the sap of the well known Upas tree (*Antiaris toxicaria*) and the sap of a shrub called Ipoh Akar, which is a species of *Strychnos*.

The blow-pipe is a breech-loader, the dart being inserted in the orifice, with a light wad of a fluffy substance obtained from the leaf-bases of a palm (*caryota*) packed behind the butt end for the prevention of "windage." It is fired by taking part or the whole of the mouth-piece into the mouth and sharply expelling the air from the lungs. The dart thus poisoned and ready to break off in the wound may in fact be not inaptly compared to the sting of a bee, from which it may quite possibly, to some extent, have been copied.

Even the blow-pipe itself is not without its natural prototype in the Malay Peninsula, in the rivers of which there lives a small fish called *Toxotes jaculator*, which I have myself seen shoot a fly off a leaf several inches above the surface of the river by means of a small drop of water forcibly expelled from its mouth.

By the Sakais each of the darts is carried in a separate reed, about 30-50 of these reeds being lashed together, rolled up into a bundle, and fitted into an

¹ E. H. Man, '*The Andaman Islanders*.'

² A very much rarer kind is the wooden blow-gun of Kuantan, which is made by lashing together throughout their entire length two half-cylinders of wood. One of these latter, measuring 5 feet 2 inches in length, has recently been presented to the British Museum by Mr. F. W. Douglas, of the F.M.S. service.

ornate bamboo quiver. The butt-ends of the darts are frequently marked to distinguish the strength of the poison.

The Semang quiver contains fewer darts than that of the Sakai, and is without reed-bundle, cap, or rings; in fact, it is a mere internode or joint of bamboo which is only remarkable for the beauty of the designs with which it is decorated. Various compounds of the two main poisons to which I have referred are used by the wild tribes, the ingredients varying according to the fancy of the maker. Thus, venom from the fangs of serpents, centipedes, scorpions' stings, etc., is frequently added, though it is in no way really required. Furnished with these darts both Sakais and Semangs regularly bring down their quarry at short distances up to about 30 paces, and have even been known to kill birds and monkeys on high trees at a distance of 60 yards. The method of collecting and applying the coat of poison to the dart-point in its simplest form is as follows: The bark of the tree (when the tree-poison is used) is slashed with a jungle-knife in the shape of a big V. The poisonous sap, which immediately collects at the apex of the V, is then drawn off into a bamboo vessel, and carried home, where it is either, when small quantities are used, as among the Semangs of Kedah, merely heated and applied to the dart points, or prepared by boiling until a sufficient consistency is obtained. In the former case it is poured out into a bamboo-tray, and applied to a broad, wooden spatula, which is heated over a fire until it begins to dry, when the point of the dart is rolled upon the spatula, the dart being then deposited against a fallen tree-trunk to dry in the sun in a safe place. Among some Sakai and Jakun tribes an elaborate kind of drying-rack is used, which prevents the darts, which are very light, from being carried away in a high wind whilst drying.

Habitations.

The most primitive forms of dwelling employed by the wild tribes are rock-shelters (sometimes caves, but more commonly natural shelters under overhanging rocks) and leaf-shelters which are sometimes formed on the ground, sometimes between the branches of trees. The simplest form of these leaf-shelters consists of a single big palm-leaf, which is planted in the ground to afford the wanderer some slight shelter for a single night. The more elaborate leaf-shelters, used especially by Semangs, sometimes take the form of a rude lean-to, consisting of three or four uprights planted in the ground at an angle of about 60° to 70°, with palm leaves or branches lashed horizontally across them. Other kinds consist of palm leaves planted in the ground in the form of a semi-circle or circle, the leaves, which are frequently about 6 feet long, drooping over towards the centre, and thus forming a shelter of the circular or bee-hive type. The most developed form is a long communal leaf-shelter in which all the members of the tribe reside.

The Malayizing tribes who come more into contact with civilization insensibly adopt the Malay type of hut, but even here some striking departures from the normal Malay type are to be seen, *e.g.*, in the low or almost totally absent side walls and in the projection of one side of the gable over the other, so as to allow

the roof to remain open at the top. These huts are generally barricaded with fallen trees.

The tree huts, or "human bird-nests" as they have been called, are built at a height of from 20–30 feet from the ground, chiefly as a means of escape from wild elephants.

