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Pawangs on the Malay Frontier: Miraculous Intermediaries of Rice, Ore, Beasts and Guns

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by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

_Pawang_s on the Malay Frontier:
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Professor Nile Spencer Green, Chair

This dissertation focuses upon peripatetic, godly and technologically advanced Muslim miracle-workers or *pawangs* who operated upon and were pivotal to rice, mining, game and armed frontiers in 19th and early 20th century Malaya. It is written with an understanding that a study of miracle-workers is fruitful in terms of providing a microcosm of the characteristics of particular socioeconomic stratums and socioeconomic trends. Redressing the conspicuous academic silence on these key historical agents, this dissertation explores how a variety of socioeconomic activities in 19th and early 20th century Malaya were premised and dependent upon the miraculous expertise of *pawang*s; namely agricultural colonization, forest clearing, rice production, alluvial tin and gold mining, elephant trapping and the bearing of hand-held firearms. Moreover, this dissertation elaborates upon how such a historical analysis of miracles or miraculous expertise is revelatory of sophisticated cosmopolitan worlds wherein miracle-workers capitalized upon their predominance within subaltern communities as spectacular intercessors of eclectic supernatural beings, and the

patronage networks of indigenous and non-indigenous entrepreneurs engaged in extracting the natural resources of the Peninsula.

The dissertation of Terenjit Singh Sevea is approved.

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for Falak Sufi

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Glossary

adat	customary religion
akuan	spirit-friends
anak	dependent
anak chuchu	descendants
anchak	sacrificial tray
anak buah	dependents-laborers
anak pawang	dependent of the *pawang*
anak raja	royal descent, children of chief
arwah	*zikr* or remembrance, recitation of the name of God, prophets, *pawangs* or pious ancients
assalamualaikum	*Ar.*: peace be upon you
*aulia*s	saints, friends of God
aulia anbia	saints and prophets
bab	book
Bahar Rum	Ocean of Constantinople
bahdi	malignant influence
bahra	400 lbs of tin
baluh dzat	cylinder of Essence
batara	saving power
Batara Guru	Siva
Batara Kala	Siva the Destroyer
Batara Sakti	Brahma
bedil	gun, rifle
benah	insect rice pests, Nephotettix bipunctata
beneh	seed; also, sowing
beras	raw husked rice
berkat	transferrable power-grace
berpuar	spiritual combat with the stems of *puar*, armomum cardamomum
bertih	parched rice
bhuta	goblin
bidadari	houri
bijeh	rice seed; also, tin 'seed' or tin ore
bilal	muezzin
biliong	light hatchet
bomor	miracle-worker (a term interchangeable with *pawang*)
boriah	Muharram band
bumi haiwan	land of beasts
busut	anthill or earth mound
chahaya	luminosity
changkul	hoe; Malayan spade
chinca	spell to silent or confuse

chin chia	water-wheel or chain pump constructed with timber, impromptu
chucha	silencing charm
Chuliah	Tamil Muslim
dato (*to'*)	honorific for elder, non-royal chief or for spiritual beings
depa	a measure of land equivalent to six feet
derhaka	treason
dewa	demi-god
doa	supplication
durgah	miracle-working shrine
dzat	Essence of God, or language of essential
emas	gold
falnama	bibliomancy involving the opening of the book randomly
faqir	ascetic
fasal	section
gajah	elephant
gantang	a measure of rice equivalent to 3.125 kg
gantia	vice-regent
genaling	vengeful influence
genggulang	altar or platform erected upon commencing rice agriculture
ghaib	invisible; esoteric
ghazi	religious warrior
Habshi	African from Habash, Abyssinia
haiwan	beasts
hantu	demon
hilir	downstream, estuary
hukum	govern, governance
hulat	caterpillar-like rice pest
hulu	upstream, interior
huma	dry, hill rice
hun	Chinese secret societies
hutan	forest
ilmu	esoteric science
ilmu gajah	esoteric science of the elephant
imam	leader of a mosque-based congregation
isharat	mark, sign
jahil	ignorant; also, un-initiated by *pawang* or *bomor*
jampi	miraculous charm
jawatan	agency (*jawatan pawang*: agency as miracle-worker)
jembalang	gnome that damages rice crops, earth demon
jinn	genie
jinn Zanggi perkasa tuha	old gallant Habshi forest banshee
jinn bumi jembalang tanah	combine of the earth *jinn* and crop-damaging earth gnome
kafir	infidel, non-Muslim

kalimah	literally: a word, saying; also, understood as the utterance of *shahadat*
kampung	village
karang	a Chinese expression for the coveted tin 'seed' or gold constituting layer above the bedrock
kataan	recitations
kebun	garden
kenduri	religious feast
kepala	key, authoritative
kepenatan	a monetary compensation for 'fatigue'
kerah	conscripts-laborers
keramat	miracle-working shrine and/or miracle-workers (*Ar.*: *karama*, miracle)
kemang	female earth spirit feared for haunting fields and mines, and sowing tares in crop and tin ore
khaus	official epistle
kias	theology; also, miracle-working theology
kijaji	honorific title for religious teachers and leaders
Kling	Tamil, Telugu
kong	a Chinese expression for the sub-stratum of earth or clay below the ore-bearing *karang* layer
*kongsi*s	special Chinese cooperative forms of labor organization
kshatriya	warrior caste in classical Indian sociology
kuasa	power; also, a term for written land grant
kubu	stockade
kunyit trus	Aingeber cassumunar; a key article of elephant *bomor*
ladang	dry hill rice or reference to a rice clearing
laksana gajah	esoteric signs of the elephant
lalang	tall grass, Imperata cylindrical
lapisan tanah	layers of the land
langkesa	the 'spectral reaper' (also: *rengkesa*)
langsuyir	hostile whinnying female banshee
lebbai	petty Tamil religious dignitary
lombong	large open-cast, predominantly Chinese excavation
makan	the meal for spirit propitiation
malaikat	angel, or messenger-spirit
Malik al-Maut	angel of death
mambang	'hoverers', yellow spirits
mantra gajah	mantras for the elephant
marraikayar	elite Tamil Muslim trading community
Marrikh	Mars
mata-mata	honorary police functionary; policeman
*maulud*s	prayers invoking prophets
melombong	open-cast mining (also, *melumbung*)
menyemah	smelting (literally: 'sacrificing')

mika	an intimate
mualad	creole, Arab-Malay, patrilineal descendants of the prophet Muhammad
muapakat	agreement
mukim	'parish' area, territorial subdivision
mulla	religious instructor
mungkir	repudiation
munshi	secretary, scribe; 'Malay Writer'
Mushtari	Jupiter
nadzar	brightness of God
nur	luminosity
nur Muhammad	luminosity of the prophet Muhammad
orang bumian	aboriginal horticulturalists
padi	The modern American use of 'paddy' as meaning wet rice field is unknown in Malay and Malayan English, and the term *padi* is employed here for the rice plant
pantang	customary prohibitions
parang	cleaver, timber-knife
pauh zanggi	cosmological abode for exorcized spirits (literally: colossal Habshi coconut palm)
pawang	miracle-worker
paya	swamp, marsh; also, wet rice field
peladang	husbandman
pemanggil	harbinger for supernatural beings
penghulu	headman; chief administrative authority of district
perabun	consciousness-dimming charms
perahu	small watercraft
perang	war
peri	fairy
perman	edict
pertahunan	religious rite of annual wet rice production
peterah	tithe of crops paid after Ramdzan
petua	*fatwa*, authoritative comment or legal opinion issued a Muslim jurist, *pawang*, *bomor* or guru
pilak	misfortune
pir	religious elder, saint (literally: wise old man)
poyang	*pawang*
pusat bumi	navel of the earth; also, cosmological entry point for spirits
putri	nymph-princess
qab-o qusain	the internode between pre-existence and existence
qalandar	ascetic
Qamar	Moon
raiat	agricultural laborers (also, *raayat* or *raiyat*)
raja	chief

rakaat	unit of prayer
raksi	esoteric astrological 'star'
rejah	spiritual charge forward
rejang	divination from days of the month, often symbolized by different animals
relau	typical Chinese furnace
rezki	livelihood
rijalulghaib	the '*ghaib* spirits of protective saints' that accompany the funeral procession of Ali bin Abi Talib
rimba	primeval forest
ruhani	spiritual
ruh izafi	the constructive spirit whereby God makes Himself objective
rukn	pillars, comportment, element
Rume	Ottoman
saat	auspicious, supernatural 'moment'
sabda nabi	say of the prophet
sahabat	companion; also, friend
salam	salutation to God
salasilah	chain of transmission (also, *silsila*)
saudara	relative
sawah	wet rice
sayyid	patrilineal descendant of the prophet Muhammad
semangat	vital force, or soul
semangat padi	vital force of rice
sempena	blessed transmission
Seri	goddess of rice crop (equivalent of Ceres in Greek mythology)
shafaat	intercession
shahadat	Muslim confession of faith
Shams	Sun
sharat	clause
shariat	comportment
sheikh	instructor in *ilmu*; also complimentary title for Arabs and Indo-Arabs
shetan	armies of Iblis (Satan)
shikari	hunter
sifat	character, appropriates
suku	clans or landowning classes
Sultan Muda	state *pawang* in Perak
sumpitan	bamboo blowpipe shooting poisonous darts
surat	epistle, letter
takbir	the exclamation of *Allahu Akbar*
takdir	predestination
tangkal	talisman

tariqat	esoteric path
tawar	miraculous remedy
tazkira	biographical dictionary, memoir
teman	friend
tentera	armies
tepung tawar	a rice paste concoction employed by miracle-workers
teyib	manual
tilek	second sight
timah	tin; also, a reference to the ingot form of tin
tuai	tiny reaping knife concealable in the palm of a hand
tuan	title applied to Europeans, sayyids and hajjis (*tuan besar*: the chief in office)
tuju	ritual of slaughtering enemy
tumpu langgam	an expression used by *pawangs* and *bomors* to describe a 'melodious foothold', often upon the forested frontier
towkay lombong	mine leasee
ulama	scholars, learned men; theologians
ummat	the people; oft-used in reference to the ummat of the prophet Muhammad
Utar	Mercury
wali	friend of God, saint
Zahrah	Venus
zakat	almsgiving, in the form of crops
Zanggi	Habshi
zikr	remembrance, recitation of the name of God, prophets, *pawangs* or pious ancients
zinah	unlawful sexual conduct
Zuhal	Saturn

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Biographical Sketch

Terenjit Singh Sevea has been a student at the Department of History, University of California Los Angeles since 2007. He is particularly interested in the history of religion in modern South and Southeast Asia, and is the co-editor of a volume entitled *Islamic Connections: Muslim Societies in South and Southeast Asia*.

Introduction: *Pawangs* on the Malay Frontier

In a letter written in 1892 by the 'imam of the sepoys' in Malacca, Sayyid Abdullah Al-Aydarus, to his friend in Pontianak, we find his condemnation of the social world he inhabited:

> *Here [in the Malay Peninsula] the self-proclaimed pawang serves as … the god of the rice clearing [ladang] … revels even in the company of English hunters … here even the bastard lebbai [petty Tamil religious dignitary] is kept busy shuttling between the bosoms of his wives here and in Nagore … looting the silly Malays and squeezing a hundred or two hundred dollars out of clients.*[1]

Abdullah Al-Aydarus's letter provides a compelling depiction of Malayan socioeconomic stratums wherein, by the late 19th century, *pawang*s or miracle-workers enjoyed lucrative careers as 'gods' of rice clearings and expert hunters, and found clients amongst Malay cultivators, representatives of the British Residencies in Malaya and in the sepoy circles within which the Hadhrami sayyid served as imam. According to the Malaccan imam, this was a 'detestable' world wherein, firstly, it had become 'difficult to distinguish between the self-proclaimed *pawang* and [true] *pawang*'. Secondly, *pawang*s from within Malaya and even from the Coromandel Coast were sprouting like 'bastards' and engulfing socioeconomic settings in the fashion of 'pests who multiplied but never died'. Thirdly, rice agriculture and trapping or hunting were perceived as religious operations that required the esoteric expertise of Muslim miracle-workers who, in Abdullah Al-Aydarus's words, 'penetrated forests through mantras' that 'God', 'His prophet' Muhammad, the 'ancient *pawang*s' and 'Batara Guru' (Siva) had for some inexplicable reason, gifted them.

[1] MHCS MS. Abdullah Al-Aydarus, *Inilah Surat Imam Abdullah Al-Aydarus* (1892).



Bay of Bengal, ca. 1800 and route between Nagore and Negapatam (Nagapattinam), and the Straits of Malacca (Source: *The General Gazetteer; or, Compendious Geographical Dictionary*. Courtesy of the University of Texas Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection).

This dissertation explores the simultaneously socioeconomic and religious stratums denigrated by Abdullah Al-Aydarus, and focuses upon the key historical agent of socioeconomic transformation in 19th century Malaya, the Muslim miracle-worker or *pawang*. The Malaccan imam's letter, in spite of its beration of the self-proclaimed *pawang*, comprises of a definition of the 19th century *pawang* as a male or female miracle-worker who possessed *ilmu* (esoteric science) and the *berkat* (power-grace) of God and eclectic spiritual beings such as Muhammad and Siva, and served as the widespread agent of socioeconomic activities in the Peninsula which in turn, is portrayed as an agrarian frontier divided between communities of prospective agriculturalists, hunters and miners,

and porous and spiritual forests that were exclusively penetrated by the expertise of the *pawang*. The following four chapters of this dissertation are devoted to examining Malay frontiers whereupon peripatetic, godly and technologically advanced Muslim miracle-workers were central to agricultural colonization, forest clearing, rice production, alluvial tin and gold mining, elephant trapping and the bearing of firearms. Post-colonial historians of Malay frontiers have overwhelmingly ignored the centrality of miracle-workers to socioeconomic worlds and activities in 19th and early 20th century Malaya, and this is a theme I return to regularly in the following chapters. As such, this study serves as an endeavor to write 'new' histories of the Malay frontier through the figure of the *pawang* and his or her miraculous expertise.

Post-colonial historians' neglect of the *pawang* as a historical agent of socioeconomic change in the Peninsula can partly be attributed to their inheritance of certain European ethnographers' depictions of the *pawang* as a 'magician, repository of immemorial superstitions and older faiths' who had little to do with modern Malaya, and the *pawang*'s expertise as 'magic', 'clouded in mystery' and inaccessible to the 'eye of the materialist'.[2] Nevertheless, unlike post-colonial scholars of Malaya, a number of European scholar-administrators were exceptionally sensitive to the role of *pawang*s as agents of socioeconomic transformations in Malaya, and the centrality of miraculous expertise to socioeconomic activities. For instance, the Orientalist and employee of the Straits Settlements Civil Service, Charles O. Blagden referred to the *pawang* in 1892, as the 'indispensable functioning' upon the Malayan agricultural frontier throughout 'sowing, reaping, irrigation works, clearing [of the] jungle for planting and other agricultural

[2] Cited from Abraham Hale, 'On Mines and Miners in Kinta, Perak', *Journal of the Straits Branch, Royal Asiatic Society*, 16 (1885), 303-304; Richard O. Winstedt, *The Malay Magician: Being Shaman, Saiva and Sufi* (London: Routledge and Paul, 1951), 7; Richard O. Winstedt, 'Malay Industries: Part 1: Fishing, Hunting and Trapping' in *Papers on Malay Subjects* (Kuala Lumpur: Federal Malay States Government Press, 1926), 1-2.

operations'.[3] In a similar vein, in a 1926 pamphlet, the Orientalist and Director of Education, Straits Settlements and Federated Malay States, Richard O. Winstedt alerted scholars to the reality that *pawang*s possessed specialized expertise, or 'weapons in the … spiritual "gun-room"', for 'agriculture', 'mining' and 'trapping and hunting', and that these experts were 'not mere charlatans even to the eye of the materialist'.[4]

African historians such as Ioan M. Lewis and Steven Feierman have challenged the 'curious disconnection' of Nyabingi public healers and *zar* possession cults from 'larger historical narratives' of the 19th century, and in turn, suggested that a historical inquiry into miraculous expertise and miracle-workers bore the potential of providing scholars valuable data on broader social worlds of east African frontiers.[5] In a similar vein, this dissertation is based on an understanding that a study of miracle-workers who operated upon the frontiers of Malaya and have been 'curiously disconnected' from 'larger historical narratives', is fruitful in terms of providing a microcosm of the characteristics of a particular socioeconomic stratum and socioeconomic trends. Redressing the conspicuous academic silence on these key actors in economic, colonial, environmental and subaltern Malayan historiography, my dissertation explores how a variety of socioeconomic activities in 19th century Malaya ranging from the transformation of forests or grasslands into dry, drained or irrigated ricefields, the mining of alluvial stanniferous and auriferous terrain, and the trapping of elephants in the mountainous interior of Malay states, to the appropriation of American hand-held firearms were premised and dependent upon the miraculous expertise or *ilmu* of *pawangs*. Moreover, this dissertation elaborates upon how such a historical analysis of *ilmu* is

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[3] SOAS MS 297483 C. O. Blagden, 'Pawang', in *Notes on Matters Connected with Malacca and the Malay Peninsula*, Book I (1892).

[4] Richard O. Winstedt, 'Malay Industries: Part 1: Fishing, Hunting and Trapping' in *Papers on Malay Subjects* (Kuala Lumpur: Federal Malay States Government Press, 1926), 1-2.

[5] Steven Feierman, 'Scholars, Colonizers, and the Creation of Invisible Histories' in *Beyond the Cultural Turn: New Directions in the Study of Society and Culture* eds. Victoria E. Bonnell, Lynn Avery Hunt and Richard Biernacki (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999) 187-188, 196, 202; I. M. Lewis, *Religion in Context: Cults and Charisma* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

revelatory of sophisticated stratums wherein miracle-workers capitalized upon, firstly, their predominance within subaltern communities as spectacular intercessors of historical prophets, saints and eclectic supernatural beings based upon the agricultural, geological, game and armed frontiers of Malaya. Secondly, the patronage of Muslim courtiers and rajas (chiefs), Chinese mining entrepreneurs, Tamil Muslim assayers and elephant traders, and European scholar-administrators. Thirdly, the abundance of land in the Malay states, semi-monetized mining, trapping and gun economies, competitive religious economies of Muslim and Christian holy men, and a ready supply of itinerant laborers via Indian Ocean networks.

