

University of Kent at Canterbury

Centre of South-East Asian Studies

Occasional Paper No. 7



Thomas Barnes' Expedition
to Kerinci in 1818

J. Kathirithamby-Wells

1906

1-08

1 620.6.99

new and interesting facts and particulars which from accident or neglect might otherwise be lost."¹⁶

Faithful to the aims expressed in the preface, the second volume of the Malayan Miscellanies published reports of the various excursions made by Benkulen servants into the interior during Raffles' administration as well as an abridged version of Barnes' Report published under the title, "Account of a Journey from Moco Moco to Pengkalan Jambi from Korinchi."¹⁷ It provided for the first time, a description of the places and trade of the region beyond the Lake Kerinci area towards Pangkalan Jambu. Descriptions of the local people and their government and the difficulties encountered by Barnes on the journey were omitted as being of less topical interest. It is these passages of ethnographic and historical interest, constituting some of the earliest reports of Kerinci and the interior of Jambi which warrant publication of the full report, including the short "Journal from Pengkalan Jambi towards Korinchi and Moco Moco". The latter, scheduled to appear in the Malayan Miscellanies III, was never published because of the termination of the press.¹⁸

According to Marsden, in his first edition of the History of Sumatra (1783), his information on Kerinci was derived from Rogers, a British servant, who visited the area.¹⁹ No details are, however, available about Roger's visit,²⁰ which Marsden does not mention in his third edition of the History of Sumatra (1811) where the report of Campbell's 1800 expedition to Kerinci is published instead.²¹ It is likely that Rogers did not make a full report available and this would explain why it does not appear either in Marsden's History or in the Malayan Miscellanies. Marsden's History (1811) includes, besides Campbell's report, an account of the expedition launched a few years later, in 1804, by Lieutenant Hastings Dare into the interior of Mukomuko, in pursuit of rebel elements, from the Malay Court; but his forces did not proceed further than Serampi and

Sungai Tenang, on the borders of Kerinci.²² Thus Campbell's report of his 1818 excursions into Kerinci, largely in the interests of natural history remains, in fact, the earliest European account of Kerinci. The full report by Barnes, which covers a more extensive area in the interior of Kerinci, and undertaken as a result of Raffles' political motivations, makes an interesting comparison with Campbell's report, as well as complementing it.

Thomas Barnes, unlike Campbell and other British servants who explored the interior, had no botanical background. He was first appointed in 1811 in Penang as "Superintendent of Caffres and Convicts" and in 1815 rose to the rank of Acting Collector of Revenues. On transfer to Benkulen in 1816 he was appointed Resident at Mukomuko and was described as "being well acquainted with the Malay language".²³ Because of Mukomuko's traditional links with the latter, Barnes was the obvious choice to lead the expedition to Jambi via Kerinci.

Having collected his instructions from Fort Marlborough, Barnes started out on 15 August 1818 from Mukomoko, via the Air Selagan, taking with him Broekhuysen, his assistant from the sub-Residency of Ketaun, military forces consisting of Ensign Marra Kallam, 1 Sergeant, 2 Corporals, 20 Buginese soldiers and a party of local chiefs including Raja Jalil, Malintang Bumi and various menteri, ulubalang and juritulis. Due to the lack of accessibility by boat, the entire journey was made on foot, via the Merangin and Tembesi rivers, towards Pangkalan Jambu which, because of the many obstacles placed in its way by local chiefs, the expedition reached only on 18 October, after more than two months. On being unable to gain access beyond Pangkalan Jambu to Salamuka, from where a boat could be taken to Jambi, the expedition returned via Lake Kerinci to Mukomuko which it reached on 18 December 1818.

The full report which Barnes submitted to Raffles, and which is published here, is preserved within the collection of European Manuscripts (Miscellaneous) MS D119, No. 132, ff. 303-87, in the India Office Records, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London. Unlike the more substantial and lengthy account of the journey to Pangkalan Jambu, the "Journal from Pengkalan Jambi towards Korinchi and Moco Moco", which forms the second part of the report, constitutes daily jottings in a diary, in parts barely legible, and covering only 11 manuscript pages.³⁰ The brevity of the journal is probably because the visit to the Lake Kerinci area, which is away from the direct route to Jambi, was subsidiary to the main purpose of Barnes' mission. The diary, nonetheless, provides a record of the places visited and the state of cultivation and settlement in the region.

The early English reports on Kerinci have continued to be an essential part of the historiography of the region and were consulted later as important sources by the Dutch. In 1876, as a preliminary to its Sumatran Expedition of 1877/78 the Aardrijkskundig Genootschap (Geographical Society) in Amsterdam published in its Tijdschrift all available reports on Kerinci, as well as the other interior regions, drawing both from English and Dutch sources.²⁴ The Kerinci reports by Campbell (1800), Dare (1804) and Barnes (1818) were published as Appendices I, IV and II respectively.²⁵ The copy of the Barnes' Report which the Society obtained from the India Office in London²⁶ was translated with some notes by P.J. Veth.²⁷ Though a fuller version than that printed in the Malayan Miscellanies, it is still incomplete. However, appendix III of the same Tijdschrift van het Koninklijk Aardrijkskundig Genootschap consists of later Dutch reports on Kerinci. One by an anonymous author written in 1872 and submitted by E. Netscher, then Governor of Sumatra's West Coast,²⁸ and another by Heer van