Arts and Crafts.

The craftsmanship of these wild tribes, though extremely primitive, is excellent of its kind, and shows that they by no means lack ingenuity.

The manufacture of the blow-pipe, its darts and quiver, as already described, forms an important industry of both Semang and Sakai. The tree-bark cloth of the wilder tribes is made by hammering (with a wooden mallet) the bark of a big jungle-tree called Terap (*Artocarpus Kunstleri*, a species of wild bread-fruit tree), the outer surface of which is first removed by scraping it with a knife. The mallet is frequently improved by transverse grooves or teeth, which assist in the separation of the fibres.

A not less interesting type of cloth is manufactured from the cuticle of the Upas tree (*Antiaris*) itself, a tree which belongs, I believe, to the same order as the *Artocarpus*. In this case a young sapling (of the Upas tree) is felled and a ring cut round the bark a few feet from the base. The bark is then scraped and pounded *in situ* with a rounded wooden mallet or club for a space of about a foot below the incision. The pounded part is then pulled away from the stem, separating at the point where the bark meets the wood, and is turned down (not rolled) and skinned off like a stocking, the scraping and pounding being continued at intervals as required, until all the bark is completely separated.

As regards other forms of industry, mat-work, basket-work, and netting, are all found among these tribes, but no kind of weaving or pottery whatever. A high artistic sense is, however, shown (by the Semang especially) in the beautiful and finely executed designs with which they decorate their blow-pipes and quivers, and the magic combs worn by the women. An amusing example of the skill of the Jakuns was furnished me in the form of a set piece, representing the use of the blow-pipe.

Dress.

The commonest form of clothing worn by the men of all these tribes is the waist-cloth of tree bark, which consists of a long narrow strip of hammered bark. That of the women, on the other hand, is usually a sort of short petticoat or wrapper of the same material. But the most interesting form of girdle worn by these tribes is undoubtedly one which is beautifully woven from the long black shining strings or cords called rhizomorphs, which are in reality the vegetative parts of a toadstool. (Plate IX, 5.)

Leaving the question of girdles there are several other slight but otherwise important items of attire worn by these tribes, such as arm-bands, necklaces and combs. Arm-bands and even leg-bands are frequently worn, apparently for the purpose of bandaging and so strengthening the muscles. They vary from a simple

tie of jungle fibre to metal circlets or spirals, which latter are usually obtained from the Malays.

The necklaces, which are worn chiefly by the women, it would appear mainly for magical purposes, consist at times of as many as nine strings, and are composed of such objects as monkeys' teeth, tufts of hair from squirrels' tails, black and white beads, seeds of jungle fruits, shells, and so forth.

The combs, which bear magical designs, and are worn solely by women, are of the kind which I believe are termed back-combs in England, but which are only worn to defend the wearer against poison or sickness. To complete the picture, tattooing or rather scarification is practised over a limited area among the wilder tribes of the interior, with face- and body-painting (apparently as a substitute for tattooing) in places where Malay influence has begun to enter. The usual pattern consists of four or five horizontal stripes on the cheeks, with a sort of trident or pitch-fork design on the forehead or chin. For the stripes on the cheeks are often substituted rows of black and white dots, supposed to represent what are called the spores, or perhaps more correctly the sori, of a fern. The tattooing is performed by drawing the finely serrated edge of a sugar-cane leaf across the skin, and rubbing into it powdered charcoal.

In addition to the foregoing the septum of the nose is frequently (among the Semang and Sakai only) pierced to admit the quill of a porcupine, bone, or piece of stick, or some other decorative object of the kind.

Music and Dancing.