Writing a History of the *Pawang* and the Frontier

The contributions in two recent works on Southeast Asian environmental history, Greg Bankoff and Peter Boomgaard's *A History of Natural Resources in Asia* and Boomgaard and David Henley's *Histories of Foodcrop and Livestock Farming*, have highlighted the urgent need for scholars to, on the one hand, place 'agricultural and livestock histories of Southeast Asia … on the map'. On the other hand, formulate a 'new research agenda' for writing histories of Southeast Asian environments and natural resources that have 'received literally no attention' in academic literature.[6] Indeed, in their introduction to *A History of Natural Resources in Asia*, Bankoff and Boomgaard call upon historians of Southeast Asia to finally undertake a serious historical investigation into the 'question of natural resources' such as forests, rice, ore and animals. Whilst the editors of *A History of Natural Resources in Asia* propose that Asians have 'realistically' conceived of natural resources as secular 'commodities' that were 'harvested and exchanged in the

[6] Greg Bankoff and Peter Boomgaard, 'Introduction: Natural Resources and the Shape of Asian History 1500-2000', in *A History of Natural Resources in Asia: The Wealth of Nature,* eds. Greg Bankoff and Peter Boomgaard, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), xv, 1; Peter Boomgaard and David Henly, 'Agricultural and Livestock Histories of Southeast Asia', in *Smallholders and Stockbreeders: Histories of Foodcrop and Livestock Farming in Southeast Asia*, eds. Peter Boomgaard and David Henly. (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2004), 5.

realization of profit', a number of contributions to this volume highlight (albeit, in passing) that historians should be sensitive to the 'conventions, schemata and stereotypes' employed by Asians to 'culturally define' their environment and resources such as rice, ore and livestock.[7] Alternatively, the contributions of Ronald D. Hill and William G. Clarence-Smith in *Histories of Foodcrop and Livestock Farming* emphasize that a 'new research agenda' for environmental history is urgently required to, firstly, redress the inadequacies of historiography that has overwhelmingly focused upon politics and trade in Southeast Asia in spite of the reality that Southeast Asians were involved in 'traditional agriculture' for most of the region's 'recorded history'. Secondly, produce a new history of environmental frontiers that is centered upon the 'real experts' and key historical agents, agriculturalists and animal breeders, who 'deserve to be rescued from obscurity'. Thirdly, undertake the 'scarcely begun', 'systematic collection' and 'investigation' of eclectic sources such as popular traditions that promise to be informative about the 'belief systems' and 'attitudes' of frontiersmen to natural resources.[8]

The following chapters endeavor to write new histories of sophisticated Malayan environments whereupon natural resources such as rice, alluvial deposits, elephants and metals used in firearms were 'religiously defined artifacts', and forests were understood as supernatural frontiers exclusively penetrated by miraculous expertise. Whilst this dissertation focuses upon the religious definition of Malayan forests in the 19th and early 20th century, Leonard Y. Andaya and Barbara W. Andaya's comments on the extraction of forested aromatic woods, resins and rattans in *A History of Malaysia* suggest that the

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[7] Bankoff and Boomgaard, 'Introduction', 1-5.

[8] Ronald David Hill, 'Towards a model of the history of 'traditional' agriculture in Southeast Asia', in *Smallholders and Stockbreeders: Histories of Foodcrop and Livestock Farming in Southeast Asia*, eds. Peter Boomgaard and David Henly (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2004), 19-46; William G. Clarence-Smith, 'Horse Breeding in Mainland Southeast Asia and its Borderlands' in Boomgaard and Henley (eds.) *Smallholders and Stockbreeders*, 203; William G. Clarence-Smith, 'Elephants, Horses, and the Coming of Islam to Northern Sumatra', *Indonesia and the Malay World,* 32:93, (2004), 271-272, 280-281.

frontiers of the Peninsula have been understood from 'early history' as 'haunts of demons and spirits', and as terrain that was penetrated by the 'mastery of the secret and esoteric knowledge', 'special language' and the invocation of 'supernatural powers'.[9] Furthermore, the subsequent chapters 'rescue from obscurity' the 'real experts' of rice production, alluvial mining, elephant trapping and gun bearing, who were miracle-workers and their associated frontiersmen. This will involve an extraction of data from a wide corpus of manuscripts that were produced in the 19th and early 20th century Peninsula which have been dismissed by historians of Malaya as compilations of ahistorical and anti-scientific magical traditions. These historical documents comprise of exceptional data on traditional methods and religious terms that were employed by the experts of agriculture, mining, hunting and shooting.

In a recent article on 19th century Persian travel narratives that 'discovered' the Central Eurasian steppe world, Arash Khazeni elaborates upon how these travelogues contained valuable information about how Muslim 'societies used, constructed, and perceived natural environments'. Khazeni, however, laments that within world history, 'little is known' about experts who penerated frontiers, 'Islamicate systems of knowledge about nature' and the role of such knowledge in 'projects to reclaim natural environments'.[10] *Pawangs on the Malay Frontier* is the first historical work centered upon the experts of Malayan frontiers, 'Islamicate systems of [esoteric] knowledge [or *ilmu*] about nature', and the role of *ilmu* in 'projects to reclaim natural environments' and resources in the 19th and early 20th century Peninsula. This study also proposes that a history centered upon miracle-workers who were intimately associated with planters, miners, trappers and gun bearers, and esoteric 'systems of knowledge about nature', is one that takes

[9] B. W. Andaya and L. Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), 12, 48, 136-137.
[10] Arash Khazeni, 'Across the Black Sands and the Red: Travel Writing, Nature and the Reclamation of the Eurasian Steppe Circa 1850', *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* 42:04 (2010), 593-600.

historians 'very close to the action' and 'much closer to the actors' upon the frontier.[11] As Carlo Ginzburg's *The Cheese and the Worms* reveals, a serious study of records and traditions of individuals who remain insignificant in historiography can prove that these figures were microcosms of the 'characteristics of an entire social stratum in a specific historical period'.[12] Appropriating Ginzburg's microhistorical methods, the subsequent chapters understand the miracle-worker who remains insignificant in historiography, as a microcosm of 'entire socioeconomic stratums', 'worlds of vulnerability' and 'disorderly terrains' upon the 19th century Malayan frontier. Moreover, this dissertation draws inspiration from Nile Green's *Islam and the Army in Colonial India* that investigates the 'religious world of the Indian Muslim soldier' through the figure of the *faqir* (ascetic), and pays close attention to the religious terms through which sepoys of the Hyderabad Contingent understood their social worlds.[13] Whilst Green's study introduced readers to a 'barracks Islam' centered upon the anti-scientific miracles of the *faqir*, the following chapters narrate an 'insider's history' of 'ricefields Islam', 'mines Islam', 'enclosures Islam' and 'stockades Islam' that was pivoted upon the miraculous expertise of the *pawang* that 'serious' history has been unable to take at 'face value'.[14]

Taking the miraculous expertise of *pawang*s 'at face value', this dissertation attempts to redress gaps in scholarly knowledge of 'vital subjects' in the history of the Peninsula.[15] In *A History of Malaysia*, Andaya and Andaya have noted that historiography suffers from 'glaring gaps' in knowledge of the practice of Islam, and the 'life of the Malay peasant' and 'common people' upon Malay frontiers, due to the 'lack of

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[11] Cited from Donald Quataert, *Miners and the State in the Ottoman Empire: The Zonguldak Coalfield, 1822-1920,* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), 18.
[12] Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth Century Miller*, trans. John Tedeschi and Anne Tedeschi, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1980), xx; Luise White, *Speaking with Vampires: Rumor and History in Colonial Africa*, (Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 5, 10, 55, 70, 85.
[13] Nile Green, *Islam and the Army in Colonial India: Sepoy Religion in the Service of the Empire*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
[14] Green, *Islam and the Army in Colonial India*, 4-6.
[15] Andaya and Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 40-41, 109-110.

information' on these topics in European and Malay manuscripts that were produced in the Peninsula. On the contrary, the following chapters reveal that a study of miracle-workers and miraculous expertise, and exploration of a corpus of multilingual manuscripts, provides historians valuable data on a variety of 'vital subjects'. These topics include religious mentalities and traditions of cultivators, miners, trappers and gun-bearers; the nature of specific labors or operations undertaken upon the Malay frontier; socioeconomic preferences and techniques of peasants, miners and trappers; fears of the common people who penetrated rice, mining and game frontiers; the mobility and cosmopolitan mindsets of frontiersmen in the Peninsula; the moral policing that laborers were subjected to upon rice, mining and armed frontiers; and, the intimate and exploitative relationships between miracle-workers and husbandmen, mining entrepreneurs, miners, elephant owners, trappers, mahouts, rifle bearers and craftsmen. The trope of intimate and exploitative relationships between Muslim miracle-workers and laborers is not peculiar to Malayan frontiers, and we find evidence of similar networks at play upon the 19th and early 20th century agricultural frontiers of Java and Punjab. For instance, Clifford Geertz's article on the Javanese *kijaji* mentions that these Muslim masters enjoyed saintly veneration by peasants and were able to mobilize a 'cheap, hardworking, and disciplined labor force' of devotees who expanded the 19th and early 20th century rice frontiers.[16] Alternatively, the works of Richard M. Eaton, Arthur F. Buehler and David Gilmartin are revelatory of the simultaneously religious and propietary connections that bound peasant clans to landholder castes of 'intercessionary' and 'mediatory' Sufi saints upon the agricultural frontiers of 19th century Punjab.[17]

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[16] Clifford Geertz, 'The Javanese Kijaji: The Changing Role of a Cultural Broker,' *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 2:2 (1960), 236.

[17] Richard. M. Eaton, 'The Political and Religious Authority of the Shrine of Baba Farid,' in his *Essays on Islam and Indian History*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 213-220; David Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam: Punjab and the making of Pakistan* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1988), 52, 61-2; Arthur F. Buehler, 'Currents of Sufism in Nineteenth and Twentieth-Century Indo-Pakistan: An Overview', *Muslim World* 87:3-4 (1997),

Pawangs on the Malay Frontier also makes a humble contribution to a field of scholarship that has re-visited early modern and modern Asian frontiers as hubs of sophisticated intra-Asian encounters and connections. John F. Richards's *The Unending Frontier*, for instance, encouraged environmental historians to explore early modern Eurasian frontiers as sites upon which enterprises to 'exploit natural resources' were undertaken by 'technologically advanced' colonizers and hunters who operated independently of European power.[18] Furthermore, Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam's work on early modern autobiographical narratives of *Indo-Persian Travels* has persuaded historians to faithfully 'listen' to eclectic records of intra-Asian encounters and networks of information that transpired upon Asian frontiers 'beyond a Western framework'.[19] This dissertation listens to a corpus of manuscripts that are compelling portrayals of 19th and early 20th century Malay frontiers as hubs of cosmopolitan and peripatetic actors who were bound by Asian and Muslim enterprises to exploit natural resources. These agricultural, mining, trapping and smuggling enterprises that were pursued upon frontiers whereupon the British Residency had a minute impact upon, linked the fates of technologically advanced miracle-workers, Malay subsistence planters, Chinese tin miners, Tamil assayers, Tamil elephant traders, cosmopolitan gun runners, European scholar-administrators, and Habshi laborers or slaves.

Technologically advanced miracle-workers discussed in the following chapters include Minangkabaus who were reputed as 'great sorcerers' and as possessors of miraculous powers to produce 'bountiful harvests' and 'tame wild tigers' by the 18th

299-314; Arthur F. Buehler, *Sufi Heirs of the Prophet: the Indian Naqshbandiyya and the Rise of the Mediating Sufi Shaykh* (Columbia : University of South Carolina Press, c1998).

[18] John F. Richards, *The Unending Frontier: An Environmental History of the Early Modern World,* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

[19] Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Indo-Persian Travels in the Age of Discoveries, 1400-1800*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), xiii, 20-21; also see Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 'Connected Histories: Notes towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia,' in *Beyond Binary Histories: Re-imagining Eurasia to c.1830,* ed. Victor Lieberman (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 289-315.

century in the western Malay states, Arab sayyids and Tamils.[20] Whilst the aforementioned letter of Abdullah al-Aydarus mentioned *lebbai*s who shuttled between the Straits of Malacca and the Coromandel Coast to perform as *pawang*s upon the Malay frontier, Chapter 1 explores an early 20th century Jawi manuscript that serves as a window into Negri Sembilan rice frontiers that were spiritually guarded by a Tamil rice *pawang*, Abdullah Pillai. The subsequent chapters also suggest that laborers upon the Malay frontier included Malayan, Minangkabau and Tamil husbandmen, Chinese miners who constituted more than 97 per cent of the tin mining labor force in western Malaya by the late 19th century, and Habshi slaves. Drawing upon Helene Basu's work on the 'migration of African spirits' in conjunction with the 'forced or voluntary migrations' of Habshis across the western Indian Ocean, Chapter 3 employs a late 19th century Jawi compendium as a historical record of the 'high mobility of ['*Zanggi*'] spirit pantheons' that travelled to the Malay frontier along with Habshi laborers who were employed for forest clearing.[21]

This dissertation's focus upon the aforementioned Muslim and transcultural enterprises serves as a reminder of Muslim and Asian pasts for historians of Southeast Asia who have often credited late 19th century European colonizers with the expansion of the 'great rice and mining frontiers' of the region. Richards's *The Unending Frontier*, and contributions within Kenneth Pomeranz and Edmund Burke III's *The Environment and World History*, have shown that it is futile to hold on to an assumption that non-Europeans enjoyed an 'ecological harmony' with the environment that was ruptured by

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[20] Alexander Hamilton, *A New Account of the East Indies: Being the Observations and Remarks of Capt. Alexander Hamilton, who spent his time there from the year 1688. to 1723. Trading and travelling, by sea and land, to most of the countries and islands of commerce and navigation, between the Cape of Good-Hope, and the Island of Japon*, II (Edinburgh: John Mosman One of His Majesty's Printers, 1727), 83.

[21] Helene Basu, 'Drumming and Praying: Sidi at the Interface Between Spirit Posession and Islam', in *Struggling With History: Islam and Cosmopolitanism in the Western Indian Ocean*, eds. Edward Simpson and Kai Kresse, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 303-304; Lewis, *Religion in Context*, 140-145. For an exploration of the interveawing relationships of spirit cults in Bihar and labor relations and the articulation of 'bondage', refer to Gyan Prakash, *Bonded histories: Genealogies of Labor Servitude in Colonial India* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

19th century European colonizers.[22] Indeed, Michael Adas's work on rice frontiers located in the river deltas of mainland Southeast Asia (Mekong, Chao Phraya and Irrawaddy) has, firstly, criticized post-colonial historical geographers for assuming that the expansion of these 'great rice frontiers' was associated with late 19th century European colonizers, and secondly, highlighted that drainage and settlement projects were spearheaded by non-European indigenous and non-indigenous entrepreneurs and involved non-European laborers.[23] Nevertheless, Timothy N. Harper has recently emphasized that historians of Malaya have regularly 'contrived a [non-European] relationship of reciprocity' between *hulu* (upstream, interior) and *hilir* (downstream, estuary) areas that was shattered by the first generation of European colonizers associated with the British Residencies that were established in Perak, Selangor and Sungei Ujong, Negri Sembilan, in 1874.[24] For instance, Lim Teck Ghee's *Origins of the Colonial Economy* writes a history of the Perak rice frontier as one demarcated into, on the one hand, the era of Malay 'harmony with the native environment' that preceded the establishment of the British colonial administration, and on the other, the period of agricultural colonization that was spearheaded by a 'generation of British officers in Perak' who 'deliberately chose agriculture as a tool of colonial development' and capitalized upon the 'orderliness of the colonial administration'.[25]

Even scholars of agricultural frontiers in 19th and early 20th century Java who have drawn attention to the religious mentalities of peasants such as Kartodirjo Sartono,

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[22] See Kenneth Pomeranz, 'Introduction: World History and Environmental History,' in *The Environment and World History,* eds. Edmund Burke III and Kenneth Pomeranz (Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2009), 9; also see Mahesh Rangarajan, 'Environmental Histories of India: Of States, Landscapes, and Ecologies' in Burke III and Pomeranz eds., *The Environment and World History*, 229-237.

[23] See Michael Adas, 'Continuity and Transformation: Colonial Rice Frontiers and their Environmental Impact on the Great River Deltas of Mainland Southeast Asia,' in Burke III and Pomeranz, *The Environment and World History*, 191-207.

[24] Cited from T. N. Harper, 'The Politics of the Forest in Colonial Malaya,' *Modern Asian Studies* 31:1 (1997), 2; R. H. Grove, Vinita Damodaran and Satpal Sangwan (eds.) *Nature and the Orient: The Environmental History of South and Southeast Asia* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998).

[25] Lim Teck Ghee, *Origins of a Colonial Economy: Land and Agriculture in Perak, 1874-1879, (*Penang: Penerbit Universiti Sains Malaysia: Federal Publications, 1976), 3-4.

Michael Adas and James C. Scott, have been preoccupied with producing histories of 'movements', 'peasant unrest', 'prophet-inspired rebellions', 'religio-magical' opposition and 'every day forms of resistance' against the Dutch colonial administration.[26] In doing so, they have depicted the Javanese frontier as one subjugated under the hegemony, 'absolute power' and 'tentacles' of the Dutch administration. *Pawangs on the Malay Frontier*, on the contrary, is a history of rice, mining, trapping and armed frontiers whereupon Muslim and non-European miracle-workers and their associates enjoyed absolute power, and in the words of the Resident of Perak in 1890, the Residency made an 'infinitesimal' impact and struggled to create a 'foothold'.[27] The Malay frontiers that the following chapters discuss are socioeconomic worlds wherein miracle-workers, pushers of prohibited dry hill rice (*ladang*), tin miners, and gun craftsmen and runners, pursued operations that were untouched by even the 'sound' of the 'colonial administration'. Furthermore, officials associated with the British Residencies and Straits Settlements Civil Service were indeed dependent upon Muslim *pawang*s for rice planting calendars, elephant trapping and breeding, and for their coveted *ilmu* to penetrate the 'horrid ghostly' forests of Malaya.[28]

Academic Silence on Miracle-Workers and the Religious Frontier

Pawangs on the Malay Frontier is a history of 19th and early 20th century Malaya centered upon experts and key historical agents of socioeconomic transformation,

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[26] Kartodirjo Sartono, *Protest Movements in rural Java: A Study of Agrarian Unrest in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1973), 15; J. C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 41; Michael Adas, *Prophets of Rebellion: Millenarian Protest Movements against the European Colonial Order* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press , 1979); Michael Adas, *State, Market and Peasant in Colonial South and Southeast Asia* (Aldershot, Hants; Ashgate, 1998), 233.

[27] Frank Swettenham, *About Perak*, (Singapore: Straits Times, Press, 1893), 34; Frank Swettenham, *Annual Report of the State of Perak for the year 1890*, 22-23; Yip Yat Hoong, *The Development of the Tin Mining Industry of Malaya,* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1969), 100, 104.

[28] Cited from F. A. Swettenham, 'Journey … from Durien Sebatang on the Perak river to Slim, and down the Slim and Bernam rivers to the sea', *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 5, (1880), 65-66.

Muslim miracle-workers; religious 'systems of knowledge about nature'; and, the simultaneously socioeconomic and religious nature of rice production, alluvial mining, elephant trapping and firearms bearing. The following chapters are devoted towards a serious historical investigation of the miracle-worker who has been 'curiously disconnected' from 'larger historical narratives' of Malaya, as a microcosm of the characteristics of socioeconomic stratums and trends. In undertaking this study of *pawang*s, this dissertation draws upon historical works related to religious agriculture, mining, hunting and Muslim gun bearing in early modern and 19th century South Asia, 19th century Ottoman Turkey, and early modern and 19th century America.

Studying the Religious Rice Frontier

On a prophetic note, Lim Teck Ghee's 1976 *Origins of the Colonial Economy* stated that the topic of agricultural frontiers and rice agriculture in 19th century Malaya draws 'insufficient attention' of, and remains 'mostly neglected' by, post-colonial historians of the region.[29] Almost legitimizing the lack of scholarship on 19th and early 20th century agricultural frontiers in Malaya, Lim Chong-Yah's study of the *Economic Development of Modern Malaya* highlighted that a history of rice production in Malaya could only be written for the period after 1932 wherefrom cultivation and acreage statistics were extant, 'scientific' and 'dependable'.[30] On the contrary to this, Chapters 1 and 2 of this dissertation suggest that a corpus of seemingly anti-scientific manuscripts that were produced in 19th and early 20th century Malacca, Negri Sembilan and Perak are invaluable historical records of rice agriculture in the western Malay states which had attained a religious meaning and was associated with cosmopolitan *pawang*s by the late 19th century.