DEC 1986

Notes

1. G.E. Gerini, Researches on Ptolemy's geography of East Asia (London, 1909) 587-91; Donald Lantham (trans.), Travels of Marco Polo (Middlesex, 1974) 242-7; J.V.G. Mills (trans.) Ma Huan, Ying-Yai Sheng-Lan (Cambridge, 1970); A.Cortesao, The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires (London, 1944) I, 135-65.
2. F. Valentijn, "Beschrijvinge van het Eiland Sumatra", Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indien (Dordrecht-Amsterdam, 1724-26) V, 1-44.
3. J. Bastin (intro.), W. Marsden, The History of Sumatra, London, 1811, Reprinted (Kuala Lumpur, 1966) v-x. Marsden's History of Sumatra was first published in 1783 and 1784 and revised in 1811.
4. J. Kathirithamby-Wells, The British West Sumatran Presidency (1760-85): Problems of Early Colonial Enterprise (Kuala Lumpur, 1977) 93 n. 65.
5. Marsden, The History of Sumatra (1811) 363, 369.
6. Ibid., 304-8.
7. F.M. Schnitger, Forgotten Kingdoms in Sumatra (Leiden, 1964) 53-63.
8. Sophia Raffles, Memoir of the Life and Public Services of Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles (London, 1930) 342-64.
9. This idea had, in fact, been mooted earlier during the British occupation of Padang and its dependencies in 1781-85. Refer, Kathirithamby-Wells, The British West Sumatran Presidency, 172-3.
10. SFR 48, Letters, Raffles, Ft. Marlborough, 12 April 1818 - Court of Directors, f. 83-101.
11. SFR 48, Letters, Raffles, Ft. Marlborough, 1 June 1820 - Holt Makenzie, Secretary to Council, London, ff. 296-97, 304-5.
12. J. Bastin, The Native Policies of Sir Stamford Raffles in Java and Sumatra (Oxford, 1957) 128.
13. J. Bastin, The British in West Sumatra (1685-1825): A Selection of Documents (Kuala Lumpur, 1965) xxx, 128-9 n. 353, n. 354; J. Kathirithamby-Wells, "A Survey of the Effects of British Influence on Indigenous Authority in Southwest Sumatra (1685-1824)", Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, 129 (1973) 255-9.
14. See below, Barnes' Report.
15. For an account of Raffles' attempt to establish British influence in Palembang see: J. Bastin "Palembang in 1811 and 1812", Essays on Indonesian and Malayan History (Singapore, 1961) 53-91.
16. Malayan Miscellanies, I (Benkulen, 1820) p. iii.

17. Ibid., II (1822) No. 6, 1-23. These include an "Account of a journey from Ranna to Pasumah Lebah and the ascent of Gunung Dempo", by E. Presgrave; "Diary of a Journey from Bencoolen to Palembang", by Capt. F. Salmon; and an "Account of a Journey to the Lake of Ranow in the interior of Kroeë," by J. Pattullo, Malayan Miscellanies II, Nos. 2, 3 & 5.
18. Ibid., II (1822) No. 6, p. 23.
19. W. Marsden, A History of Sumatra, 1783, 87.
20. It is not unlikely that the visit which Rogers is claimed to have made to Kerinci during Marsden's service in Benkulen (1771-79) was through the mediation of, or even perhaps in company with, the latter's regular informant on local languages and customs, Raden Temenggung Wiradiningrat of Benkulen. According to an Kerinci oral tradition, on the orders of the Pangeran (presumably Lingang Alam of Sungei Lemau), Radan Temenggung (Wiradiningrat) visited Sangguran Agung, to convey the Undang-Undang (Melayu) of the coastal region. The close connections of the two Benkulen chiefs with the Mukomuko area, linked with Kerinci, climaxed later in the marriage in 1810 of Raden Anon Zainal Abidin, the Pangeran's grandson, and relative of Raden Temenggung Wiradiningrat, with a daughter of the Sultan of Mukomuko. J. Kathirithamby-Wells, "A Note on Malay 'Historical' writings in Benkulen during the British era", Indonesia Circle, 22 (1980) 24-5; J. Kathirithamby-Wells and Muhammed Yusoff Hashim, The Syair Mukomuko: An early nineteenth century Sumatran Chronicle, Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, Monograph 13 (1985) 7-9; P. Voorhoeve, Tambo Kerintji (U.P. mimeograph, compiled 1941) 157.
21. Marsden, A History of Sumatra, (1811 Reprinted Kuala Lumpur, 1966).
22. Marsden, A History of Sumatra, (1811) 304-8.
23. Personal Records, ff. 86, 970-1, India Office Records, 0/6/7, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London.
24. Tijdschrift van het Koninklijk Aardrijkskundig Genootschap (TKAG) (Amsterdam, 1876).
25. TKAG (1876) 38-40, 66-9, 41-56.
26. Ibid., 41.
27. Ibid., 58 note 35.
28. Ibid., 59-63.
29. Ibid., 63-65.
30. See map on p. 10.
31. See Voorhoeve, Tambo Kerintji, ii.
32. Ibid., 5; A. Ph van Aken (Controleur, Binnenlandsch Bestuur) "Nota betreffende de afdeeling Koerintji", Mededeelingen van het Bureau voor de Bestuurszaken der buitenbezittingen bewerkt door het Encyclopaedisch Bureau, Aflevering VIII (Batavia, 1915) 4;