It would take too long to describe in any sort of detail the musical instruments of these tribes. Suffice it to say that they are almost always made of bamboo, some of the most primitive kinds being of special ethnographical interest, notably the bamboo Jew's harp and the nose-flute. One or two of these latter (Fig. 2)

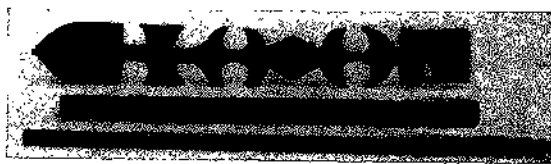


FIG. 2.—DANCE-WAND, FLUTE AND NOSE-FLUTE.

may be played at a time, the performer breathing into the mouth-hole of the flute through the nostrils. This instrument is found among tribes who do not use the blowgun, as well as among those tribes who do, but the accomplishment should be an easier one for the latter, *i.e.*, the Sakais, to acquire, from the healthy development of the lungs with the blowpipe exercise. Simpler forms of instruments are represented by a couple of sticks which are struck together, producing a sound like castagnettes, and (among the Semang) by big internodes or "joints" of bamboo, which are closed naturally by the node at the lower end and played by being beaten at the upper end with a fan-shaped palm-leaf beater.

The most important instrument of the Jakuns is the drum, which is made of a

hollowed-out trunk of screw-pine headed with the dressed skins of mouse-deer or monkeys.

On festive occasions, *e.g.*, for singing and dancing, both sexes decorate the person profusely with festoons of leaves. The Sakais and Jakuns in addition wear upon the head a curious circlet made of strips of palm-leaf (*licuala*) in the form of a plait with long streamers so depending from it as partially to conceal the face of the dancer. That of the women has in addition a number of short sticks on which are spitted fragrant leaves or flowers, on a principle of which we seem to have the counterpart in the design of some of our peers' coronets. In the girdle, head-band, and festoons (which are crossed upon back and breast) are inserted bunches or bouquets of cunningly woven strips of palm-leaf representing nooses, etc., which are said to be intended to entrap evil spirits when they make assault upon the person of the dancer.

Finally a short wand or sceptre is carried, which takes at times a most peculiar shape, resembling a series of crescents and double axes. (Fig. 2.)

Feasts and Songs.

In former days at harvest-time the Jakuns kept an annual festival, at which, the entire settlement having been called together, fermented liquor brewed from jungle fruits was drunk; and to the accompaniment of strains of their rude and incondite music, both sexes, crowning themselves with fragrant leaves and flowers, indulged in bouts of singing and dancing, which grew gradually wilder throughout the night, and terminated in a strange kind of sexual orgie.

The songs which were sung on these occasions were sometimes merely topographical, but more often the theme was a description of some one of the denizens or products of the jungle. Commencing by setting forth the attributes and habits of some particular wild animal, or bird, they would proceed to describe the incidents of its pursuit by men from their encampment, its death by a venomous shaft from the blowgun, the return of the successful huntsmen, and the impartial division of the spoil. It has often been said that these songs are mere gibberish and have no connected meaning. Whether they are so or not, the following extracts will show.

The first is one of the Semang songs which I took down in Kedah. It refers to a kind of long-tailed monkey called "kra," whose name forms the burden of the song.

“He runs along the branches, the kra,
 Carrying fruit with him, the kra,
 He walks to and fro, the kra,
 Over the knotted 'seraya' tree, the kra,
 Over the knotted 'rambutan' tree, the kra,
 Over the live bamboos, the kra,
 Over the dead bamboos, the kra,
 Over the giant bamboos, the kra,
 He hangs downwards, the kra,
 And runs along the branches, the kra,

He runs along and hoots, the kra,
 And peers forward, the kra,
 Among the young rambutans, the kra,
 And shows his grinning teeth, the kra,
 From every sapling, the kra!"

Here is one of the Jakun songs, which is one out of a set of about thirty different ones which I took down in Selangor:—

"'Impit-impit' is the cry of the rhinoceros,
 The rhinoceros of the herd (calling) to the recluse rhinoceros,
 He calls his comrades to seek for food.
 He walks the forest and climbs the hills.
 He walks abroad when the dew dries on the granite.
 What skills it for me to resist the rhinoceros?
 I call my comrades, but my comrades are not there.
 I am terrified and climb up into a tree,
 But the rhinoceros waits at the tree's foot.
 I break off a bough and throw it down to him,
 The rhinoceros champs it, and passes onward.
 I climb down to ground again and run back homewards
 And climb into the hut, but the rhinoceros follows.
 I take my gun and shoot the rhinoceros.
 The bullet has hit him! The rhinoceros has fallen!
 I roast him next and cut up the rhinoceros,
 And give of the meat a little to everyone.
 But the horn I sell to the Chinese foreigners."