[29] Lim Teck Ghee, *Origins of a Colonial Economy*, x.
[30] Lim Chong Yah, *Economic Development of Modern Malaya*, (Malaya: Oxford University Press, 1968), 149.

The religious characteristics of the rice frontier, the figure of the miracle-worker and the sophisticated nature of the rice *pawang*'s miraculous expertise are key historical subjects that have found negligible attention in the yet-limited academic literature on agriculture in Malaya. For instance, Hill's comprehensive historical geography of *Rice in Malaya* merely dedicates sentences to the fact that both the '*ladang*-maker' and '*sawah* [wet rice]-cultivator' in 19th and early 20th century Malaya had his 'religious sanctions', 'incantations', 'magico-religious observances pertaining to rice', belief in the '*semangat padi*, the soul of the rice' and 'ritual acts' such as 'harvest ceremonies'. Hill also merely mentions that in 19th century Perak, a ceremony was conducted 'once in three months' by the 'force of law' wherein the 'wizard' (*pawang*) was tasked to 'vivify the padi'.[31] Similarly, John M. Gullick's influential *Indigenous Political Systems* concludes with a brief reference to 'organized village magic' wherein readers are haphazardly introduced to the 'magician' (*pawang*) who orchestrated 'rituals of rice cultivation' throughout stages of rice agriculture to 'drive out pestilential spirits which might injure health or crops'.[32] Furthermore, Cheng Siok Hwa's articles on the Malayan rice industry contain passing references to the historical reality that *pawang*s in the 19th century Peninsula were 'experts in the production of rice', conducted 'elaborate ceremonies and rituals' throughout the expansion of the rice frontier, and held the 'function of fixing the time for the commencement of planting, transplanting and harvesting'.[33]

Whilst there has been a conspicuous silence in post-colonial historiography on miracle-workers and religious rice frontiers in Malaya, scholars such as Gullick, Lim Teck

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[31] Ronald David Hill, *Rice in Malaya: A Study in Historical Geography*, (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2012), 42-3, 137, 139.
[32] J. M. Gullick, *Indigenous Political Systems of Western Malaya*, (London: Athlone, 1958) 142-143; J. M. Gullick, 'The Negri Sembilan Economy of the 1890s', *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 24:1 (1951), 45-46.
[33] Cheng Siok Hwa, 'The Rice Industry of Malaya: An Historical Survey', *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol XLII, No.2, (1969), 131-33; Cheng Siok Hwa, *The Rice Trade of Malaya*, (Singapore: University of Malaya Press, 1968) 1.

Ghee and Cheng have acknowledged that by the late 19th century, rice agriculture was an 'occupation hallowed by tradition and esteemed for more than purely economic reasons', and a 'way of life [rather] than an economic undertaking'. These scholars have also noted that the 'religious traits of the Malays' were 'derived from and revolved around' rice which had attained a 'special significance' in Malay life in this historical period.[34] Furthermore, Paul Kratoska's work on ethnic labor in British Malaya highlighted that by the late 19th century, the 'uneconomic' and 'unremunerative' occupation of rice production was the 'the most important fact of Malay economic life'.[35] The special religious significance of rice appears to have kept the 19th and early 20th century Malay Muslim labor force dedicatedly engaged in unpredictable rice production that, on the one hand, provided a lower income than pepper, gambier or market gardening and wage labor, and involved a 'major investment of time, labour and capital'. On the other hand, was plagued by the 'vagaries of water supply and rice pests', peculiar tropical diseases, and a range of meteorological and soil conditions that impeded crop growth.[36] It is unfortunate that historians of Malaya have ignored the need for a serious historical examination of the religious sensibilities of frontiersmen and the religious terms they employed to understand the unpredictability and hazards of the rice frontier. Chapters 1 and 2 serve as windows into socioeconomic stratums in 19th and early 20th century Malaya wherein rice frontiers were perceived as particularly unpredictable and hazardous terrains that were populated by eclectic spirits. These spirits were manifest upon rice frontiers as a list of 'vagaries' such as vermin, tropical diseases, economically-damaging meteorological conditions and deficient crop growth and harvests. These unpredicatable

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34 Lim Teck Ghee, *Origins of a Colonial Economy*, 43-44; Cheng Siok Hwa, 'The Rice Industry of Malaya', 133-4; Cheng Siok Hwa, *The Rice Trade of Malaya*, 1; Gullick, 'The Negri Sembilan Economy of the 1890s', 38-55.

35 Paul H. Kratoska, 'Rice Cultivation and the Ethnic Division of Labor in British Malaya', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 24:2 (1982), 286-288.

36 Kratoska, 'Rice Cultivation and the Ethnic Division of Labor in British Malaya', 286-288; Lim Chong Yah, *Economic Development of Modern Malaya*, 1, 147.

frontiers were in turn, exclusively penetrated through the miraculous expertise of the rice *pawang*.[37]

In writing a comprehensive history of rice *pawang*s and the religious rice frontier, this dissertation is influenced by the writings of Eaton and Richards on Muslim forest pioneers who were pivotal to the transformation of forested tracts into wet rice fields in eastern Bengal. Using Mughal records from the mid-17th century until 1760 (which marked the rise of British power), Eaton traced the careers of forest pioneers who constituted petty mullahs, pilgrims returned from Mecca, preachers and charismatic *pirs* (religious elders, saints) and received favorable or tax-free tenures from the Mughal state to convert forested tracts upon the Bengal frontier into permanent wet rice-fields.[38] More pertinent to this dissertation are Eaton's arguments that rice agriculture and Islam were introduced and developed simultaneously upon the Bengal frontier, and that the expansion of rice frontiers in eastern Bengal was from the mid-17th century onwards, 'particularly associated with Muslim holy men, or perhaps accurately, with industrious and capable forest pioneers identified as holy men' and 'men [who] swelled into vivid mythico-historical figures, saints' in 'popular memory'.[39] Eaton also asserts that literature on the spectacular powers of *pir*s who spearheaded rice agriculture that was produced in Bengal from the 16th to 18th century, provides historians windows into the religious mentalities of communities upon the early modern rice frontier who were 'familiar with the theme of thousands of Muslims attacking the forest under the leadership of

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[37] For a discussion of unpredictable and hazardous spiritual frontiers in Java, see Peter Boomgaard, 'Introducing Environmental Histories of Indonesia,' in *Paper Landscapes: Explorations in the Environmental History of Indonesia* eds. Peter Boomgaard, David Henley and Freek Colombijn (Leiden, KITLV Press, 1997) 10-17; Peter Boomgaard, 'Sacred Trees and Haunted Forests: Indonesia, Particularly Java, in the 19th and 20th Centuries,' in *Asian Perceptions of Nature: A Critical Approach* eds. O. Bmun and A. Kalland (London: Curzon Press for Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, 1995), 47-62.

[38] See Chapter 9 of Richard M. Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal frontier, 1204-1760* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994); R. M. Eaton, 'Who are the Bengal Muslims? Conversion and Islamization in Bengal,' in his *Essays on Islam and Indian History* (New Delhi; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 257, 261-263, 274.

[39] Eaton, 'Who are the Bengal Muslims,' in his *Essays on Islam and Indian History* 266.

charismatic *pir*s'.[40] Whilst agreeing with Eaton's premise that the transformation of the Bengal frontier was driven by 'technologically advanced' and non-indigenous Sufis who possessed written land grants from an aggrandizing Mughal state, Richards has argued that these simultaneously religious and economic processes lasted until the mid-19th century.[41]

Eaton's *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier* concludes with a call for scholarship 'from a world history perspective' that would locate frontiers whereupon 'Islam grew in tandem with deforestation' and 'agrarian expansion' and paralleled the 'Bengali experience'.[42] Chapters 1 and 2 are explorations of 'industrious and capable' miracle-working experts of forest clearing, rice agriculture and Islam who, in Eaton's words, served as pivots of a 'socioeconomic system geared to the production of rice' and a 'religious ideology that conferred special meaning on agrarian life' upon 19th and early 20th century Malay frontiers. Particular attention is also paid in these chapters to how Jawi, romanized Malay and Anglo-Malay manuscripts produced 'close to the action' upon western Malayan rice frontiers served as valuable windows into the mentalities of frontiersmen familiar with the trope of forest clearers 'attacking the forest under the leadership' of *pawang*s.

Understanding the Religious Mining Frontier

By 1895, Malayan mines produced 49,592 tons of alluvial tin for the global market, and contributed the largest proportion (55%) of tin produced internationally.[43] In spite of the these statistics, as Yip Yat Hoong emphasized in his study of the *Tin Mining Industry of Malaya*, the mining frontier of Malaya has received 'yet relatively little' scholarly

[40] Richard M. Eaton, 'Shrines, Cultivators, and Muslim 'Conversion' in Punjab and Bengal, 1300-1700', *Medieval History Journal* 12:2 (2009), 206-7.
[41]Richards, *The Unending Frontier*, 34-37.
[42] Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal frontier*', 313.
[43] Wong Lin Ken, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1964), 53, 246-248.

attention.[44] Furthermore, the limited post-colonial academic literature on Malayan mining has regularly ignored the need to undertake a serious historical scrutiny of the social worlds and religious customs of late 19th century miners in western Malaya. Wong Lin Ken's *The Malayan Tin Industry*, for instance, did not even ambition to 'embrace in detail' these subjects as a study due to 'the information relevant' to this subject being 'not available', and the alleged fact that religious customs barely affected the workings of 'rational' Chinese open-cast excavations that constituted 90 per cent of Malayan mines by the late 19th century Malaya.[45] Moreover, the 'reputed immorality' of Malay mine worlds in terms of civil wars between Malay chiefs over tin revenue, conflating conflicts between Chinese miners and secret societies, and profiteering mine-owners' indulgence of 'labourers in drink, opium, women and gambling' referred to by scholars such as Robert N. Jackson, Wong, Yip and Anthony Reid, appear to have prevented a historical inquiry into the spiritual nature of the mining frontier.[46] Chapter 3 suggests that a corpus of seemingly anti-scientific manuscripts that were produced in the late 19th western Malay states are invaluable historical records of open-cast mining in the Peninsula which had attained a spiritual meaning, and was associated with Muslim *pawang lombong*s (miracle-workers of large open-cast, predominantly Chinese excavations).

The figure of the *pawang lombong*, the sophisticated nature of the miracle-worker's expertise and supernatural characteristics of the rice frontier are key historical subjects that have found negligible attention in the 'yet relatively little' scholarship on Malayan mining. For instance, Wong's survey of the *Malayan Tin Industry* merely mentioned and

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[44] Yip, *The Development of the Tin Mining Industry of Malaya,* 56.
[45] Wong, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, xi, 83.
[46] Cited from L. Maffly-Kipp, *Religion and Society in Frontier California,* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1994), 2; R. N. Jackson, *Immigrant Labour and the Development of Malaya 1786-1920* (Kuala Lumpur: Government Press, 1961); Wong, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*; Yip, *The Development of the Tin Mining Industry of Malaya*; Anthony Reid, 'Chinese on the Mining Frontier in Southeast Asia' in Eric Tagliacozzo and Wen-Chin Chang, *Chinese Circulation: Capital, Commodities, and Networks in Southeast Asia* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 21-36.

dismissed the 'Malay magician' (*pawang*) as a feature of 'superstitious' Malay (as opposed to Chinese) mining that was 'hampered by the absence of economic rationalization', plagued by the 'payment of customary dues' to the 'magician' and 'determined so largely by custom and not market conditions'. However, Wong does, albeit haphazardly, concede that late 19th century Malayan and Bankan (Sumatran) Chinese miners 'employed Malay methods and, invariably, the *pawang*' in open-cast excavation who enjoyed a 'long record of success'.[47] More sympathetic, but brief, mentions of the mining *pawang* are found in the works of Yip and P. J. Sullivan that refer to late 19th century European writings that were illustrative of Malayan mining frontiers whereupon the 'economic and ritual aspects of mining were not separable', and the Chinese miner 'entrusted his tin prospecting to the Malay *pawang*' who 'discovered the tin' through 'prospecting … with a wand' and performed the 'necessary rituals at the opening of the mine and throughout its life'.[48] Chapter 3 endeavors to write the first serious history of religious tin, and gold, mining in 19th century Malaya wherein Muslim *pawang*s were pivotal to the excavation of alluvial ore upon the geological and supernatural frontier, and sustained lucrative careers through collaborations with labor intensive Chinese mining enterprises.

In writing a comprehensive history of mining *pawang*s and the religious mining frontier, this dissertation is influenced by Donald Quataert's *Miners and the State*, L. Maffly-Kipp's *Religion and Society in Frontier California* and John Tutino's *Making a New World*. Quataert explores the history of 19th and 20th century Zonguldak mine worlds through documents that were produced upon Ottoman frontiers, 'very close to the action', and offered a 'perspective that is much closer' to the Black Sea miners.[49] The historical documents that Quataert employs are illustrative of the religious nature of

[47]Wong, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, 46, 58.
[48] Patrick Sullivan, *Social Relations of Dependence in a Malay State: 19th century Perak* (Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1982), 30, fn93, 35; Yip, *The Development of the Tin Mining Industry of Malaya*, 101.
[49] Quataert, *Miners and the State in the Ottoman Empire,* 18.

Zonguldak coal mines that blended production and Islam through contributing charities for the provision of 'ostensibly religious' institutions and teachers. These teachers comprised of 'travelling students' who conducted 'observances at various mines', and petty dignitaries 'who had memorized the Qur'an' in villages that provided the mining labor force and performed prayers, Qur'anic recitations and religious ceremonies within mines 'in support of the worker'.[50] Maffly-Kipp's work serves as a window into the Californian gold mining frontier that by the mid-19th century, had developed into a 'free market of religious beliefs' such as Mormonism, spiritualism, phrenology, Universalism, 'traditions of American Indians' and the Protestant evangelism of missionaries who had 'planted the seeds of evangelical piety in the agricultural frontiers of Iowa and Minnesota'.[51] *Religion and Society in Frontier California* also emphasizes that the 'capriciousness of fate was the central fact of existence in the mines' and led miners to participate in 'divination and other magical practices' and 'popular religious practices', and invest their fates in 'new gods' and miraculous intercessors of the 'cosmic order in the mines' and the 'magical properties' of the frontier.

Tutino's *Making a New World*, alternatively, surveys the 'vibrant religious culture' of the silver mining frontiers of 18th century Bajio and Spanish America wherein 'discussions of production' were centered upon the 'primary language of morality', Catholicism.[52] Tutino suggests that the religious character of these mining frontiers was determined by the 'uncontrollable uncertainties of [the] everyday life' of laborers who excavated ore in 'mines that resembled hell' and 'bottomless dungeons, risking life and limb' and disease, and pinned all hope upon 'virgins', 'shadowy healers' and Jesuit missionaries who in turn, 'pressed lives of danger' upon and 'tamed' the 'unruly mulatto

[50] Quataert, *Miners and the State in the Ottoman Empire*, 71, 88, 111-116.
[51] L. Maffly-Kipp, *Religion and Society in Frontier California,* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 2-5, 122-129.
[52] John Tutino, *Making a New World: Founding Capitalism in the Bajío and Spanish North America*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011) 59.

[laboring] majority' through 'preaching penitence and adherence to a moral code'.[53] Chapter 3 explores a range of Malay manuscripts that offer historians a 'perspective that is much closer' to the prospectors and miners who penetrated the 'most lethal frontiers anywhere' in Malaya that were plagued with 'diseases, including malaria, cholera and dysentery' and claimed the lives of multitudes of Chinese laborers, and understood their socioeconomic worlds through distinct spiritual terms.[54] *Pawangs on the Malay Frontier* suggests that miners upon the 'capricious' and 'uncontrollably uncertain' Malayan geological and supernatural terrain, like the miners of early 20th century Zonguldak and 18th century Bajio, had 'little hope' beyond spiritual experts who were physically present in the open-cast mine.

Exploring Godly Traps on the Frontier

Winstedt's 1926 pamphlet which clarified that miracle-workers were 'not mere charlatans', also called upon scholars to focus upon the 'interesting subject' of 'Malay trapping' that was centered upon the hunting and trapping *pawang* who was the real expert of the forest and *shikari* (hunter).[55] In the past two centuries, however, no single historical monograph has been produced on elephant trapping upon the Malayan frontier, and the adepts and *shikari*s, *pawang*s and *bomor*s (a term interchangeable with *pawang*) who possessed the *ilmu gajah* (esoteric science of the elephant). The only post-colonial historical work that has mentioned miracle-workers and esoteric expertise, albeit in an appendix, is B. W. Andaya's *Perak: An Abode of Grace* which concedes that 'certain people possessed the knowledge and power to trap elephants' upon the mountainous frontiers of upper Perak and the plains of Kinta.[56] This conspicuous academic silence on key historical agents and the expertise of elephant trapping is particularly surprising in

[53] Tutino, *Making a New World*, 173, 183, 189, 419-420.
[54] Reid, 'Chinese on the Mining Frontier in Southeast Asia', 33.
[55] Winstedt, 'Malay Industries: Part 1: Fishing, Hunting and Trapping', 1-2, 7-8.
[56] 'Appendix C: The Art of Elephant Hunting' in B. W. Andaya, *Perak, The Abode of Grace: A Study of an Eighteenth Century Malay State* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1979), 675-676.

light of European records from the late 19th century, which are referred to in Chapter 4, pertaining to, on the one hand, extensive religious hunting and breaking in of elephants in northern Malaya through the *ilmu gajah*. On the other hand, the indispensability of Muslim elephant trapping to the transportation of alluvial tin from stanniferous terrain and mining districts in the upstream interior of Perak to the head-waters of tributaries, and the Malay, Chinese and British penetration of the 'never-ending' forested frontier of northern Malaya. Chapter 4 proposes that a corpus of manuscripts and published materials that were produced in late 19th and early 20th century Perak related to the 'esoteric science of the elephant' are exceptional historical records of game frontiers in the Peninsula whereupon the trapping and domestication of elephants had, by the late 19th century, attained a religious meaning and was associated with Muslim *bomors*.

In writing a comprehensive history of elephant *bomor*s or *pawang*s and the religious game frontier in Malaya, this dissertation draws from the academic literature on supernatural beasts, 'frontiers of fear' and religious hunting in early modern and 19th century Bengal, 19th century Java and 20th century Hadhramaut. For instance, Eaton's work shows that early modern Sufi biographical traditions and 19th century European records have regularly depicted the *pir* as the key historical agent of penetrating forested tracts of the Bengal delta that were replete with supernatural tigers. These supernatural beasts were in turn, stripped of their 'natural ferocity' by the colonizing saint, and drawn into 'symbiotic relationships' with the *pir* through his spectacular expertise of trapping and domesticating beasts.[57] Similarly, Boomgaard's *Frontiers of Fear: Tigers and People* is the pioneer history of supernatural tigers in the Indonesian archipelago and draws scholarly attention towards late 19th and 20th century Javanese and Malay frontiers being supernatural ones populated by 'invisible powers', 'ancestor spirits' and 'were-tigers'.

[57] Richard M. Eaton, 'Three Overlapping Frontiers in Early Modern Bengal: Religious, Agrarian, Imperial' in *Untaming the Frontier: In Anthropology, Archaeology, and History,* eds. Bradley J. Parker and Lars Rodseth, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2005), 65; Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal frontier*, 65-67, 209.

