

disinherited by his father Mahmud Shah (of Malacca) about the year 1520 A.D. This version associates Mudzafar Shah with the slaughter of the snake and the loss of the Perak diadem, but it throws back the tale of Nila Utama and his brothers to a much earlier date. Indeed, the old Palembang legend of the brothers who appeared on Mount Siguntang Mahameru is well known in Perak song and story:

*Lembayong gētah-nya putih,
Daun-nya jatuh kētēlentang,
Turun bērpayong gajah putih,
Turun dari Bukit Siguntang.*

*Daun-nya jatuh kētēlentang,
Biri-biri di-jumbatan;
Turun dari Bukit Siguntang
Dapat nēgēri di-nobatkan.*

Other Perak legends ascribe the origin of the present dynasty to a certain Sultan Ahmad Tajū'd-din who was brought from Johor Lama to reign over Perak at some period that would seem to be about A.D. 1670. This prince is said to have married the daughter of a Perak chief, Tan Saban, and to have died leaving an infant son who was murdered very shortly afterwards by the regent, a Johor prince named Malik Shah. This murder led to a civil war in which Tan Saban was killed by a warrior named Megat Terawis. The story of the lost crown of Perak is associated with Ahmad Tajū'd-din as well as with Mudzafar Shah.

The folk-lore about the prince who came out of the sea, gave a name to Singapore, lost his crown in a storm and finally slew a great dragon or snake with his sword Chura Si-manjakini is not true Perak folk-lore. It is associated with the Johor dynasty and was imported into Perak with the kings. It is all related in the "Malay Annals" and may be read there (except for some trifling discrepancies) by anyone who is interested in the subject. The real local heroes of Perak are Tan Saban, Megat Terawis and the unnamed actors in the tragedy at Tanah Abang. Tan Saban was the ruler of Upper Perak when the ancestors of the present dynasty first came to the country. He governed the whole land from the sources of the great river down to Kuala Temong, where he built a fort and defied the forces of Malik Shah or Mudzafar Shah. On the watch-tower of this fort he used to appear three times a day, clad each time in a garment of a different colour—green in the morning, white at noon-day, and red in the afternoon. Secure in the fact that his skin could

not be pierced by any bullet, he used to laugh at the efforts made to shoot him down. But there was in the army of the invader a humble soldier named Megat Terawis, an illegitimate scion of the great imperial house of Menangkabau. This Megat Terawis was born with a silver bullet in each hand, each bullet bearing the inscription "This is the bullet of the prince's son of Pagar Ruyong; wherever this bullet falls its owner will be made a chief." Megat Terawis asked that Tan Saban should be pointed out to him. He fired; the bullet struck Tan Saban, but fell to the ground without piercing the skin. Tan Saban picked it up, read the inscription and knew that his hour was come. He sent for Megat Terawis, named him his heir, expressed regret for his past hostility to the Sultan, and died, leaving the humble soldier heir to the highest chieftaincy in the State. On the day of Tan Saban's death the present dynasty began to reign over all Perak, with Megat Terawis and his descendants as Bendaharas. There was, however, a curious limitation. The Sultans kept to the left bank of the river while the family of the Megat lived on the right. The present Sultan was the first to depart from this ancient custom and to build himself a palace on the right-hand-side of the stream. In course of time, however, the family of Megat Terawis lost all its importance as well as the high office of Bendahara that it had held for about a century. At present the Bendahara is a member of the royal house.

It is difficult to see exactly the relationship between Perak legend and true history. Why did the old Sultans shun the right bank of the river? Even in the story itself there is nothing that would seem to explain it. Why did the Bendaharas assert themselves to be heirs of Tan Saban when his true representatives were the up-country chiefs who bore the title of *Seri Adika Raja*, who claimed descent from him, and whose authority was co-terminous with his own? What also is the real connection between Mudzafar Shah and the legendary origin of the name *Tanah Abang*? As the founder of Perak travelled up-river he is said to have met a youth mourning over the body of his dead brother. The boy had been asking the name of a bamboo, the *buloh apa* or "which bamboo."

"What, brother, is the name of this bamboo?"

"Which bamboo."

"This bamboo."

"Which bamboo."

And the younger slew the elder in a rage before he discovered that "which" was the name of the bamboo.

Then there is the story of the infant princess who was discovered in a great mass of cloud-like foam floating down the Perak river, and whose romantic origin seems to have led to no future of any importance. So, too, there is the tale of the great *aruan* fish that Megat Terawis discovered suckling its young with a milk the whiteness of which gave the great river its name of the "Silver Stream" (Sungai Perak). Again we have the story of the cotton-tree that marked the frontier—the tree that bore flowers of white and red, the white towards Perak and the red towards the valley of the Patani. These legends are all associated with the coming of the present dynasty, but they seem properly to belong to a much earlier period.