Other songs in my collection describe the tiger, elephant, bear, crocodile, birds and bats, fish, various reptiles, and fruit. A very pretty one is about children bathing.

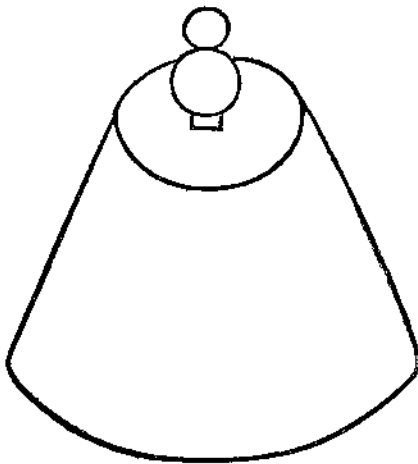


FIG. 3.—*Busut* OR ARTIFICIAL MOUND OF CLAY ROUND WHICH THE BRIDE IS CHASED BY THE BRIDEGROOM. (BESISI TRIBE.)

Marriage.

Marriage, among all these tribes, is said to be based on purchase. Of the actual ceremonies the most interesting is the form of wedding rite which is usually described as the ant-heap ceremony. The bridegroom is required to overtake the bride before she has run seven times round the ant-heap, and in the event of his failing to do so the marriage has to be postponed for a future occasion.

This is the usual account given by people who have recorded it from hearsay. I was, however, on one occasion fortunate enough to be

present at one of these weddings, and I then discovered that the orthodox object round which the chasing took place was not really an ant-heap, but a small artificial mound, the cause of the confusion being the use of the Malay word *Busut*, which may bear either meaning. The artificial mound (Fig. 3) which was used on this occasion was about $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet high with about the same diameter at the base. Its shape was that of a truncated cone, surmounted by a small globe and knob. It resembled not remotely a gigantic bell and bell-handle. It was decorated with jungle flowers, and the Jakun chiefs assured me that this was the "genuine article," and that it was the emblem of their religion, and I see no reason for doubting the statement.

Before the pursuit of the bride takes place the man or his proxy is subjected to a severe catechism by the woman's representatives, the questions asked being of a most searching description, *e.g.*:—

Can you fell trees?
 Can you climb for fruit?
 Can you find turtles' eggs?
 Are you clever at using the blowpipe? and
 Can you smoke cigarettes?

This last query doubtless relates to the fact that the ceremony sometimes concludes with the smoking of a cigarette jointly by bride and bridegroom.

Among the Orang-Laut or sea-gipsies the pursuit sometimes takes the form of a canoe race, in which the woman is given a good start, and must be overtaken by the man before she has gone a certain distance.

Funeral.

At a Sakai or Jakun funeral the body of the deceased is slung from a pole and carried to a distant spot in the jungle—at least a cock's-crow from the nearest house. Here it is wrapped in a new cloth and buried in a shallow trench, the clothes worn during the life of the deceased being burned in a fire which is lighted near the grave. The grave being filled up, rice is sown upon it and watered, some herbs and young bananas, etc., are planted round it (all of these being for the deceased's soul to feed upon), and finally a small three-cornered hutch, not unlike a doll's house, but raised on very high posts, is erected near the foot of the grave for the soul to reside in. The soul's house itself is about a foot and a half high, is thatched with palm-leaves, and provided with a ladder for the soul to climb up by. It contains in addition diminutive emblems of the sex of the deceased (in the case of a man, the model of a hatchet and a jungle knife, etc.; in the case of a woman, the model of a back-basket or wallet, such as is carried by the women of the tribe), as well as a supply of food (a little rice and fish, etc.) for the deceased's soul to feed upon, tobacco for it to smoke, and betel-leaf for it to chew.

The Semang, on the other hand, practise a simple form of interment, a supply of food and drink being placed in the grave along with the body. There is,

however, a tradition that they used to devour their dead and bury the head only, and although this assertion is certainly untrue now, and probably always was so, it is more than probable that like their close kinsmen the Andamanese they may once have been in the habit of disinterring the bones of their dead and breaking them into short segments to string on to their necklaces, in which case the skull may have once been worn, as among the Andamanese, as a sort of pendant attached to the necklace.

Magic.