Boomgaard derives his data from the writings of European 'anthropologists of the past' who had a 'sharp eye for the invisible' and shared the 'magical' and 'lycanthropic outlook' of indigenous frontiersmen.[58] Furthermore, R. B. Serjeant's 1976 *South Arabian Hunt* still serves as a valuable illustration of Muslim game frontiers, within 20th century Hadhramaut in this case, whereupon trapping was attributed a 'strong religious color' and 'associated with the worship of Allah in Mecca'; accompanied by invocations to God and Muhammad and rituals of *zikr* (the remembrance of God); and, involved observations of a 'lofty moral code' and trappers' 'purification and ritual chastity of heart'.[59]

Chapter 4 scrutinizes a range of Jawi and Romanized Malay materials that were produced 'very close to the action' on the northern Malayan game frontier. These records provide historians rich data on Malay 'frontiers of fear' that were replete with supernatural elephants and exclusively penetrated by the miraculous expertise of the *bomor* or *pawang*, and whereupon elephant trapping and taming were considered to be religious operations involving sophisticated spiritual exercises. This dissertation also suggests that elephant trappers in the interior of northern Malaya constituted cosmopolitan and peripatetic miracle-workers who circulated in between the Bay of Bengal. Indeed, Susan Bayly's work on the South Indian *qalandar* (ascetic) tradition has mentioned that Malay game frontiers figured in a 'significant number of [Tamil] Sufi legends and chronicles' as the 'exotic terrain' in which Tamil *pir*s such as the 16th century *marraikayar* Sufi, Kattyanaiwali (forest elephant saint) tested their 'power and spirituality to its utmost extent' through bloodily domesticating elephants.[60] In a persuasive portrayal

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[58] Peter Boomgaard, *Frontiers of Fear: Tigers and People in the Malay World 1600 –1950,* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 6-8.
[59] R. B. Serjeant, *South Arabian Hunt*, (London: Luzac, 1976), 14, 41, 61, 84.
[60] Susan Bayly, 'Islam and State Power in Pre Colonial South India', *Itinerario, Special Issue: The Ancien Regime*, xii:i, (1988), 154-155. For a longer history of Tamil circulations, dating possibly to the second century A. D., refer to H. G. Quaritch Wales, 'Archaeological Researches in Ancient Indian Colonization', *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 18:1, (1940), 1–85; Paul Wheatley, *The Golden Khersonese: Studies in*

of 19th century Malayan game frontiers as terrains monopolized by Tamil miracle-workers, Abdullah al-Aydarus berated petty Tamil religious dignitaries or *lebbai*s for circulating between the Bay of Bengal and ransacking forests for elephants through mantras inherited from God, Muhammad, ancient *pawang*s and Batara Guru (Siva).

Investigating Religious Guns on the Frontier

One of the earliest records of Malay Muslim gun expertise is Giovanni da Empoli's eye-witness account of the Portuguese bombardment of Malacca in 1511, wherein the explorer referred to the Muslim protectors of the port as 'most valiant men' who were 'well trained in war' and the use of gunpowder weapons.[61] Eric Tagliacozzo's recent *Secret Trade, Porous Borders* suggests that three centuries after Empoli's account, the frontiers of the Peninsula and Aceh were replete with men and women who 'went around heavily armed, usually 3 or more arms on their person'. It is worth noting that these individuals were armed with a sophisticated range of American and European guns including breach-loading muskets, revolvers, Winchester repeating rifles, Winchester Expresses, Martini-Henry rifles, Snider rifles, Enfield rifles, Beaumont rifles and Mauser rifles.[62] Whilst European records from the late 19th century, which are referred to in Chapter 4, stressed that European and American rifles were technologically and culturally domesticated in the Peninsula, no single historical work has been produced on the religious and technological domestication of guns upon the Malay frontier and Muslim intercessors of cosmopolitan firearms. In fact, Tagliacozzo's work discounts the need for a historical inquiry into 19th century Malay religious manuscripts that were informative

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the Historical Geography of the Malay Penninsula before A. D. 1500 (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1961).

[61] Sanjay Subrahmanyam and Geoffrey Parker, 'Arms and the Asian': Revisiting European Firearms and their Place in Early Modern Asia' in *Revista de Cultura* 26 (2008), 40, n43; L. Y. Andaya, 'Interaction with the Outside World and Adaptation in Southeast Asian Society' in Nicholas Tarling (ed.) *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia, Vol. 1: From the Early Times to c1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 41.

[62] Eric Tagliacozzo, *Secret Trades, Porous Borders: Smuggling and States Along a Southeast Asian Frontier,* 1865-1915, (Singapore: NUS Press, 2007), 275, 292.

about 'how these commodities [guns] were integrated into local societies', and the experts of firearms, peripatetic *pawang*s, hajjis, gurus and *faqir*s. Chapter 4 scrutinizes Jawi and romanized Malay manuscripts that were produced in northern Malaya that serve as unparalleled historical records of armed Malay frontiers whereupon American and European firearms and operations of gun bearing had attained distinct Islamic meanings and were associated with Muslim gurus and *faqir*s by the late 19th century.

In a recent survey of the role of hand-held firearms in 'Asian armies and polities' between 1500 and 1800, Sanjay Subrahmanyam and Geoffrey Parker emphasized that the 'place of Muslim intermediaries' in the transmission and appropriation of both European and non-European guns upon Asian frontiers 'should not be neglected'.[63] Subrahmanyam and Parker recommend that a history of armed Asian frontiers be centered upon Muslim intercessors such as 'gun-wielding "Turks" (or *rumes*)' and 'Ottoman military experts' who regularly circulated between the 16th century Indian Ocean and were prominent upon the Acehnese frontier. Similarly, R. D. Crews's recent book chapter on the 19th century 'global arms trade' that operated through 'dynamic circuits' of African, American, Asian and European manufacturers, merchants, smugglers and revolutionaries, highlights that highly mobile Muslim intermediaries were pivotal to the technological domestication of guns in towns and villages from the Caucasus to the Indus.[64] Furthermore, Sana Haroon's work on *Islam in the Indo-Afghan Borderland* draws attention to how Pakhtun *mulla*s or 'spiritual-religious instructors' emerged upon the late 19th and early 20th century Indo-Afghan frontier as experts of religion and the employment of firearms that were locally manufactured or trafficked from the Persian

[63] Subrahmanyam and Parker, 'Arms and the Asian', 22, 26-27.
[64] R. D. Crews, 'Trafficking in Evil? The Global Arms Trade and the Politics of Disorder' in *Global Islam in the Age of Steam and Print, 1850-1930*, eds. James Gelvin and Nile Green (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013).

Gulf.[65] According to Haroon's data, 'spiritual-religious instructors' gifted a religious meaning to guns through their maintenance of 'large retinues' of disciples (*murids*), students (*talibs*) and emissaries (*khalifas*) who were armed to implement the *mulla*'s 'religious directives among the Pakhtun tribes' and enhance the '*mulla*'s profile'.[66]

This dissertation writes the history of the armed 'frontier of faith' in the Straits of Malacca through an investigation of materials related to itinerant Muslim intermediaries who comprised of *faqir*s and gurus and were central to the religious and technological domestication of hand-held firearms. Chapter 4 proposes that these experts or *guru bedil* (gun gurus) were plugged into 'dynamic circuits' that connected them to cosmopolitan actors including European and Asian smugglers and merchants who ferried firearms to Malay frontiers, European and American manufacturers and industrial gun-makers, Acehnese revolutionaries and Asian slave-hunters.[67] This historical inquiry into miracle-workers and religious gun bearing endeavors to place the Malay frontier, the Islamic articulations of miracle-workers and miraculous expertise upon the map of scholarship on Islamic weaponry and firearms which remains '*terra incognite* for students' of world history.[68]

Key Sources

The following chapters explore a variety of materials that were produced in 19th and early 20th century Malaya pertaining to miracle-workers, their expertise, and religious rice, mining, trapping and armed frontiers. These historical sources comprise mainly of unpublished and unedited Jawi and romanized Malay records of traditions and texts that were orally transmitted by Muslim miracle-workers or associates of *pawang*s, *bomor*s, *faqir*s

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[65] Sana Haroon, *Frontier of Faith: Islam in the Indo-Afghan Borderland* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 33, 88, 203.
[66] Haroon, *Frontier of Faith: Islam in the Indo-Afghan Borderland*, 62.
[67] Subrahmanyam and Parker, 'Arms and the Asian', 22; Tagliacozzo, *Secret Trades, Porous Borders*, 265, 278.
[68] Cited from Gabor Agoston, *Guns for the Sultan: Military Power and the Weapons Industry in the Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 6, 8-9, 12.

and gurus, and epistles produced by both *pawang*s and Muslim middlemen of European scholar-administrators. These manuscripts are currently housed at the Royal Asiatic Society (RAS), the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), the Wellcome Library, the Institute of Cultural and Social Anthropology at the University of Oxford (ICSA), Lee Kong Chian Reference Library in Singapore (LKCRL) and at the Perpustakaan Nasional Indonesia (PNI). Other key sources of this dissertation include unpublished and published records and epistles of European scholar-administrators, reformist Muslim scholars and Christian missionaries. *Pawangs on the Malay Frontier* is devoted towards providing its readers an insight into the sheer abundance of historical documents related to religious frontiers in Malaya and the centrality of miracle-workers to socioeconomic stratums and activities.

A number of late 19th century European ethnographers such as William W. Skeat were cognizant of 'the extreme voluminousness of Malay folk-lore' on socioeconomic operations such as rice cultivation, and were enthusiastic to employ manuscripts on *Malay Magic* as records of socioeconomic stratums that were dominated by *pawang*s.[69] On the contrary, post-colonial scholars of the Peninsula have often denied the historical value of the genre of Malay manuscripts employed in the following chapters purely due to these texts' preoccupations with the 'magical' expertise of *pawang*s, *bomor*s, *faqir*s and gurus. For instance, J. C. Bottoms has condemned most of the Malay manuscripts that are 'tucked away in the great museums and libraries' as being magical 'legends' or 'fantasies,' hagiographies and 'entertainment' rather than the 'stuff of historians'.[70] Similarly, Ismail Hussein has remarked that out of the approximately 800 Malay manuscripts that were collected or copied in the 19th century Peninsula, only 25 (0.03 per

[69] Cited from W. W. Skeat, *Malay Magic: an Introduction to the Folklore and Popular Religion of the Malay Peninsular* (London: Cass, 1965), 249, n1.
[70] J. C. Bottoms, 'Malay Historical Works: A Bibliographical Note on Malay Histories as Possible Sources for the History of Malaya' in *Malaysian Historical Sources,* ed. G. K. Tregonning, (Singapore: Dept. of History, University of Singapore, 1962), 36-38.

cent) are 'reliable' enough for 'scientific' academic work.[71] Moreover, historians such as B. W. Andaya and Cyril Skinner have explicitly rejected a Malay manuscript tradition of anti-scientific legends, supernatural adventures and hagiographies, and privileged scientific Malay texts based upon 'reportage', a 'journalistic prose style' with an 'emphasis on the true and the real *for its own sake*'.[72] In fact, Andaya's *Perak: An Abode of Grace* rejects the value of a range of magical texts produced in Perak and privileges a late 18th century Malay record, the *Misa Melayu* due to the fact that it 'eschews folklore' and 'magical ceremonies' to provide a 'more realistic' account of relations between Perak courtiers and the European Companies.[73] This scholarly aversion towards the anti-scientific nature of historical materials comprising of 'folklore', 'magic' and oral traditions is even apparent in Henley's recent article on re-writing histories of 'rizification' upon Southeast Asian frontiers. Herein, Henley dismisses sources that lacked scientific precision as having 'little or no value' to historical work on rice agriculture in the region, and demarcates 'history' based upon scientific records from 'oral history' that was based upon 'dangerously' employed 'folkloric evidence' and 'oral traditions'.[74]

In employing manuscripts related to miraculous expertise as key historical sources, this dissertation is inspired by historians of South Asia and Africa who have employed miracle stories and rumors as valuable windows into aspects of 'social history

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[71] Ismail Hussein, *The Study of Traditional Malay Literature* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia, 1974), 18.

[72] Cited from Cyril Skinner, 'Transitional Malay Literature: Part 1 –Ahmad Rijaluddin and Munshi Abdullah,' *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land-en Volkenkunde* (1978), 470, 480-1; Cyril Skinner, *Prosa Melayu baharu; an anthology of modern Malay and Indonesian prose* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1959). For a different perspective, see Ian Proudfoot, *Early Malay Printed Books: A Provisional Account of Materials Published in the Singapore-Malaysia Area up to 1920* (Kuala Lumpur: Academy of Malay Studies and the Library, University of Malaya, 1993), 23-27.

[73] Cited from Richard O. Winstedt, 'Malay Chronicles from Sumatra and Malaya,' in *Historians of Southeast Asia* ed. D. G. E. Hall (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 26; B. W. Andaya, *Perak, The Abode of Grace*, 14; also see W. E. Maxwell, 'Notes on Two Perak Manuscripts,' in *A History of Perak* eds. R. O. Winstedt and R. J. Wilkinson, (Singapore: Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1934), 189.

[74] David Henley, 'Rizification Revisited: Re-examining the Rise of Rice in Indonesia, with Special Reference to Sulawesi' in Boomgaard and Henley eds., *Smallholders and Stockbreeders*, 115.

that would otherwise remain unrecoverable'.[75] For example, Scott S. Reese's study of locally compiled hagiographies from late 19th and early 20th century Benaadir (Somalia) emphasizes that saintly traditions provide scholars unparalleled access to an otherwise 'unrecoverable' history of African socioeconomic frontiers in spite of the fact that these traditions may not serve as 'faithful representations of 'historical fact".[76] Similarly, the works of Michael Gilsenan, David B. Edwards and Green have suggested that historians engage saintly traditions and miracle stories as invaluable historical records of the 'schemes of interpretation' and religious terms employed by people to 'explain and apprehend the multiple hazards and changes' that engulfed the social stratums and frontiers of the producers and consumers of these texts.[77] Furthermore, Luise White's investigation of vampire stories in 19th century Africa encourages scholars of global frontiers to search for unconventional and 'exceptionally reliable historical sources' that were illustrative of the 'very stuff of history, the categories and constructs' with which frontiersmen understood their 'world of vulnerability' and 'disorderly terrains'.[78] The following chapters employ 19th and early 20th century manuscripts pertaining to Muslim miracle-workers and religious frontiers as records of socioeconomic histories that 'would otherwise remain unrecoverable', and the 'very stuff of history' or the religious terms with which frontiersmen in Malaya understood their vulnerable socioeconomic stratums

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[75] See, for example: C. W. Ernst, *Eternal Garden: Mysticism, History, and Politics at a South Asian Sufi Center* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992); Richard M. Eaton, *Sufis of Bijapur 1300-1700: Social Roles of Sufis in Medieval India* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin, 1972); B. B. Lawrence and M. K. Hermansen, 'Indo-Persian *Tazkiras* as Memorative Communications' in *Beyond Turk and Hindu: Rethinking Religious Identities in Islamicate South Asia*, eds. B. B. Lawrence and David Gilmartin, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000) 149-175. Also see Nile Green, 'Jack Sepoy and the Dervishes: Islam and the Indian Soldier in Princely Hyderabad,' *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 18 (2008), 31-46; Nile Green, 'Transgressions of a Holy Fool: A Majzub in Colonial India' in B. D. Metcalf (ed.) *Islam in South Asia in Practice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 173-186; Nile Green, 'Making a 'Muslim' Saint: Writing Customary Religion in an Indian Princely State,' *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 25 (2005) 617-633.

[76] Scott S. Reese, 'Urban Woes and Pious Remedies: Sufism in Nineteenth-Century Benaadir (Somalia),' *Africa Today*, 46:3/4 (1999), 169, 186.

[77] Michael Gilsenan, *Recognizing Islam: Religion and Society in the Modern Arab World* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982), 75; D. B. Edwards, 'Mad Mullahs and Englishmen: Discourse in the Colonial Encounter', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 31:4 (1989), 655; Green, 'Making a 'Muslim' Saint: Writing Customary Religion in an Indian Princely State'

[78] White, *Speaking with Vampires*, 5, 10, 55.

and activities. This dissertation proposes that the peculiar terms, categories, concepts, tropes and languages employed in these manuscripts that were either direct products of, or produced in the proximity of operations upon frontiers, serve as exceptionally useful resources for understanding the simultaneously dangerous, lucrative, spiritual and cosmopolitan nature of rice, mining, game and armed frontiers in the Peninsula.

Chapters 1 and 2 explore a range of Jawi manuscripts pertaining to cosmopolitan rice *pawang*s and their sophisticated expertise or command over forest clearing and rice agriculture; the religious meaning of rice production in 19th and early 20th century Malaya; the religious and historical sensibilities of planters; spiritual definitions of rice, seeds, diseases incurred in colonization and the forested frontier; and, rituals and carnivals orchestrated by miracle-workers to expand rice frontiers. These manuscript sources include, firstly, the 1879 compendium, *Kitab Perintah Pawang* (*Book of the Pawang's Command*) that was transcribed in Belanja, Perak and is currently housed at the RAS.[79] This *Kitab* comprises of orally-transmitted traditions and texts related to the '*pawang*'s command' over forest clearing and agricultural operations, the historical and supernatural basis of the '*pawang* command', and rituals of communication undertaken by the *pawang* with spirits resident upon the rice frontier. Secondly, the 1922 *khaus* (official epistle) of the aforementioned Tamil *pawang* Abdullah Pillai in Rembau that comprises of an elaborate tradition, *Darihal Pawang* (*Of that Concerning the Pawang*) and is housed at the LKCRL.[80] This epistle serves as a rich illustration of late 19th and early 20th century Negri Sembilan socioeconomic worlds wherein rice agriculture had attained a 'religious meaning' through being associated with historical prophets, and the *pawang* was understood as an 'indispensable functioning' for expanding the rice frontier. Thirdly, the 1913 *Inilah Peraturan Resam Pawang Melayu* (*The Arrangement and Customary Usage of the Malay*

[79] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Kitab Perintah Pawang* (*Book of the Pawang's Command*). Transcribed by Hajji Raja Yahya, Belanja, Perak, 1879.
[80] LKCRL NL 24114. Abdullah Pillai. *Darihal Pawang* (*Of that concerning the Pawang*), 1922. Jawi Microfilm Collection, (1922).

Pawang) housed at the SOAS, that is didactically driven towards exposing socioeconomic settings in northern Malaya wherein the *pawang* served as the commander of the ricefield, and was consulted throughout forest clearing and planting procedures[81]. Fourthly, the 1890 collection, *Surat Fasal Pertahunan Artinya Bertanam* (*The Epistolary Chapter Concerning the Religious Rite that Means Planting*) that is housed at the Wellcome Library.[82] This *Epistolary Chapter* is revelatory of late 18th and 19th century Malay socioeconomic worlds, in both Minangkabau and Malaya, wherein the agricultural operations of planting, sowing and reaping were organized by the supernatural expertise of gurus.

Chapter 1 also examines four Malay texts produced by a Malaccan *munshi* (language teacher and 'Malay Writer') in between 1891 and 1893, and the 1885 compendium of *Cherita Hantu Shetan* (*Narrations Concerning Demons and the Armies of Iblis*) that was transmitted by a *pawang* from Negri Sembilan[83]. These historical documents that are housed at the Wellcome Library are informative about the historical sensibilities of planters, their absolute dependence upon *pawang*s, religious customs and carnivals that accompanied rice production, and supernatural techniques of averting epidemics upon the rice frontier. Moreover, these manuscripts are particularly illustrative of the supernatural categories and concepts employed by frontiersmen to understand their dangerous and vulnerable socioeconomic worlds. Beyond the aforementioned Jawi and romanized Malay sources, Chapters 1 and 2 explore a number of Anglo-Malay and English manuscripts and archived reports which are illustrative of late 19th century Malayan rice frontiers that were actively extended by miracle-workers, engulfed by religious customs and littered with *pawang*s and *keramat*s (miracle-working shrines and saints). These materials include Blagden's four unpublished ethnographic books of *Notes*

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81 SOAS MS40334. *Inilah Peraturan Resam Pawang Melayu* (*The Arrangement and Customary Usage of the Malay Pawang*). Unnamed Perak Headmen.
82 WL Malay 1. *Surat Fasal Pertahunan Artinya Bertanam* (*The Epistolary Chapter concerning the Religious Rite that means Planting*). Tuan hajji Abdul Kahar. Acquired 4th December 1890.
83 WL Malay 3B. *Cherita Hantu Shetan* (*Narrations Concerning Demons and the Armies of Iblis*). Transcribed by Muhammad Jaafar, 1885.

on Matters Connected with Malacca or the Malay Peninsula that were produced in between 1892 and 1895 and are currently housed at SOAS, and the 1893 collection of *Reports furnished by Order of His Excellency the Governor upon the Best Means of Encouraging the Cultivation of Rice* housed at the ICSA.[84]

Chapter 3, alternatively, investigates a range of Malay manuscripts produced in western Malaya related to the supernatural terms and meanings that were associated with alluvial mining and deposits by the late 19th century; the role of *pawang*s in operations of prospecting, open-cast excavation and smelting; spiritual definitions of stanniferous and auriferous terrain; and, the Muslim miracle-worker's governance of the predominantly Chinese *lombong* (large open-cast excavation). These Malay materials include two manuscripts housed at the Wellcome Library, the 1892 *Ilmu Pawang Melombong* (*Esoteric Science of the Pawang Regarding Large Open-Cast Mining*) that was transmitted by a peripatetic mining *pawang* from Selangor, and the 1892 *Pawang Melumbung Timah* (*The Pawang Conducting Large Open-Cast Mining*) that was transmitted by a professional divinatory.[85] The *Ilmu Pawang Melombong* serves as a rich illustration of mining worlds wherein alluvial tin and gold deposits were understood as supernatural articles, and the *pawang*'s *ilmu* and powers were perceived as necessary for prospecting, excavating, dressing and smelting operations upon stanniferous and auriferous frontiers that were replete with spirits. The *Pawang Melumbung Timah* contains detailed information on the spiritual nature of stanniferous terrain in Malaya, and the simultaneously supernatural and technological

[84] SOAS MS 297483. C. O. Blagden, *Notes on Matters Connected with Malacca and the Malay Peninsula*, Book I (1892); SOAS MS 297484. C. O. Blagden, *Notes on Matters Connected with the Malay Peninsula*, Book II (1893); SOAS MS 297484. C. O. Blagden, *Notes on Matters Connected with the Malay Peninsula and Far East*, Book III (1893); SOAS MS 297496. Blagden C. O., in *Notes on Matters Connected with the Malay Peninsula and the Far East*, Book IV (1895); ICSA. *Reports furnished by Order of His Excellency the Governor upon the Best Means of Encouraging the Cultivation of Rice*, Government Printing Office, Singapore (1893).

[85] WL Malay 2G. *Malay folklore connected with mining &c.* Muhammad Jaafar, *Ilmu Pawang Melombong* (*Esoteric Science of the Pawang Regarding Large Open-Cast Mining*). Transmitted by Pawang Hajji Hassan, 1892; WL Malay 3 Muhammad Jaafar, *Pawang Melumbung Timah* (transmitted by Mat Asip). Transcribed by Muhammad Jafaar, 1892.

expertise of *pawang*s who served as prospector-*pawang*s and as physically present authorities in open-cast mines throughout procedures.

Chapter 4 scrutinizes a set of Jawi and romanized Malay materials that serve as unparalleled historical records of violent stratums in northern Malaya wherein, on the one hand, the trapping and brutal domestication elephants upon mountainous frontiers was dependent upon the miraculous expertise and mantras of *bomor*s. On the other hand, the domestication of Euro-American rifles and bullets upon 19th century Malay frontiers was driven by the instructions of itinerant gurus and *faqir*s. The manuscripts pertaining to less well documented settings of elephant trapping in northern Malaya include the 1879 *Teyib Mantra Gajah* (*Manual of Elephant Mantras*), and the 1879 *Surat Mantra Gajah* (*Epistle of Mantras for the Elephant*), both of which are housed at the RAS.[86] These collections of 'mantras for the elephant' that were transmitted either directly by miracle-workers or individuals associated with elephant *bomor*s are valuable windows into the religious mentalities of trappers and the categories employed by them to understand ecological and supernatural forests and beasts, and game frontiers whereupon *ilmu* was perceived as being indispensable for the construction of enclosures, the ensnaring of beasts and the violent domestication of elephants. The manuscripts related to the domestication of guns and peripatetic 'gun gurus' include, firstly, an 1882 Jawi text that was produced in Perak and contains the transmissions of a Minangkabau *faqir*, and is housed at the RAS as *Maxwell 24*.[87] Secondly, a late 19th century Perak record that reproduced the transcriptions of a *bilal* (muezzin) in Kelantan and is found in a Malay compendium, *MS 25030* at the SOAS.[88] Both these texts are detailed descriptions of armed Malay frontiers whereupon

[86] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Teyib Mantra Gajah* (*Manual of Elephant Mantras*). Attached to *Kitab Perintah Pawang*. Transcribed by Hajji Raja Yahya, Belanja, Perak, 1879; RAS Maxwell 107. *Surat Mantra Gajah* [*Epistle of Mantras for the Elephant*]. Transcribed by Toh Sharif Aman, 1879.
[87] RAS Maxwell 24. ['*On casting bullets, shooting, etc.*']. Transcribed by Auda Muhammad Hashim. Larut [Perak], 1882.
[88] SOAS MS 25030. ['*Kelantan charm-book*']. Transcribed by Hajji Hassan Landang. Landang [Perak], 1906[?].

American rifles were religiously domesticated, and gurus or *faqir*s were pivotal to producing ammunition, crafting hand-held firearms and instructing Islamic shooting.

In undertaking a historical investigation of manuscripts produced in 19th and early 20th century Malaya, *Pawangs on the Malay Frontier* limits its focus to the socioeconomic worlds and activities of agricultural colonizers, rice producers, alluvial miners, elephant trappers and rifle bearers. In doing so, this dissertation has not elaborated upon certain significant historical topics and has chosen to leave these subjects to further discussion in a separate research project. These topics include the role of miracle-workers as pecticides in rice clearings, the figure of the *pawang* as the real expert of fishing, and the intimate relationship of esoteric astrological observations to socioeconomic activities. The aforementioned 1879 *Kitab Perintah Pawang* and an undated *Book of Charms formerly belonging to a Sultan Muda [State Pawang] and given to R. O. Winstedt* referred to in Chapter 2 and housed at the SOAS[89], comprise of sections related to the *ilmu* of massacring bees, *hulat* (caterpillar-like rice pest) and rats, and trapping fishes through elaborate boats and nets that were 'miraculously charged' by *pawang*s.[90] Moreover, much valuable information on the connections between astrology and socioeconomic preferences is available in a range of Jawi manuscripts referred to in Chapters 1 and 3 such as the aforementioned *Surat Fasal Pertahunan Artinya Bertanam* and an untitled 1882 text that was transcribed by Auda Muhammad Hashim and is housed at the RAS as *Maxwell 15*. The *Maxwell 15* comprises of a pictorial *falnama* (bibliomancy involving the opening of the book randomly) and *rejang* calendar (divination from days of the month, often symbolized by different animals such as the elephant) that locates the

[89] SOAS 25027/2. *Book of Charms formerly belonging to a Sultan Muda of Perak and given to R. O. Winstedt by Raja Haji Yahya of Chendriang*

[90] Also see W. W. Skeat, 'Some Records of Malay Magic by an Eye-Witness', *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 31, (1898), 35-40; Ishak bin Ahmad, 'Malay Fishermen's Superstitions' *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 19:1, (1941), 131-136; H. C. Clifford, *In Court and Kampung* (Singapore: Graham Brash, 1989), 147-8; Winstedt, 'Malay Industries: Part 1: Fishing, Hunting and Trapping', 8, 12-13, 18.

orbits of Masura (the great Surya), Kala (Siva the Destroyer), Brahma, Bisnu (Visnu) and Jakini (the Tantric, Dakini) upon the days of the Islamic months.[91]

Outline of Chapters

Chapter 1 draws attention to the religious rice frontiers of Negri Sembilan and Malacca, the religious sensibilities of subsistence wet and dry hill rice planters, and the centrality of *pawang*s and their miraculous expertise to the expansion of the rice frontier. This chapter will pay particular attention to how, on the one hand, rice agriculture in the Malay states was associated with prophetic and *pawang*-ic traditions by the late 19th century. On the other hand, Muslim miracle-workers were indispensable authorities in rice worlds due to their miraculous expertise of intermediating and controlling hazardous agricultural and supernatural frontiers, and negotiating with eclectic spiritual beings and forces that populated the forested frontier. This chapter will also highlight the transcultural patronage networks and socioeconomic factors that sustained the careers of rice *pawang*s in Negri Sembilan and Malacca, and the cosmopolitan nature of the Malayan interior.

Chapter 2 shifts the focus from Malacca and Negri Sembilan northwards to Perak, and explores the religious rice frontiers and the religious sensibilities of dry hill rice (*ladang*) pushers in the Malay state and the role of the archetypal *pawang* in socioeconomic change upon the agricultural frontier. Particular attention will be paid in this chapter towards the religio-historical mentalities of planters who associated their agricultural labors with traditions of historical rice *pawang*s and prophets by the late 19th century, and the technological and supernatural command of *pawang*s over the forest clearings and rice-fields of late 19th and early 20th century Perak. Herein, it will be

[91] WL Malay 1. *Surat Fasal Pertahunan Artinya Bertanam;* RAS Maxwell Malay 15. Untitled. Transcribed by Muhammad Hashim. Taiping [Perak], 1882.

suggested that Muslim miracle-workers spearheaded the expansion of the rice frontier through their establishment of 'footholds' upon dangerous forested terrain through sophisticated technological and supernatural techniques. This chapter will also draw attention to socioeconomic factors, patronage patterns and transcultural networks that produced Jawi texts pertaining to the figure of the rice *pawang*, and the cosmopolitan nature of the agricultural labor force and forested interior.

Chapter 3 explores the religious sensibilities of and religious terms employed by miners to understand the alluvial frontiers and deposits of western Malaya, and the figure of the *pawang* as a microcosm of late 19th century religious mining worlds in Perak, Selangor, Malacca and Negri Sembilan. This chapter will pay particular attention to how, on the one hand, the socioeconomic and geological stratums and activities of alluvial tin and gold miners were intimately connected with the supernatural. On the other hand, the miraculous expertise of *pawang*s was indispensable to expanding and governing spiritually hazardous mining frontiers of the interior, and prospecting, excavating, dressing and smelting alluvial ore. This chapter will also consider the cosmopolitan nature of western Malayan mine worlds, and transcultural networks or webs of patronage within and beyond large open-cast mines that sustained the careers of mining *pawang*s.

Chapter 4 shifts the focus of the dissertation from religious rice and mining frontiers to violent religious stratums of elephant hunters and gun users wherein miracle-workers were coveted for their trapping and firearms expertise. Particular attention will be paid in this chapter to, on the one hand, how the game frontiers of northern Malaya and elephants were understood in religious terms, and how operations of hunting, ensnaring, brutally domesticating and exploiting beasts were directly associated with the miraculous expertise of *bomor*s or *pawang*s. On the other hand, armed frontiers in the Straits of Malacca whereupon firearms and their metals had attained religious definitions, and *faqir*s and gurus were pivotal to religiously and technologically domesticating Euro-

American rifles and instructing religious militancy or 'kafir-shooting'. This chapter will also highlight court and transcultural elephant-hunting networks, and the clandestine and transcultural arms trade that sustained the careers of elephant *bomor*s and gun gurus.

The following chapters reconstruct a history of frontiers in 19th and early 20th century Malaya whereupon *pawang*s, *bomor*s, *faqir*s and gurus were key agents of agricultural colonization, forest clearing, rice production, alluvial tin and gold mining, elephant trapping and gun bearing. The rice, mining, game and armed frontiers that the subsequent chapters explore are simultaneously agrarian and religious ones that were divided between Malay and Tamil agriculturalists, Chinese and Malay miners, Asian and European trappers and Muslim bearers of American rifles, and porous forests that were replete with transcultural spirits that were exclusively penetrated by *pawang*s and their miraculous expertise. This study of religious frontiers, miracle-workers, the sensibilities of frontiersmen or subalterns, and cosmopolitanism in the Malayan interior, is one that endeavors to place the Malay frontier upon the map of scholarship on labor and subaltern history, Indian Ocean history and world history.

1 Religious Rice Worlds: *Pawang*s on the Agricultural Frontiers of Malacca and Negri Sembilan

This chapter recollects the history of socioeconomic stratums in late 19th century Malacca and Negri Sembilan wherein dry hill (*ladang*) and wet (*sawah*) rice production had attained a religious meaning, and cultivators employed religious terms to understand agricultural frontiers and rice. This is a history centered upon cosmopolitan *pawang*s who were pivotal to expanding rice frontiers in the western Malay states. These *pawang*s were indispensable to the intermediation of frontiers through their miraculous expertise, and central to a 'socioeconomic system geared to the production of rice' and a 'religious ideology that conferred special meaning on agrarian life'. In writing a history of religious rice worlds and the 'real experts' of rice cultivation, Muslim miracle-workers and their associates, this chapter attempts to redress both the impasse historians have faced in accessing the sensibilities of subsistence planters, and the academic silence on the socioeconomic importance of *pawangs* and their miraculous expertise in post-colonial scholarship.

This chapter is divided into two sections, '*Religious Rice Worlds in Negri Sembilan and Malacca: Historical Sensibility, Pawangs and Saintly Networks*' and '*Miraculous Expertise: Pawangs on the Agricultural Frontiers of Malacca and Negri Sembilan*'. The opening section draws attention, firstly, to a sensibility prevailing among producers of dry and wet rice in Negri Sembilan and Malacca, by the late 19th century, of their socioeconomic activities being linked to traditions of the prophet Muhammad, heirs of Muhammad and religious ancients, and secondly, to *pawangs* being indispensable dignitaries within the worlds of the majority food producing sector due to their technological or supernatural expertise. I base these arguments upon the data extracted from an early 20th century epistle produced by a Tamil *pawang* in Negri Sembilan, the epistles produced by a *munshi* associated with the Resident-Councillor Office Malacca and the notes of the scholar-administrator C. O. Blagden. These unpublished sources also provide snippets of information regarding sophisticated transcultural patronage networks and socioeconomic factors that sustained the careers of rice *pawangs* in the two Malay states. The subsequent section of this chapter shifts the focus from rice worlds to the miraculous expertise of *pawangs*, and discusses how the careers of *pawangs* in the 19th century Malay states revolved around their intermediation and control of simultaneously agricultural and supernatural frontiers. Herein, I elaborate upon the technological expertise of talisman-bearing and demonology-knowing *pawangs* who appeared necessary upon the hazardous forested frontiers of the Peninsula's interior that were represented by demons (*hantu*), armies of Iblis (*shetan*), Muslim and non-Muslim *jinns*, and Muslim prophets and supernatural beings. I will also explore the rituals of communication undertaken by the Muslim miracle-worker to mobilize supernatural beings on the frontier for intricate agricultural operations, as well as the *pawang*'s or guru's intermediation of time, astrology and orbits upon the frontier. I base this discussion upon the data provided by demonologies transcribed in 19th century Malacca, fatwas of *pawangs*, and a detailed Minangkabau planting manual.

Religious Rice Worlds in Negri Sembilan and Malacca: Historical Sensibility, *Pawangs* and Saintly Networks

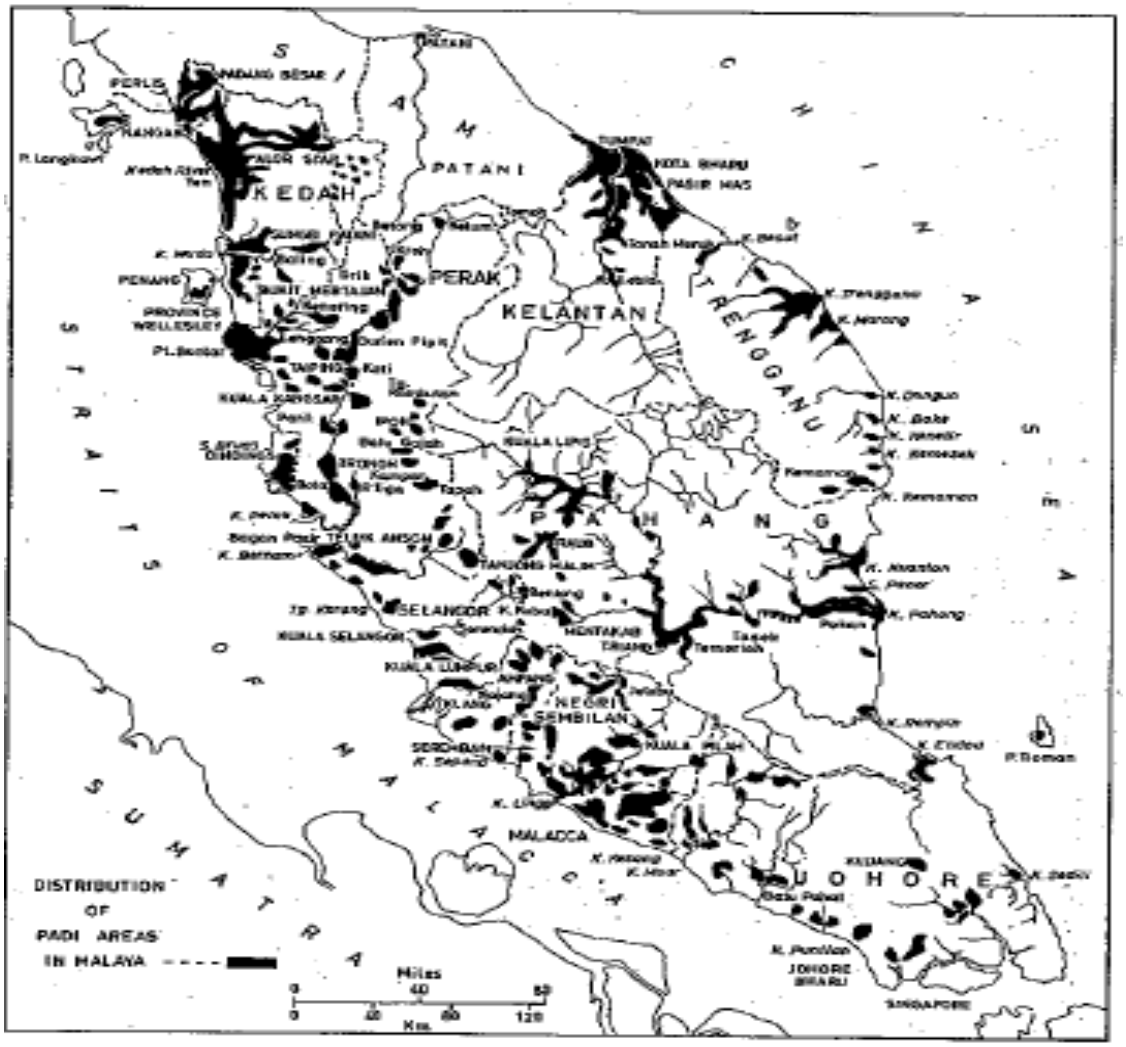
The introductory chapter has highlighted that rice agriculture in 19th and early 20th century Malaya remains a topic that receives insufficient attention and remains largely neglected by historians of the Malay archipelago, and that no single historical monograph has been produced on religious rice worlds and the key historical agents of expanding rice frontiers in the Peninsula, *pawang*s. This conspicuous academic silence on religious rice frontiers in the Peninsula can be attributed to post-colonial historians' neglect of a corpus of seemingly anti-scientific manuscripts that were produced in late 19th and early 20th century Malacca, Negri Sembilan and Perak, manuscripts that are employed in this dissertation as key historical records, and presumption that a history of rice agriculture in Malaya had to be based upon documents published after 1932 wherefrom cultivation and acreage statistics were increasingly available, 'scientific' and 'dependable'.[92]

The academic silence on the religious characteristics of the Malayan rice frontier, the figure of the miracle-worker and the sophisticated nature of the rice *pawang*'s miraculous expertise is apparent in Lim Teck Ghee's *Origins of the Colonial Economy* and *Peasants and their Agricultural Economy*, both of which speculate that Malay rice agriculture in the late 19th century western Malay states was autonomously spearheaded and centered upon the key 'power-holders', Muslim rajas who attained *kuasas* (written land grants) either directly from the Sultan or indirectly from Muslim and non-Muslim providers of capital in the Peninsula.[93] Lim's speculations on the Malay expansion of rice frontiers, however, ignore how actual forest pioneering and procedures of rice production were understood as religious acts by the late 19th century within subaltern worlds of the rice

[92] Lim Chong Yah, *Economic Development of Modern Malaya*, 149.