The chiefs of the tribe were often, if not always, medicine men or magicians, their power in this respect being greatly feared by the Malays, who believed them to be capable of slaying people at a distance by means of what are called "sendings," which were small slivers of bamboo apparently representing darts, which being placed on the palm of the hand would (it was thought), at the magician's bidding, fly through space until they reached their intended victim, whom they would pierce to the heart and kill even at a distance of two or three days' journey.

The Buluh Pěrindu or "Love and Longing" Bamboo was said to grow upon almost inaccessible mountain peaks. Slivers of this plant were formerly obtained from the Jakuns by the members of Malay travelling theatrical troupes, who inserted them between the teeth, this being believed to render the voice of the wearer irresistible. This custom, however, led, it was said, to such abuses that formerly in some parts of the Peninsula the possession of any portion of the "Buluh Pěrindu" was punished with the death penalty.

The *chinduai* or *chingkuai* is a small fragrant plant with minute inflorescences (sometimes it is described as a small white five-petalled blossom) which is believed to be one of the rarest and most fragrant flowers in the world.

The story goes that it formerly grew underneath a ledge of overhanging rock on one of the crags of the Ulu Klang mountains. Although the exact spot where it grew could be seen from the ledge, it was nevertheless inaccessible, and it was said that the wild man who wanted it had to ascend the mountain and there keep his fast possibly for weeks or months upon the summit of this ledge until a kite, which used the *chinduai* as medicine for its young, should drop a piece in flying over him. Whatever may be the facts, this particular charm is well known in connection with the Klang country, and is alluded to in the local quatrain which says, "Set not your foot upon the Klang mountains, if you do you will suffer from their charm."

Both Semang and Sakai are great adepts at the exorcism of demons; and on one occasion I saw an apparently wonderful cure effected by this simple means, the patient being a woman belonging to one of the tribes of Semangs in Kedah. We were all sitting and talking quietly in the long communal leaf-shelter in which the tribe lived, when one of the women, who suffered at intervals from agonizing pains in the limbs, was seized with a sudden paroxysm (which made her scream

with pain) and presently leapt to her feet and fled into the jungle. The remainder of her companions, who declared that she had gone into the jungle to die there, slipped out one by one after her, and I decided to follow them to see whether anything could be done. When I arrived I found the woman seated on the ground, while the chief, in his capacity of medicine man to the tribe, was digging away for dear life with a pointed stick to try and unearth the stump of a small sapling which grew near the spot. This he presently succeeded in doing, and on examining the root found what he pronounced to be clear evidence of the demon's recent presence in the curious pinching in of part of the root. He next took earth out of the hole and rubbed it over the patient's stomach and back, muttering charms as he did so, in order to induce the demon to return to the spot whence he had come. In a few minutes the woman began to get better, but as the demons were not yet quite done with, the chief proceeded to dig up the stump of another tree, this time a creeper whose root proved in shape to bear some resemblance to a mandrake. He then repeated the former process, and chanted his incantations more vigorously than ever, at the conclusion of which two of the men of the tribe who assisted him hurled away into the jungle the stems of two saplings which had been lying near the spot, in order, they said, to get rid of the demon's presence. By this time the woman had ceased her lamentations and in about ten minutes' time was pronounced cured, after which she quietly returned to the encampment as if nothing had happened.

The whole performance was an excellent example of sympathetic magic or make-believe.

The most remarkable development, however, of the wild magician's alleged powers is connected with the "tiger-man" beliefs, which are analogous to former European ideas about werewolves. One of the Semang men, whom Mr. Laidlaw and I met at Ulu Aring, in Kelantan, had the reputation of being a notorious tiger-man or B'lian and gave me some interesting information about the performance. "You go," he said, "a long way into the jungle" (usually, he added, into the next valley), "and there, when you are quite alone, you squat down upon your haunches, burn incense, and making a trumpet of your hand blow some of the smoke of the incense through it, at the level of your face, in three directions. You then repeat this process, holding your hand close to the ground; all you now have to say is, 'Yě chöp' ('I am going abroad'), and presently your skin will change, the stripes will appear, your tail will fall down, and you will become a tiger. When you wish to return say, 'Yě wet' ('I am going home'), and you will presently return to your natural form." It sounds easy enough, and the only wonder was that one so seldom heard in that part of the world of the disappearance of an obnoxious rival, or a scolding wife.