[93] Lim Teck Ghee, *Origins of a Colonial Economy*, 6-8; Lim Teck Ghee, *Peasants and their agricultural economy in colonial Malaya, 1874-1941* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1977), 68-69; Gullick, *Indigenous Political Systems of Western Malaya*, 32; See Gullick's 'Preface' to a 1988 edition of *Indigenous Political Systems* (Oxford: Berg, 1988), x-xii, 94. For a different perspective, see Khoo Kay Kim, 'The Pangkor Engagements,' *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 47:1 (1974), 1-14.

producing majority, and as such, spearheaded and supervised by village headmen (*penghulu*s) and *pawang*s who in the words of the scholar-administrator Blagden, were 'indispensable functionings' throughout 'sowing, reaping, irrigation works, clearing jungle for planting and other agricultural operations'.[94] The intimate connections of *pawangs* and *penghulu*s upon late 19th and early 20th century Malayan agricultural frontiers appear to be evident in two Perak Jawi manuscripts, discussed in the subsequent chapter, that were produced by the pen of *penghulu*s and comprise of elaborate traditions and texts related to the archetypal *pawang*'s centrality to the expansion of the Malayan rice frontier.



Rice Worlds, early 20th century Malaya (Source: *Rice in Malaya*)

[94] SOAS MS 297483. C. O. Blagden, 'Pawang', in *Notes on Matters Connected with Malacca and the Malay Peninsula*, Book I (1892).

Beyond these collaborations of village headmen and *pawangs* 'at every stage in the seasonal cycle from first clearing of the ground to harvest' that were illustrative of the religious character of rice worlds, historians of socioeconomic transformations in Malaya such as Kratoska, Gullick, Cheng, and even Lim Teck Ghee, have conceded (pithily, in the form of brief sentences and footnotes) that by the late 19th century, firstly, rice agriculture was the 'most important fact of Malay economic life', was a 'way of life [rather] than an economic undertaking' and had 'determined to a large extent the way of life of the Malay rural population' throughout the Peninsula. Secondly, rice production was an 'occupation hallowed by tradition and esteemed for more than purely economic reasons' which was pursued in spite of its 'uneconomic' and 'unremunerative' nature, and was a socioeconomic activity that had attained a 'special significance' through the association of rice with the 'religious traits of the Malays'. Thirdly, that *pawang padi*s (rice *pawang*s) were 'most important personage[s] in the village', 'experts in the production of rice', orchestrated 'rituals of rice cultivation' to expand agricultural frontiers, and held the 'function of fixing the time for the commencement of planting, transplanting and harvesting'.[95] Furthermore, Hill's comprehensive historical geography of *Rice in Malaya* mentions the fact that scientific data from 19th and early 20th century western Malaya was illustrative of socioeconomic settings in Malacca, Negri Sembilan and Perak wherein there was a 'persistence of magico-religious observances pertaining to rice'; a powerful aversion against abandoning rice for 'more remunerative crops' due to the fact that religious 'tradition was too strong for that'; it was the 'force of law' that the *pawang*s 'vivified' ricefields 'once in three months' and as such, in all probability sustained

[95] Lim, *Peasants and their agricultural economy in colonial Malaya*, 43-44; Cheng, 'The Rice Industry of Malaya', 133-4, Cheng, *The Rice Trade of Malaya*, 1; Gullick, 'The Negri Sembilan Economy of the 1890s', 45-46; Kratoska, 'Rice Cultivation and the Ethnic Division of Labor in British Malaya', 286-288; Gullick, *Indigenous Political Systems of Western Malaya*, 142-3. The term is 'padi' is employed here for the rice plant; the contemporary American use of the term 'paddy' to connote wet rice is not applicable in Malay and Malayan English.

lucrative careers; and, petty Muslim holy men such as hajjis and sheikhs were active agents of forest clearing and expanding rice frontiers.[96]

The most substantial, yet concise, discussion of the religious character of the rice frontier in western and northern Malaya emerges in sections of two articles, William R. Roff's essay on the Islamic body 'Majlis Agama Kelantan' and Kratoska's article on the 'Ethnic Division of Labor in British Malaya'. Roff's study comprises of a brief discussion of Muslim holy men or imams in the northern Malayan state, who by the late 19th century, appear to have been central to rice cultivation and Islam through possessing 'general administrative oversight' of the 'alienation of land' for subsistence planting, 'supervision of [the rice] produce, and assessment and collection of the triennial *banchi* or tax' upon the crop, and establishing *surau*s or 'simple wooden structures on piles, thatch-roofed and partially mat-walled' mosques.[97] Kratoska's article, alternatively, is probably the only post-colonial historical work on rice agriculture in Malaya to scrutinize the 1893 *Reports furnished by Order of His Excellency the Governor upon the Best Means of Encouraging the Cultivation of Rice* which are employed as historical records of religious rice worlds in this chapter and Chapter 2.[98] As Kratoska acknowledges, the 1893 *Reports* are persuasive portrayals of late 19th century rice frontiers in 19th century Malaya that were replete with cosmopolitan holy men who spearheaded forest clearing and wet rice cultivation. It is regrettable, however, that on the whole, these articles by Roff and Kratoska merely devote sentences and footnotes to the religious nature of the rice frontier, the prominence of Muslim and Christian holy men within northern and western Malayan rice worlds and the availability of published records of cosmopolitan holy men such as the

[96] Hill, *Rice in Malaya*, 42-45, 137, 139.
[97] W. R. Roff, 'The Origins and Early Years of the Majlis Agama Kelantan' in W. R. Roff, *Studies on Islam and Society in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2009), 182-3.
[98] ICSA. *Reports furnished by Order of His Excellency the Governor upon the Best Means of Encouraging the Cultivation of Rice*, Government Printing Office, Singapore (1893).

late 19th century priest of a Tamil Roman Catholic rice colony in Krian (Perak), which is elaborated upon in the following chapter.

In writing a comprehensive history of religious frontiers in the western Malay states and rice *pawang*s, this chapter and the subsequent chapter on Perak rice worlds are influenced by the literature on the Islamic colonization of the early modern Bengal delta. In particular, Eaton's work on the *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier* surveys Mughal records from the mid-17th century to 1760 that are historical illustrations of the Bengal frontier as one whereupon the production of wet rice was directly associated with 'Muslim holy men', 'industrious and capable forest pioneers identified as holy men' and men who 'swelled into vivid mythico-historical figures, saints' in popular memory.[99] Furthermore, Eaton suggests that Bengali literature from the 16th to 18th century pertaining to the miracles and spectacular powers of colonizing *pir*s serve as valuable historical records of the 'mytho-historical' sensibilities of communities and scribes associated with the colonization of the Sundarbans forests, who were familiar with the trope of 'Muslims attacking the forest under the leadership of charismatic *pirs'*, and reconstructed historical saints and prophets into iconic forest pioneers and the 'first cultivators' of the delta who expanded rice frontiers 'at the command of God'. These materials are also revelatory of how these agrarian communities subscribed to religious cosmologies that portrayed the Islamic colonization of the Bengal frontier as a sophisticated spiritual program that involved negotiations and compromises between colonizing 'Islamic superhuman agents' and non-Muslim 'indigenous agents'.[100] Eaton's work appears to emphasize the 'unique Bengali variant' of the religious rice frontier in South Asia and the distinctiveness of the early modern 'Bengali experience' of the simultaneous development of religion and rice agriculture. Nevertheless, the conclusion

[99] Eaton, 'Who are the Bengal Muslims,' in his *Essays on Islam and Indian History,* 266.
[100] Eaton, 'Shrine, Cultivators, and Muslim 'Conversion', 206-207; Richard M. Eaton, 'Human Settlement and Colonization in the Sundarbans', *Agriculture and Human Values*, 7:2, (1990) 8; Eaton, 'Who are the Bengal Muslims?' in his *Essays on Islam and Indian History*, 271.

of *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier* issues a call for historians to locate further early modern and modern global frontiers whereupon socioeconomic transformation paralleled the Bengali experience. Drawing upon Sartono's *The Peasants' Revolt of Banten* which mentions agrarian communities that were established by 'hajjis' within the forested tracts of the Sultanate of Banten, West Java, in between the 16th and 19th century, Eaton encourages historians to look across the Bay of Bengal towards the Malay archipelago for religious rice worlds wherein 'Islam grew in tandem with deforestation, [and] agrarian expansion'.[101]

The following sections of this chapter explore a corpus of late 19th century and early 20th century Malay and Anglo-Malay manuscripts that are unparalleled historical records of western Malayan rice frontiers whereupon deforestation and agrarian expansion had attained religious meanings and was directly associated with Muslim miracle-workers. Whilst Eaton's work on the early modern Bengal frontier acknowledges that the key historical agents of socioeconomic change in eastern Bengal, colonizer-*pir*s, were possibly '*capable* forest pioneers' who were posthumously reconstructed into 'saints' within popular memory, the manuscripts employed in this chapter do in fact illustrate that cosmopolitan *pawang*s sustained careers in Negri Sembilan and Malacca as living saints who possessed the coveted *ilmu* and miraculous expertise of penetrating forests and expanding the rice frontier. These Malay and Anglo-Malay materials further serve as valuable windows into the sensibilities of planters in the western Malay states who remained religiously engaged in unpredictable rice production which provided a lower income than pepper, gambier or market gardening and wage labor, involved a 'major investment of time, labour and capital', and was regularly plagued by the 'vagaries of water supply and rice pests', epidemics and detrimental meteorological and soil

[101] Eaton, The *Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier*, 313; Kartodirdjo Sartono, *The Peasants' Revolt of Banten in 1888: its Conditions, course and Sequel* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966) 34-61. Also see Adas, *State, Market and Peasant in Colonial South and Southeast Asia*, 235.

conditions that were peculiar to the Peninsula.[102] Like Adas's work on the late 19th and early 20th century Lower Burma rice frontier, this chapter and the subsequent chapter on Perak rice worlds endeavor to provide a 'framework of analysis that makes it possible to fully integrate the much neglected history of the "peasant masses"' into a broader socioeconomic history of Asian rice frontiers.[103] Adas attempted to write a subaltern history of the Burma delta through European settlements reports on exponential rice production and exports that accompanied the British annexation of Lower Burma in 1852. On the contrary, this dissertation produces an 'insider's history' of rice worlds through scrutinizing manuscripts that were produced 'very close to the action' upon agricultural frontiers, and are replete with data on the religious sensibilities of frontiersmen and terms, categories, constructs and tropes employed by them to understand their simultaneously dangerous, nutritional, spiritual and cosmopolitan rice frontiers.

Hoe-Bearing Prophets and Pawangs in Negri Sembilan Rice Worlds

> *Spoke God the Sacred and Mighty to the prophet Muhammad [-] endeavor to establish a dry hill rice clearing [ladang] so as to materialize nutritional sustenance … the prophet Muhammad established a garden and a ladang … upon the appearance of a padi disease … was called the pawang who was named ya Muhammad Saleh … the pawang of provenance.*
>
> - Abdullah bin Pillai, *Darihal Pawang.*

In a Jawi *khaus* or official epistle completed upon 16 February 1922, the Dato Pawang Abdullah bin Pillai who had 'under his command' the parish areas (*mukims*) of Sepri, Chembong and Batu Hampar of Rembau, Negri Sembilan, transmitted the historical tradition of the *Darihal Pawang* (*Of that Concerning the Pawang*) to the recipient of

[102] Kratoska, 'Rice Cultivation and the Ethnic Division of Labor in British Malaya', 286-288; Lim Chong Yah, *Economic Development of Modern Malaya*, 147

[103] Michael Adas, *The Burma Delta: Economic Development and Social Change on an Asian Rice Frontier, 1852-1941,* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1964), 5.

profuse 'reverences', 'the honorable the *tuan* District Officer Rembau'.[104] This transmission of the *Darihal Pawang* begins by positioning Abdullah Pillai's European counterpart within a historical setting wherein 'God', 'Muhammad', the 'earth' and 'sky' were not yet known as such, and wherefrom God created the 'luminosity of *nur Muhammad*' as an object of divination. This *nur*, in turn, transpired into the creation of the aligned solar system and a plethora of supernatural beings including the '*pawang* of provenance' whom the prophet Muhammad introduces to God as '*ya* Muhammad Saleh', *keramats* (miracle-workers and miracle-working shrines), *hantus* (demons), *jinns* and *shetan* (armies of Iblis). The scribe of the epistle proceeds to reveal a series of conversations between a prophet paranoid about his emerging ummat's food scarcity, and his audience, God and the archangel Jibrail, both of whom furnish agricultural solutions that lead Muhammad to establish a *ladang* and a *kebun* (garden). Having established an Islamic work ethic of subsistence cultivation for his ummat and selected the *negri* (Negri Sembilan) as the chosen land for rice production, the planter-prophet is struck by despondency when a 'padi disease takes control' of his *ladang* upon maturity, compelling him to plead for the intervention of the 'indispensable functioning' in agricultural operations, the '*pawang* of provenance', Muhammad Saleh.

Abdullah Pillai's epistle is preoccupied with focusing the reader's attention upon a prevailing sensibility in Negri Sembilan regarding Islamic *ladang* and permanent *sawah* cultivation or *paya* (wet rice in swamp or marsh) agriculture, and Muhammad Saleh being pivotal to the operations of both these types of cultivation. Such socioeconomic logic is not simply derived from the historical episode of the prophet Muhammad's invocation of the miraculous Muhammad Saleh into Negri Sembilan, but also as the epistle elaborates, from Muhammad Saleh's role in the historical establishment of a pioneer

[104] LKCRL NL 24114. Abdullah Pillai *Darihal Pawang* (*Of that Concerning the Pawang*), 1922. Jawi Microfilm Collection (1922).

permanent wet rice colony at a 'broad and extensive *paya*' in the *negri* through the collaboration of the prophet's ummat and heirs, 'human assemblies' (an apparent reference to non-Muslims), *hantus*, *jinns* and *shetan*. Abdullah Pillai's reference to this pioneer wet rice colony appears to be one to, as 19th century oral traditions recorded in Rembau attest, the establishment of permanent *paya* and *sawah* colonies in the lowland valleys of Negri Sembilan by Minangkabau settlers and sheikhs who were simultaneously experts of wet rice techniques and Islam, and the aboriginal horticulturalists of Jakun (or related) stock, by 773/1388.[105] Less preoccupied with historical chronology, Abdullah Pillai's epistle is driven towards revealing the historical basis of Muhammad Saleh's reputation as the '*pawang* of provenance' in Negri Sembilan rice worlds. Indeed, in the fashion of their agricultural forefather, the prophet Muhammad, the aforementioned pioneer wet rice colonizers are forced to beg for the intervention of Muhammad Saleh upon the outbreak of a 'padi epidemic' in the fourth month of the second annual *sawah*.

A mere beckon away from the believing cultivator, the time and space-traveling Muhammad Saleh instantly 'pops up' in the *negri*, mobilizes the peasantry for a seven-day long *berpuar* (combat with the stems of *puar*, armomum cardamomum, which according to a witness in early 20th century Johol were '3½ feet long darts') to expel the cause of rice epidemics, malignant supernatural beings.[106] 'Spearing' the four directions with *puar* stems, a 'war cries' screaming Muhammad Saleh led a march of cultivators, armed with articles including gongs, elongated weapons, multi-colored flags and banners into the wet ricefields from the upper waters of the principle river watering the *mukim*'s valley(s) to the lower reaches, 'terrifying away' malevolent *hantu*s and rice-pests in the *sawah*, while

105 T. J. Newbold, *Political and Statistical Account of the British Settlements in the Straits of Malacca* (Oxford University Press, 1971), 61; Michael G. Peletz, *A Share of the Harvest: Kinship, Property and Social History Among the Malays of Rembau* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988) 15-18; C. W. C. Parr and W. H. Mackray, 'Rembau: One of the Nine States', *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 56, (1910), 2-6; D. F. A. Hervey, 'Rembau', *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 13 (1884), 241-258.

106 For a discussion of the *berpuar* ceremony, see: Richard O. Winstedt, 'A Rice Ceremony', *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 77, (1917), 249; Skeat, *Malay Magic*, 250; Dato Sedia Raja Abdullah, 'The Origin of the Pawang and Berpuar Ceremony', *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 2, (1927), 310-313.

reminding colonizers to 'befriend' beneficial *jinn* and *shetan* congregations in the *hulu* through buffalo sacrifice.[107]

Due to its didactic concerns with Muhammad Saleh's supernatural attributes, Abdullah Pillai's epistle (housed in the Jawi microfilm collection of the LKCRL) provides the reader little data regarding the actual *pawang*, but one could easily confuse the '*pawang* of provenance' with a range of prominent rice *pawang*s remembered in the late 19th and early 20th century Minangkabau lands of Negri Sembilan and Malacca. This list would comprise of the *jinn Islam* (Islamic *jinn*), hajji Muhammad Saleh, whose *keramat* (miracle-working shrine) was established in the historically *hantu*-plagued Minangkabau wet rice colony of Jasin, Malacca, and the tiger-riding founder of the *berpuar* ceremony and universal 'protector of rice', Dato Anggut, whose *keramat* was based at Bukit Serudong, Negri Sembilan.[108] In spite of this apparent lack of specification, a close reading of the internal dynamics of texts recording the supernatural careers of 19th century *pawang*s such as Muhammad Saleh can provide historians an unparalleled window into particular socioeconomic stratums and socioeconomic trends in 19th century Negri Sembilan. My reference to Muhammad Saleh as a 19th century *pawang* might appear inconsistent due to Abdullah Pillai's physical association of the miracle-worker with the prophet Muhammad and the prophet's heirs, the 14th century pioneer Muslim colonizers of Negri Sembilan. However, while Abdullah Pillai's hagiography of the '*pawang* of provenance' is almost silent about Muhammad Saleh's genealogy, the scribe is careful to attach a section entitled '*The Descent of the Pawang of Provenance*' which provides a chronology of Muhammad Saleh's successors up to Abdullah Pillai, and makes apparent to the reader

[107] A comparison has been made here between Pillai's discussion in the *Darihal Pawang* (LKCRL NL 24114) and Abdullah's 'The Origin of the Pawang and Berpuar Ceremony' to access unclear details on the ceremony.
[108] SOAS MS 297483. C. O. Blagden, *Notes on Matters Connected with Malacca and the Malay Peninsula*, Book I (1892); Richard O. Winstedt, '*Karamat*: Sacred Places and People in Malaya', *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 2:3 (1924), 264.

that the seemingly ancient, albeit time-traveling, Muhammad Saleh was only replaced by a successor-*pawang* in 1867!

Abdullah Pillai's associations of the 19th century Muhammad Saleh with the prophet Muhammad and his ummat are purposed to reveal a historical sensibility among rice cultivators in Negri Sembilan of emulating the 'tradition of the luminous Muhammad' at the beginning of time and his heirs. Indeed, the early 20th century epistle is much more telling about the tradition-bound socioeconomic activities of 19th and early 20th century Minangkabau colonizers or frontiersmen in Rembau or Negri Sembilan on the whole rather than an imagined Islamic past. This is particularly apparent in how Abdullah Pillai draws connections between the work of contemporary forest pioneers in the upstream, interior (*hulu*) and the prophet Muhammad through depicting the prophet as the archetypal Minangkabau frontiersman and *ladang* pioneer of 19th century ethnography who was a cultivator of *ladang*s in tracts of secondary forest upslope from a garden providing a variety of vegetables (and presumably, a hamlet) upon the piedmont, enjoying his 'innate love of liberty, and freedom from all shackles' of state monopolies over river systems that snaked into the interior, and a connoisseur conscious of *ladang* rice being 'sweeter and whiter, and to keep better' than the 'watery' rice of wet fields.[109] In a similar vein, Abdullah Pillai's detailed discussion of the pioneer wet rice colony of Negri Sembilan and the *berpuar* ceremony provides a useful window into the socioeconomic logic of contemporary Minangkabau frontiersmen who selected lands characterized by heavy clay soils of the gentle gradient plains in need of lesser irrigation rather than coarser soils formed from granitic detritus lying in the steeper valleys of the interior, following a desire to connect themselves with the past heirs of the primordial Muhammad. Indeed, if we compare Abdullah Pillai's epistle to an 1892 *Report on Padi*

[109] Cited from Newbold, *Political and Statistical Account of the British Settlements*, 1, 263; William Marsden, *The History of Sumatra* (London: Longman, 1811), 66; Thomas Stamford Raffles, *The History of Java*, (London, 1817), 1, 118.

Cultivation in the District of Kuala Langat, during 1891 produced by the District Office Kuala Langat, Selangor, we find that the successor or Muhammad Saleh appears to draw linkages between contemporary Minangkabau wet rice cultivators and the pioneer wet rice cultivators of Negri Sembilan, through both groups' adoption of a peculiar Minangkabau 'system of planting … *wet ladang*'.[110] It is highly possible that this late 19th century religious tradition in the Minangkabau lands of clearing blocks of secondary growth, establishing nurseries and planting out as *sawah* padi upon maturity, while being 'altogether dependent on the rainfall' for water supply, that was driven by a tradition-bound nature of emulating pioneers, was also facilitated by the fact that Minangkabau upstream colonizers were refused government assistance for irrigation before 1900.[111]

On the whole, Abdullah Pillai's reference to *ladang* and *sawah* cultivation as being driven by prophetic tradition serves as way out of the impasse historians have faced in accessing the sensibilities of subsistence planters in Negri Sembilan for whom, by the late 19th century, rice production was an 'occupation hallowed by tradition and esteemed for more than economic reasons'.[112] Indeed, the *pawang*'s depiction of the food producing population of Negri Sembilan as being steeped in prophetic work ethics, while possibly exaggerated, is confirmed by the scholar-administrator W. E. Maxwell's 1893 *Encouragement of Rice-Cultivation in the Malay Peninsula* wherein he describes the peculiarity of the 'Malays of Negri Sembilan … [who as] an ideal peasantry … preserve their ancient habits and traditions, and are satisfied with very little'.[113] Similarly, the 1888 *Annual Report* contains a statement Rembau Malay Muslims being exceptionally prone to conceiving of rice as an ancestral factor of production rather than an 'ordinary article of commerce' for

[110] ICSA. *Reports furnished by Order of His Excellency* (1893), 31-33.
[111] Hill, *Rice in Malaya*, 131.
[112] Gullick, 'The Negri Sembilan Economy of the 1890s', 38–55.
[113] W. E. Maxwell, 'Encouragement of Rice-Cultivation in the Malay Peninsula' in *ICSA. Reports furnished by Order of His Excellency,* (1893), 60-61.

sale and exchange.[114] Furthermore, it is perhaps possible for historians working with texts such as Abdullah Pillai's to start answering questions posed by the scholar-administrator D. F. A. Hervey in 1884 regarding the socioeconomic and technological rationale of late 19th century Rembauans who religiously refused to work with extant alluvial tin for fear of the discharge 'poisoning the 'sawah' and preventing the cultivation of padi', and prepared the *sawah* before harrowing 'by means of a large wooden 'changkul' or hoe' in spite of buffaloes being more available in Negri Sembilan vis-à-vis Malacca wherein buffaloes were employed for ploughing and puddling.[115] If we are to adopt Abdullah Pillai's record as a reflection of certain socioeconomic settings, the cultural preference of the *changkul* (hoe, Malayan spade) technology of *ladang* cultivation in the preparation of permanent *sawah* centers in Negri Sembilan was indeed driven by a historical sensibility associating contemporary agricultural work with the *changkul*-bearing primordial planter Muhammad and his *changkul*-bearing heirs.

Beyond providing a reader an insight into Negri Sembilan rice worlds that were hallowed by prophetic tradition, Abdullah Pillai's epistle is exceptionally informative about the image of *pawang*s and their technological or supernatural expertise within these socioeconomic stratums. This is apparent in both the discussion of Muhammad Saleh's expertise in prophetic and historical Negri Sembilan, and the aforementioned section on the '*Descent of the Pawang of Provenance*' wherein Abdullah Pillai appears to be at pains to associate himself with the esoteric expertise and agency of premier value in the *negri*, the knowledge of Muhammad Saleh and his pre-1867 *jawatan pawang* (agency as *pawang*), an agency even the prophet Muhammad appears to have been deprived of. In this section, the scribe-*pawang* legitimizes his succession of 'Pawang Dris' (Dato Pawang Idris of

[114] Refer to Gullick, 'The Negri Sembilan Economy of the 1890s', 46.
[115] Newbold, *Political and Statistical Account of the British Settlements*, 117-8; T. J. Newbold 'Account of Rumbowe, One of the States in the Interior of Malacca', in J. H. Moor, *Notices of the Indian Archipelago and Adjacent Countries being a Collection of Papers Relating to Borneo, Celebes, Bali, Java, Sumatra, Nias, the Philippine islands, Sulus, Siam, Cochin China, Malayan Peninsula, etc* (Singapore, 1937), 62, 66; Hervey, 'Rembau', 256-258.

Sepri) in 1913, and 'command over' *mukims* and *keramats* (miracle-working shrines) at junctures of the Rembau and Linggi rivers, through highlighting that his *jawatan pawang* was solely premised on its ability to assure the *negri* 'extensive comprehensive healthy padi … and bountiful pleasures' in the fashion of 19th century Negri Sembilan under the supervision of Muhammad Saleh. Moreover, Abdullah Pillai elaborates upon how two of his predecessors and aspirants of the *jawatan pawang* and Muhammad Saleh's expertise, had been 'fired' in 1895 and 1904 respectively due to the emergence of 'poor padi' and civil strife within food producing worlds of the *negri*. It is possible that Abdullah Pillai's attempt to defend his succession to the *jawatan* might have been driven by a perceived need to react against concerns being raised regarding his ascendancy to the 'agency' from being a mere 'child disciple' from Chembong of the Minangkabau *pawang* Dris or due to his apparent Tamil descent (as the title 'Pillai' suggests).

This '*Descent of the Pawang*' section could also have rendered the epistle into a more valuable historical record if the scribe had provided specific examples of extensions of the rice frontier and epidemics during respective *jawatan*s, some of which would include extensions in the Nerasau valley of Rembau in the 1890s and rinderpest from 1882-1884 that 'carried off almost all the buffaloes' of Rembau.[116] However, there appears to be no reason to discard the data it furnishes regarding subaltern socioeconomic worlds of Rembau and Negri Sembilan that still remain in obscurity for scholars, wherein, on the one hand, rice production and agricultural health was particularly associated with the *pawang* who performed as an indispensable material and supernatural adept intermediating epidemic-causing supernatural beings. On the other hand, to paraphrase Eaton, rice agriculture was particularly associated with Muslim holy men such as Muhammad Saleh who had swelled within popular memory into vivid historical figures, 'saints whose lives served as metaphors for the expansion of both

[116] Hervey, 'Rembau', 256; Hill, *Rice in Malaya*, 127.

religion and agriculture'.[117] Indeed, the scholar-administor, Winstedt's 1924 article on '*Karamat*s' mentions that even the lives of historical personages associated with Muhammad Saleh as clients, such as the hairy-tongued pioneer colonizer of Rembau 'Dato Sri Maharaja [di Gunung]', had swelled into popular memory as saintly metaphors for the expansion of religion and agriculture in Negri Sembilan by the late 19th century.[118] Similarly, Gullick's study of Sungei Ujong, Negri Sembilan, contains a reference to early 19th century forest pioneers in Sungei Ujong belonging to the *Suku Batu Hampar* clan, and drawing inspiration from the clan's historical founder who had swelled in popular memory into an itinerant Muslim saint pivotal to the spread of Islam and technologies of wet rice production.[119]

It might be tempting to dismiss Abdullah Pillai's claims about socioeconomic stratums and activities in Negri Sembilan being particularly associated with the *pawang* as self-fulfilling exaggerations of the infrequent 'affirmation of links with an unseen world … [upon] crisis points' by cultivators. Nevertheless, the *pawang*'s epistolary implications are substantiated by the published works of the reformist courtier, Dato Sedia Raja Abdullah bin Haji Dahan.[120] These works of the *Undang* or 'Supreme Law Giver' of Rembau (in office, 1922–1938) comprise of diatribes against both 'living but invisible' and physically living *pawang*s in Negri Sembilan who are identified as being holders of unparalleled authority in Negri Sembilan and as 'saints' and premier agents of influence on the overwhelming majority of the Malays and their 'wet-rice fields'.[121] For the reformist courtier, there was overwhelming evidence from 19th and early 20th century Negri Sembilan to suggest that the socioeconomic and religious worlds of subaltern planters were centered upon these saints who were in reality 'lamentable obstacles' to the

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117 Eaton, 'Who are the Bengal Muslims,' in his *Essays on Islam and Indian History*, 266.
118 Winstedt, '*Karamat*: Sacred Places and People in Malaya', 271-272.
119 J. M. Gullick, *Sungei Ujong*, (Singapore: Malaya Publishing House, 1949), 45-51.
120 Cited from Hill, *Rice in Malaya*, 43.
121 Dato Sedia Raja Abdullah, 'The Leading Saints in Rembau', *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 3:3 (1925), 104; Abdullah, 'The Origin of the Pawang and the Berpuar', 313.

'economic progress of Malays' and relics of the 'pre-Islamic 'Days of Ignorance". Even the *Undang*'s early 20th century pamphlet that rubbished the theological foundations of the aforementioned *berpuar* ceremony, is revelatory of how the food producing population of 19th and early 20th century Negri Sembilan 'lamentably' associated their socioeconomic activities with a zealous veneration of the time-traveling '*pawang* of provenance', Muhammad Saleh. Indeed, the reformist Abdullah's pamphlet contains a summarized hagiography of Muhammad Saleh that was in vogue in early 20th century Negri Sembilan which differs from Abdullah Pillai's account in terms of crediting the pioneer *pawang* and his descendants esoteric knowledge of a 'Book' of miracles and remedies transmitted by God to Muhammad Saleh via the prophet Muhammad.[122] Like Abdullah Pillai's representation of the prophet Muhammad being dependent upon Muhammad Saleh, this seeming relegation of the prophet Muhammad into the role of Jibrail transmitting the Qur'an to Muhammad Saleh, that was prevalent in rice worlds of Negri Sembilan, is probably reflective of how cultivators on agricultural frontiers of the Malay state called upon more familiar *pawang*s such as Muhammad Saleh rather than the more distant prophet Muhammad.

Beyond berating the socioeconomic importance of *pawang*s in Negri Sembilan, the reformist *Undang*'s literary contributions provide snippets of information regarding networks and factors that sustained the careers of rice *pawang*s in Rembau. Like Abdullah Pillai's epistle, the reformist courtier's articles and pamphlets fail to spell out these networks or factors but are rich enough to allow us to draw the inference that the careers of 19th century miracle-workers such as Muhammad Saleh (and his descendants) were intricately connected to, firstly, the abundance of land in the historical and contemporary Malay state, which in theory belonged to the Sovereign but in return for a customary tithe, allowed permanent and transhumant cultivation by forest pioneers who were in

[122] Abdullah, 'The Origin of the Pawang and Berpuar Ceremony', 310-312.

turn, dependent upon the services and supernatural powers of *pawang*s. Secondly, a semi-monetized economy of landholding and production that helped perpetuate an image of rice as a customary religious product rather than a commodity of exchange, while ensuring the *pawang* non-monetized or semi-monetized customary remunerations upon successful agricultural operations. Thirdly, a ready supply of itinerant laborers dependent upon the miraculous powers of the *pawang* in the course of penetrating agricultural frontiers.[123] Moreover, the reformist Abdullah's critiques of a Malay generation plagued by 'primaeval beliefs' were as much directed against subalterns as courtiers and rajas or chiefs of *sukus* (clans or landowning classes) in 19th and early 20th century Negri Sembilan who sustained the careers of 'intercessors between man and Allah'.[124] Indeed, we even find evidence of rice *pawang*s being plugged into such patronage networks with the non-food producing sector of society (the chiefs and their coteries) within the early 19th century writings of an officer in the 23rd Regiment Madras Light Infantry, Thomas J. Newbold, and Abdullah Pillai's epistle. Whilst Newbold's 1837 *Account of Rumbowe* is informative about Muslim chiefs and their coteries being patrons of the supernatural powers of a somewhat professional class of awe-inspiring 'sages, *Poyangs*' (*pawang*s, whom Newbold inadequately classifies as being solely of the stock of aboriginal horticulturalists), Abdullah Pillai's introduction of himself as enjoying 'command' over the Minangkabau *suku*s of Batu Hampar, Chembong and Sepri is, in all probability, evidence of the *pawang*'s intimate connections to the *suku*s' chiefs.[125]

Beyond being revelatory about 'indigenous' patrons, Abdullah Pillai's *khaus* and its production is telling about networks between *pawang*s and European scholar-administrators that led to the transcription of hagiographies of 19th century *pawang*s such

123 Abdullah, 'The Origin of the Pawang and Berpuar Ceremony', 310-312; Dato Sedia Raja Abdullah, 'Mandi Ayer Gawar', *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 4:2 (1926), 214; Hervey, 'Rembau', 250-255.
124 Abdullah, 'The Leading Saints in Rembau', 104; also refer to Peletz, *A Share of the Harvest: Kinship, Property and Social History Among the Malays of Rembau*, 112-113, 146.
125 Newbold, 'Account of Rumbowe, 62-63.

as Muhammad Saleh. Whilst it is tempting to assume, following Cheng's survey of *The Rice Industry of Malaya* that by the early 20th century, relationships between 'parasite' *pawang* padis (rice *pawang*s) and District Officers were solely defined by acrimonious impositions of supernatural and 'scientific methods of cultivation' respectively, Abdullah Pillai's dedication of the tradition of the *Darihal Pawang* to the 'revered' District Officer of Rembau suggest that the *pawang* was plugged into a sophisticated transcultural scholarly network.[126] It is also possible that Abdullah Pillai was consulted by the District Officer in synchronizing planting dates, collaborations that we find evidence of in mid 20th century Kelantan, and was a 'priest' enjoying exemption from the tolls of the District Officer or Collector of Land Revenue; nevertheless, there is no evidence in the 1922 epistle to suggest so.[127] Furthermore, whilst the 1922 epistle makes no direct reference to the ethnic composition of Muslim rice worlds in Negri Sembilan, both the fact of its Tamil scribe being a prominent rice *pawang* and Abdullah Pillai's conscious attempt to depict the identities of his key Muslim protagonists (Muhammad Saleh, the prophet Muhammad and his heirs) nebulously, might be a reflection of the cosmopolitan nature of *pawang*-centered rice worlds in the Malay state.

Plough-Pushing Pawangs and Religious Rice Worlds in Malacca

Like the aforementioned materials pertaining to rice worlds in Negri Sembilan, there is an extant corpus of Malay and Anglo-Malay manuscripts that were produced in late 19th century Malacca and serve as valuable windows into socioeconomic stratums wherein agricultural projects and methods involved a sensibility of adhering to a religio-historical tradition, the *pawang* was an indispensable functioning in agricultural operations, and sophisticated transcultural networks facilitated the supernatural careers

126 Cheng Siok Hwa, 'The Rice Industry of Malaya', 131.
127 For instance, see A. H. Hill, 'Kelantan Padi-Planting', *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 24:1 (1951), 60.

of *pawang*s. This corpus includes the official epistles or *khaus* of the *munshi* or 'Malay Writer' in the Resident Councillor's Office Malacca, Inche Muhammad Jaafar, and the ethnographic notes of Blagden, *Notes on Matters Connected with Malacca or the Malay Peninsula*, Book I, 1892 (housed as *MS 297483* at SOAS), *Notes on Matters Connected with the Malay Peninsula*, Book II, 1893 (housed as *MS 297484* at SOAS), and *Notes on Matters Connected with the Malay Peninsula and Far East*, Book III, 1893 (housed as *MS 297484* at the SOAS).[128]

The only epistle of Muhammad Jaafar that has found scholarly attention, possibly due to its publication in 1897, is the 1893 *Darihal Pkerja'an Bersawah di Malaka* (*Concerning the Work of Wet Rice Cultivation in Malacca*), a *khaus* addressed to the Acting Resident-Councillor of Malacca, E. M. Merewether.[129] One of the only historians of *Rice in Malaya* who has employed this 1893 epistle of Muhammad Jaafar as a historical source, Hill, has expressed his frustrations at the fact that the few extant English and Malay records from the 19th century suffer from being 'annoyingly vague' on extensive cultivation, population estimates and average crop yields in Malacca.[130] Whilst it is undeniable that Muhammad Jaafar's *Darihal Pkerja'an* fails to make any reference to actual centers of permanent *sawah* production in Malacca, one should approach it as a text didactically driven towards exposing a historical sensibility prevailing among the majority food producing sector, of emulating the agricultural traditions and methods of primordial beings who were possibly, the 'prophetic' pioneers of colonies. Indeed, the *munshi's* 'intricate and sensitive observations' of *sawah* societies in Malacca lead him to conclude that Malaccans were

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[128] SOAS MS 297483. C. O. Blagden, *Notes on Matters Connected with Malacca and the Malay Peninsula*, Book I (1892); SOAS MS 297484. C. O. Blagden, *Notes on Matters Connected with the Malay Peninsula*, Book II (1893); SOAS MS 297484. C. O. Blagden, *Notes on Matters Connected with the Malay Peninsula and Far East*, Book III (1893); SOAS MS 297496. Blagden C. O., in *Notes on Matters Connected with the Malay Peninsula and the Far East*, Book IV (1895). WL Malay Folder 3D. *Buffalo-Fighting and Other Ceremonies Connected with Padi-Planting,* (1890-1891). Transcribed by Muhammad Jaafar. See untitled epistle '*khaus* [to] the honorable the *tuan*, by the slave of the *tuan*'.