The most interesting point about this ceremony, however, is its apparent universality, for it is found, *mutatis mutandis*, in all parts of the globe. In passing, it may be noted that a small variety of ripping-knife (*bēladan*), shaped like a tiger's claw, and fitted with a hole in the haft to pass the finger through, is

well known and used to this day both in the Malay Peninsula and Sumatra, in both of which countries the were-tiger belief is still held strongly.

Religion.

The religion of the Wild Tribes is a form of Shamanism such as prevails in other parts of South-East Asia. They believe in certain greater spirits, who may perhaps, when we have found out all about them, prove to be a sort of gods in the making. But they have, of course, nothing which exactly corresponds to our own idea of God, and the evidence on this subject is more than usually conflicting, owing to the extreme reticence and timidity of these wild men themselves, of whom it would be but little exaggeration to say that they were as wild as deer. Most of them believe that the soul shortly after death proceeds to a place called the Island of Fruits (the Jungle-man's idea of a Paradise), which they not unfrequently identify with the moon. To reach this island they are compelled to cross a boiling lake resembling a copper, by means of a narrow bridge formed of a fallen tree trunk, and the souls of the wicked, failing to accomplish this in safety, fall off the log into the lake, where they swim about desperately for three long years, clutching at the smooth sides of the lake, after which the Chief of the Island of Fruit Trees, if he so thinks fit, contemptuously lets down to them one of his feet so that they may catch hold of his great toe, in which undignified fashion they are at length permitted to escape from Purgatory and to enter Paradise.

DISCUSSION.

Mr. C. O. BLAGDEN apologized for the necessarily provisional and tentative character of the few observations he could make on the subject, inasmuch as he had not come prepared for the honour of being called upon to speak, and was still in the middle of a comparative investigation of the dialects of these aboriginal tribes, being engaged in arranging a large mass of new materials of the Sĕmang dialects collected by Mr. Skeat. His own personal knowledge of these tribes was confined to various sections of the Jakun group, whom he often met in Malacca during the years 1890-94, and of whose dialects he had made some slight study. Since that time he had from time to time endeavoured to make a comparison of these dialects with those of the Sakai and Sĕmang groups. Though it must not be expected that the anthropological and the linguistic phenomena would run in parallel lines, it would probably be found that just as these races fell anthropologically into three quite distinct sections, so their languages also, in spite of a certain superficial appearance of unity, constituted three different and originally independent types. There were, however, a considerable number of common elements which ran practically all through the dialects, from Kĕdah in the north (Sĕmang group) to Johor in the south (Jakun group). These were attributable to (1) Malay, which of course had more or less influenced all these dialects by means of loanwords; an element which, however, could be readily eliminated; (2) a very considerable Indo-Chinese stratum of words and forms, attributable to the Mon-Annam group of languages, of which Peguan and Cambojan were the best representatives; as to these, the fact of their presence in almost all these aboriginal dialects was

undeniable, but how they got there was not yet satisfactorily explained. There was no contact now between the aborigines of the Peninsula and the people who spoke these Indo-Chinese languages, the latter living many hundreds of miles to the north in Lower Burma and Cambaja respectively, and the races were quite distinct; (3) a third common element, the importance of which had never yet been pointed out, was what might be called the generically Malayan or Malayo-Polynesian element (as opposed to the specifically Malay). In most of these dialects there were words, not very numerous perhaps, which, while not occurring in Malay, did occur in closely allied forms in other Malayan languages, such as Javanese, Madurese, Achinese, certain Dayak dialects of Borneo, and other even remoter island languages. He regarded these words not as loanwords from these various tongues, but as relics—the only existing relics—of the old local Malayan dialects of the Malay Peninsula. The main language of the Peninsula had now for some six or seven centuries past been Malay, which was a Central Sumatran language, not originally native to the Peninsula itself. It would be a strange anomaly if, unlike every other region of the Malay Archipelago, the Peninsula situated where it was, and with an aboriginal Malayan population (the Jakun group) had been without a local Malayan dialect or dialects, differentiated from the other Malayan groups. He believed that this third element, common to the aboriginal dialects, represented that now practically extinct Malayan group.

After making allowance for these common elements, and then only, would it be practicable to compare the aboriginal dialects with other languages. There would be a residuum, probably in Sakai, certainly in Sĕmang, left after eliminating the above three strata. It was impossible to say at present what such residuum would turn out to be, but there was some reason for anticipating that in the case of Sĕmang, where it was large and clearly ascertainable, such residuum would turn out to be related to Andamanese; the comparison, however, had not yet been made, but he hoped, after the newly acquired materials had been arranged and classified, to find time to make it, or to induce some more qualified person to do so.

Mr. BOUVERIE-PUSEY asked whether there were any evidences of Mohammedan influence as affecting the religion of these tribes . . . He had been particularly struck with the account of the bridge between earth and heaven, by following which the souls of the departed were believed to approach Parádise.

Mr. SELIGMANN said, I have been especially interested in what Mr. Skeat said about the use of poisoned darts, and should like to know what part of the plant, *Ipoh akar*, is the source of the poison, and how the latter is extracted and used, and whether in Mr. Skeat's experience this poison is ever combined with that derived from the Upas tree, *Antiaris toxicaria*. Is the preparation of the poison the occasion of secret rites, incantations, or religious ceremonies? Kükenthal hints at such among the Kayans of the Baram District of Sarawak, but among their neighbours the Kenyahs I found that collecting, preparing, and applying the poison were frankly utilitarian processes unassociated with any kind of mystery. In Kenyah quivers there were, however, to be generally found certain masses consisting of pieces of old darts, fragments of bone and teeth cemented together by the dried blood of animals already killed. Such conglomerations called *siap* (the

generic name I think for a charm of any kind) had magical properties, and brought success in hunting to their owners. Does anything resembling this occur among the Semang and Sakai? Among the up country Baram folk, who, like the Semang and Sakai, are animistic in their beliefs, there is a regular method of approaching their high gods. A pig appropriately tied up is lightly scorched, and given the message to which an answer is desired. The animal is then killed and its liver inspected for the answer which is deduced from the size and appearance of the lobes, the gall, bladder, etc. At times fire alone may be used to convey a message. It would be interesting to know if Mr. Skeat has observed more or less stereotyped methods of communication with the high gods of the now Malay people of the Peninsula.

Mr. SHRUBSALL remarked upon the apparent close resemblance between some of the Sakais (as shown by the slides) and the Tamils, and asked whether any measurements of the Semang had been obtained, as they would prove of high value for comparison with measurements of the Andamanese. He also asked whether the Semang showed any kind of resemblance to the Central African Pygmies.

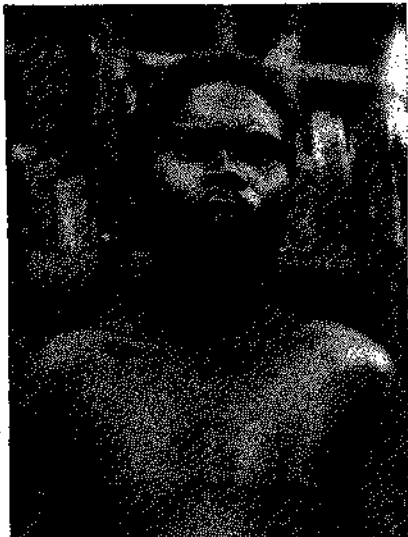
Mr. DALTON inquired whether any form of Jew's harp was used by any of these tribes, and whether any of them were known to have used stone implements?

Mr. MYRES remarked that the series of shelters as shown by the slides was interesting as bearing upon the question of the evolution of the hut type, and asked whether the lecturer could throw any light upon the history of the model representing Jakuns in the act of shooting birds, since it resembled models made by some of the Central African tribes, and appeared to belong to an altogether different type of art from that which had produced the rectilinear form of decoration otherwise employed by the tribes of the Malay Peninsula.

Mr. SKEAT, in replying to Mr. Bouverie-Pusey, said that the religion of these Peninsular tribes had been very little affected by Mohammedanism, and that the idea of the bridge leading to Paradise was found among races to the north of the Peninsula, who certainly could not have borrowed it from Mohammedan sources. Perhaps the best example, however, was that of the Andamanese, who were admittedly free from any such influences, but who yet believed that the souls of the departed pass into Paradise by crossing an invisible bridge of cane.

As regards the poison obtained from *Ipoh akar* (the Ipoh creeper or strychnos), the poison was certainly in some instances obtained by shredding up the root. There was, moreover, a close parallel to the Bornean *siap* in the leaves (of a particular kind of tree), which were carried inside their quiver by the Jakuns, and which were called *Penurun Tupai*, or the bringers-down of squirrels. Omens were strongly believed in (though not perhaps to anything like such an extent as in Borneo), and an instance of an attempt to communicate with the high gods might probably be found in the Semang and Sakai practice of drawing a few drops of blood from the shinbone with the jungle-knife during the prevalence of a storm of thunder and lightning, and throwing it up to the angry skies with a prayer of propitiation.

As regards the question of measurements, Mr. Skeat replied that a number of Semang measurements had certainly been obtained, and that it was hoped they



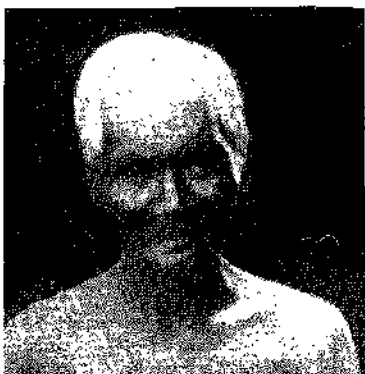
SEMANG (PANGAN) OF K. ARING ON LEBIH RIVER, ULU VULANTAN, EAST COAST.



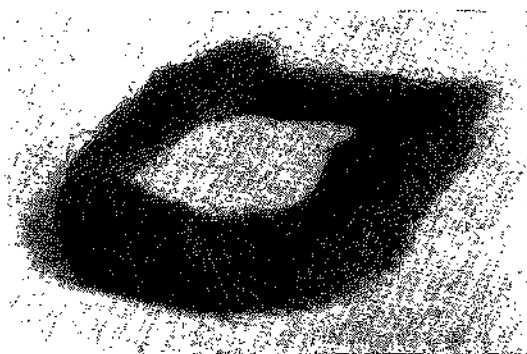
SAKAI TYPE.
(*Photograph by Rudolf Martin.*)



MIXED SEMANG SAKAI TRIBE (ULU PAHANG). (*Photograph by D. Machado.*)



JAKUN TYPE.
(*Photograph by D. Machado.*)



SEMANG GIRDLE MADE FROM RHIZOMORPH OF FUNGUS (KEDAH).

might be published at no very distant date, but he could not yet say whether there was much resemblance between the Semang and the Central African Pygmies, concerning whom scanty details were as yet to hand.

The Jew's harp was used by all three races, Semang, Sakai, and Jakun, the form which it took, a slip of bamboo with a central tongue, which was made to vibrate by pulling a short string, being in all cases pretty much the same, though it was widely different from the form of Jew's harp used in Bangkok, which latter had no string to pull it by, being twanged by the thumb.

The question of stone implements was an exceedingly difficult one. Large numbers of stone axeheads and chisel-shaped stones had been found in various parts of the Peninsula, but there was no evidence whatever to show that they had been manufactured or used by any of the wild races now inhabiting the jungles of the Peninsula. The probabilities were in fact dead against it. The axeheads, which were of types conformable to the iron implements now in use by the Peninsular Malays, belong to an altogether higher culture than that of any of these tribes as we now know them, and among an isolated and pure fragment of the Negrito race (the Andamanese), Mr. E. H. Man had stated that they had never been in the habit either of manufacturing or using stone axes. What they (the Andamanese) did use consisted of such simple forms of neolithic implements as flakes and chips, supplemented by stones which served as anvil and hammer, and the probability was that the jungle tribes of the Peninsula once used more or less similar tools, supplemented by tools of bamboo, bone, and wood. No stone axe or spear-heads had yet been found in the Peninsula.

In reply to Mr. Myres, Mr. Skeat remarked that both the model and the rectilinear patterns referred to were found among members of the same tribe, and that although he himself had certainly made no suggestion of the kind, some of the Malays in the same neighbourhood had recently been paid for bringing him models, and he supposed that the Jakun who made the model had been inspired by the hope of turning an honest penny.