[129] Muhammad Jaafar, '*Darihal Pkerja'an Bersawah di Malaka'*, *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 30 (1897), 285-304.

[130] See: Hill, *Rice in Malaya*, 125, 132, 134; also see Lim, *Peasants and their Agricultural Economy*, 24.

obsessed with the notion of appropriating agricultural methods and technologies that were handed down from 'historical times' to contemporary Malaccans via unnamed colonizers and pioneers of the *sawah*.[131] A significant portion of Muhammad Jaafar's discussion is devoted to the pious Malaccan reaping method of clipping rice with the *tuai* (tiny reaping knife concealable in the palm of a hand) without threshing, so as to ensure that the delicate *semangat padi* (vital force or soul of rice) was undisturbed by the sight of the reaping blade. While the planters the *munshi* observed appeared fully conscious of the *tuai* technology taking considerably longer periods vis-à-vis threshing, its adoption connected contemporary agricultural operations to the 'pious' customs of the historical ancients and supernatural adepts who had selected the rice soul-friendly technology, and made socioeconomic sense since the recent appropriation of threshing in certain parts of Malacca had resulted in lesser crop yields.[132] Whilst the epistle contains no data of yields, such a reference to an impious turn was in all probability, revelatory of the supernatural terms in which Malaccan *sawah* cultivators grappled with the fact that from 1817 to 1887, the supply of rice for local consumption drastically decreased from 'almost all' to a mere 'three month's supply' in spite of extensions, drainage works and superior tillage of buffalo ploughs.[133]

Providing a reader an insight into Malaccan rice worlds that were hallowed by religio-historical tradition, Muhammad Jaafar's 1893 epistle is further informative about the image of *pawang*s and their technological or supernatural expertise within these socioeconomic stratums. Indeed, the *munshi* devotes a section of his epistle towards exposing the predominant tradition in Malaccan *sawah* worlds, apparently inherited from the pious ancients, of venerating the *pawang* as an indispensable functioning in agricultural operations. This is evident in the data the epistle furnishes pertaining to

[131] Muhammad Jaafar, '*Darihal Pkerja'an Bersawah di Malaka'*, 285-286.
[132] Muhammad Jaafar, '*Darihal Pkerja'an Bersawah di Malaka'*, 285-286, 300-304.
[133] *Singapore Free Press*: 30.8.1887; 18.1.1849; 21.8.1856; Hill, *Rice in Malaya*, 122.

*pawang*s in Malacca being esteemed authorities in centers of permanent *sawah* due to their expertise of specifying dates and seasons for planting, reading *mauluds* (prayers invoking prophets) over 'mother seeds' and facilitating the transplanting of nurseries, providing necessary supernatural articles for intricate sites and stages of the *sawah*, instructing the use of religiously 'legal technology' for rice production, organizing the reaping of grain, stipulating the pious method of reaping, and transmitting a range of 'authoritative comments', 'legal opinions' and 'customary prohibitions' that 'guarded the *sawah* rice' and expelled its destructive 'adversaries' which included larvae, rats and swine.

Beyond this 1893 *khaus*, there are three late 19th century unpublished epistles that were transcribed by Muhammad Jaafar (as a 30 January 1891 note suggests), currently housed at the Wellcome Library in a folder *Malay 3D*, that are telling about the religio-historical sensibilities of planters and the expertise of *pawang*s within the *sawah* worlds of Naning. These epistles appear to have been produced in response to the Resident Councillor, Malacca, Hervey's inquiry into a 'well-attended' buffalo fight at Semabok, Naning, on 14 June 1890, a religious carnival conducted after reaping when 'the round rice-bin of bark had been fully completed'.[134] The first of these epistles is untitled, containing Muhammad Jaafar's dedication of the transcription to 'the honorable the *tuan* by the servant of the *tuan*', and is revelatory about the popular perception of *pawang*s in Malaccan wet rice worlds as being necessary intermediaries of buffaloes which were 'actually' supernatural beasts originating from the demon *jembalang* (the gnome that damages rice crops). While this epistle seems to assume the reader's knowledge of the direct connection between fights of these demonic beasts and *mukim*s 'having the most successful padi crop', it contains sufficient detail on how the carnival at Semabok was an opportunity to display *pawang*s' esoteric expertise to buffalo-employing *sawah* cultivators

[134] WL Malay Folder 3D. *Buffalo-Fighting and Other Ceremonies Connected with Padi-Planting,* (1890-1891). Transcribed by Muhammad Jaafar.

who in turn, witnessed fighter buffaloes being '*pawang*-ed ['*pawang*' is also used as a verb here]' with talismans, amulets, charms, chant-filled concoctions, instructed directions to face and perfect supernatural *saats* (moments) and supernatural fortune.[135]

Muhammad Jaafar's second epistle, entitled *Inilah Asal Katurunan Berlaga Kerbau* (*Herein lies the Origin and Descent of the Buffalo Fight*), traces the historical sensibility of relying upon buffalo *pawangs* in *sawah* worlds to a religious tradition established by a noble son of 'the raja who protects the four corners of the world' (possibly, the Mesopotamian Naramsin, d. 2218 BCE) who employed the '*pawang* of the buffalo' to '*pawang*-fy a [mere] calf into an effective beast'.[136] Whilst the *munshi*'s epistle is clear about the received religious wisdom among wet rice producers regarding the *pawang* being an esoteric adept of mobilizing beasts, gaming, hunting and steelwork, it is regrettable that it contains little detail about how such a 'popular myth' had been circulated in the Minangkabau rice worlds of Malacca and the connection between the *pawang*-instructed upwards stabbing stroke (*rembas*) and the agricultural instrument or light hoe of the same name.[137] The third epistle of *Malay 3D* is entitled *Fasal Melaga Kerbau* (*The Chapter on the Buffalo Fight*) and appears to be the most informative of the collection in terms of its emphasis upon the fact that food producers in Naning were preoccupied with agricultural rites and religious customs that were handed down from 'historical times' via unnamed colonizers or pioneers of the *sawah* and supernatural adepts, such as the conduct of a 'buffalo fight in the *sawah* … after having completed the reaping of the padi'.[138] Moreover, if we closely read this *Fasal*, the *munshi*'s informants appear to subscribe to a notion of the ceremony-presiding *pawang* being an agency necessary in

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135 WL Malay Folder 3D. *Buffalo-Fighting and Other Ceremonies Connected with Padi-Planting.* See untitled epistle '*khaus* [to] the honorable the *tuan*, by the slave of the *tuan*'.

136 WL Malay Folder 3D. *Buffalo-Fighting and Other Ceremonies Connected with Padi-Planting.* See *Inilah asal katurunan berlaga kerbau.*

137 For a mention of buffalo/bull strokes being associated with agricultural instruments, refer to C. C. Brown, 'Kelantan Bull Fighting', *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 74:1, (1928), 75.

138 WL Malay Folder 3D. *Buffalo-Fighting and Other Ceremonies Connected with Padi-Planting.* See *Fasal Melaga Kerbau.*

*sawah*s to 'throw off' the transhistorical padi disease (termed as *kunun* or 'of the past even in the present') and protect the produce of the *sawah* from predatory *benah* (insect rice pests, Nephotettix bipunctata) and rats. Whilst this epistle contains no data on specific pest attacks, Muhammad Jaafar's mention of the association that Malay subalterns made between the lesser attention paid to *pawang* ceremonies in the past 'fifteen sixteen years', and padi being more prone to predatory pests since, might be illustrative of the religious terms in which cultivators grappled with the fact that Malaccan *sawah*s were peculiarly prone to locust attacks and susceptible to cattle disease and the loss of traction.[139]

Like the munshi Muhammad Jaafar's epistles, the scholar-administrator Blagden's notes on *pawang*s, *keramat*s (miracle working shrines and saints) and customary rice economies provide socioeconomic historians valuable information regarding the religio-historical sensibilities of rice producers and the miraculous intermediaries of agricultural operations in late 19th century Malacca. These notes, compiled in four separate 'Books', appear to have been produced throughout 1892 and 1895 and largely comprise of Blagden's transcriptions of data and worldviews transmitted by Malay Muslim middlemen or informants. While there is little in these notes to inform us about the identities of Blagden's largely unnamed informants, there is ample evidence in these collections to suggest that their transmitted religious and socioeconomic views were reflective of a historical sensibility among socioeconomic circles in Malacca wherein contemporary work in the *sawah* was associated with the lives of historical saints which 'served as metaphors for the expansion of both religion and agriculture'. Indeed, while Muhammad Jaafar's epistles are largely silent about the pious 'ancients', Blagden's notes provide a list of historical pioneers in Naning who had attained the stature of *keramat*s by the late 19th century and were percived as exemplars of religion and methods of cultivation within *sawah* worlds. This list of *keramat*s includes the pioneer colonizer of

[139] See Hill, *Rice in Malaya*, 125.

Jasin, To Nara bin To Moget, whose mausoleum stood as a historical reminder of primordial Muslim colonization adjacent to the Jasin District Office; the *busut* (anthill or earth mound) of the tiger-attended pioneer colonizer of Suluk, Kelemak, the *keramat* Dato Lebai; the *busut* of the pioneer forest clearer and settler at the forested frontier of Kelemak; the *busut* of a pioneer of the Minangkabau colonizer clan, Suku Semelenggang, Dato Mengkudun at Pegoh; the relics of the pioneer settler of Kuala Pondoi, To' Pondoi; and, 'the most celebrated of the Malacca *keramat*s' and pioneer colonizer of Machap, Dato Machap.[140]

Beyond this extensive list of historical models of rice agriculture and religion, Blagden's *Notes* provide us significant detail on late 19th century rice worlds wherein rice was approached as a religious and supernatural product valued for nutritional sustenance, as revealed by saintly pioneers, rather than a commodity of exchange. Indeed, the scholar-administrator's observations and records of transmissions at the *mukim*s of Kesong, Bukit Senggeh, Rim, Bukit Nyalas and Sebatu, are telling of food producers being obsessed, even at times of occasional surplus, with mirroring the religion of the ancients through abiding to the specific prices (3 cents per *gantang*, a measure of rice equivalent to 3.125 kg) of padi and *beras* (raw husked rice) reputedly 'fixed' by the historical saintly pioneers.[141] We also find evidence of such a religio-historical sensibility in the pages of the 1892 *Malacca Agricultural Report* that accentuates that it was 'customary' of *sawah* producers in the interior of Jasin, Naning, to ignore rice's 'value in exchange', and choose to store surpluses in the event of good crop instead of sale, and be 'subject to

[140] SOAS MS 297484. C. O. Blagden, 'Superstitions', in *Notes on Matters Connected with the Malay Peninsula and Far East*, Book III (1893).; also see J. Balestier, 'View of the State of Agriculture in the British Possessions in the Straits of Malacca', *Journal of the Indian Archipelago*, 2 (1848), 144.
[141] SOAS MS 297483. C. O. Blagden, 'Customary Prices', in *Notes on Matters Connected with Malacca and the Malay Peninsula*, Book I (1892).

a convention or customary price … of 3 cents only' vis-à-vis the 'market price of *padi* being 5 to 7 cents a gantang'.[142]

Beyond providing a reader an insight into Malaccan rice worlds that were hallowed by religion, three sections of Blagden's *Notes* on '*Pawang*', '*Kramat*' and '*Kramats* in and near Alor Gajah', are particularly informative about the image of *pawang*s or *keramat*s (the term used by Blagden to refer to physically dead *pawang*s) and their technological or supernatural expertise within the wet rice worlds of Naning. Indeed, the data of his informants in Naning led Blagden, by 1892, to define the '*Pawang*' as a simultaneously supernatural and technological adept, an 'indispensable functioning in a Malay village; e. p. at sowing, reaping, irrigation works, clearing jungle for planting and other agricultural operations'.[143] Moreover, Blagden's sections on '*Kramat*s' serve as windows into the indispensable esoteric and material expertise of an extensive list of 'dead' *pawang*s within contemporary food producing stratums, which includes a prophetic tree-based *kramat jinn* (miracle-working shrine of a *jinn*) in Bukit Kepoh, Rim, who determined the health of padi seasons through the trunk's swelling; a prophetic, tiger-attended yellow-draped hajji, Dato Durian Daun, who intervened in transplanting nurseries for audiences at his *busut*; a prophetic *kramat jinn* at Bukit Sanggong who intermediated sowing for devotees at his *busut*; an *orang bumian kramat* or aboriginal saint who was posthumously reconstructed into a 'Muslim' miracle-worker, based at Bukit Berjulang who demanded offerings to facilitate reaping; an exceptional *sawah* master, Dato Paya Dua, whose *busut* at Pegah itself miraculously 'branched off two *chabang*s [forks] of *sawah*'; and, the time-traveling and tiger-riding *kramat jinn* in Bukit Nyalas, Nakhoda Hussein, who had been the associate of the pioneer settler of the colony and

[142] Cited from Hill, *Rice in Malaya*, 137-138; Gullick, 'The Negri Sembilan Economy of the 1890s', 46; also see T. Bradell's observations of Tanka Malays in 'Notes of a Trip to the Interior from Malacca', *Journal of the Indian Archipeligo,* 7, (1853), 82.
[143] SOAS MS 297483. C. O. Blagden, 'Pawang', in *Notes on Matters Connected with Malacca and the Malay Peninsula*, Book I (1892).

remained through his shrine, the 'presiding genius' of the colony, averting droughts and propitiating streams and waters for irrigation.[144]

Whilst scholars of Malayan socioeconomic history have neglected the serious historical value of the subjective genre of sources that Blagden's notes comprise of, they provide historians a conduit into both patterns of cultivation in Naning and authentic voices of *pawang*s' subaltern clients. For instance, upon closely reading the *Notes*' discussion of *keramats*, and comparing these to extant 19th century scholar-administrators' and missionaries' records, one finds remarkable evidence of a general pattern of a peculiar form of cultivation in late 19th century Naning that consisted of, firstly, extensive ricefields and active land development centred close to the Malacca town, and being largely the produce of the irrigated *sawah* rather than *ladang*. Secondly, steady expansions of the rice area, and the wild fluctuations of the 1880s, being accounted for in religious terms. Thirdly, rice agriculture and Islam being focussed on humble mosques, shrines, *busut*s, tomb or relic cults on the small insular knolls in the midst of *sawahs*.[145] Furthermore, in spite of Blagden's failure to elaborate upon the identity of his informants, the spectacular and awe-inspiring descriptions that they narrated regarding the *pawang*s of whom they were apparent clients, provide historians a way into hearing the authentic voices of the 'indignant and depressed peasantry' who suffered relatively low yields and was yet driven by a religious priority to 'find ten or twenty acres of marshy land for a paddy field', and ultimately, the 'very stuff of history, the categories and constructs with which people made their [rice] worlds'.[146] Indeed, the very 'rhetoric of factuality' in such narratives recorded by Blagden is evidence of uncertain socioeconomic

144 SOAS MS 297483. C. O. Blagden, 'Kramat', in *Notes on Matters Connected with Malacca and the Malay Peninsula*, Book I (1892); SOAS MS 297484. C. O. Blagden, 'Kramats in and near Alor Gajah, *Notes on Matters Connected with the Malay Peninsula*, Book II (1893).

145 Newbold, *Political and Statistical Account of the British Settlements*, 114-116, 119, 139-140; Hill, *Rice in Malaya*, 122; Alice, Lady Lovat, *The Life of Sir Frederick Weld: A Pioneer of Empire* (London: John Murrary, 1914) 278; Balestier, 'View of the State of Agriculture in the British Possessions in the Straits of Malacca', 144.

146 F. L. Baumgarten, 'Agriculture in Malacca', *Journal of the Indian Archipelago,* 3, (1849), 712; Newbold, *Political and Statistical Account of the British Settlements*, 115; Hill, *Rice in Malaya*, 123; White, *Speaking with Vampires*, 55.

progress and of dangers on agricultural frontiers that caused pioneers and cultivators, even in the face of officials of the Straits Settlements Civil Service and District Officers, to place their faith in the 'blessed flesh and bone of the saints' located near the Malacca town.[147]

The aforementioned manuscript materials pertaining to rice worlds in late 19th century Malacca provide facets of data regarding networks and factors that sustained the careers of rice *pawang*s in the Malay state. Like the aforementioned source materials from Negri Sembilan, the literature produced by Muhammad Jaafar and Blagden only allows us to draw the inference that the supernatural careers of 'living' and 'dead' *pawang*s were intimately connected to the abundance of land in the historical and contemporary Malay state, allowing permanent wet rice cultivation by forest pioneers who were in turn, dependent upon the services and supernatural powers of *pawang*s., and a semi-monetized economy of landholding and production that helped perpetuate an image of rice as a religious product rather than a commodity of exchange, while ensuring the *pawang* non-monetized or semi-monetized customary religious remunerations upon successful agricultural operations.[148] In these Malaccan materials, we also find evidence of rice *pawang*s being plugged into 'indigenous' and transcultural webs of patronage within and beyond the frontiers of the *sawah*s of Naning. On the one hand, the aforementioned epistle on the *pawang*'s intermediation of demonic buffaloes and a complaint memo produced by the Acting Superintendent, Police Office Malacca for the Resident-Councillor, attached to *Malay 3D*, are telling about the careers of *pawang*s and their ceremonies in Naning being headed by indigenous dignitaries including the headman (*penghulu*) Kasim, the creole Kedahnese-Malaccan 'Yam Tuan Kedah' (title for the Sultan)

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147 Cited from Nile Green, *Bombay Islam: The Religious Economy of the West Indian Ocean, 1840-1915*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 116.
148 Peletz, *A Share of the Harvest: Kinship, Property and Social History Among the Malays of Rembau*, 113-114, 273, 320; Abdullah, 'Mandi Ayer Gawar', 214.

and the 'Corporal No. 20 Sunan'.[149] Similarly, Blagden's ethnographic notes on an 1893 *berpuar*-like ceremony in Sebatu for the 'Propitiation of the Padi God' in Book III, introduce readers to sophisticated socioeconomic worlds wherein *penghulu*s pressured District Officers to legalize the customary religious prices established by the *pawang* and wherein prominent personages combined roles as *pawang*s, *penghulu*s and imams.[150] On the other hand, while suffering from a lack of elaboration, Blagden's *Notes* contain numerous mentions of 'dead' *pawang*s (or their tomb cults) in the *sawah* being plugged into sophisticated networks that incorporated actors from the non-food producing sectors of Malayan society including promotion-seeking Indian sepoys, generous gift-giving Klings (Tamil Muslims) and Straits Chinese merchants from Singapore, and Anglo-Malay legal authorities who employed *keramat*s to crack 'hardened liars'.[151] Furthermore, whilst the materials produced by Muhammad Jaafar and Blagden are evidence of transcultural collaborations that transpired into written records of *pawangs*, two 1890 memos attached by Hervey to *Malay 3D* are exceptionally revelatory of the nature of scholarly collaborations in the service of the Malaccan rice *pawang*. These memos, responses to the aforementioned complaint memo by the Acting Superintendent who assured the Resident-Councillor that 'action was being taken … [against] the Offending Parties' who patronized the *pawang*-directed buffalo fight at Semabok, seem solely concerned about mobilizing the Police Office towards 'obtaining a full account [of the *pawang*-presided carnival] in Malay … and any similar customs connected with padi-planting' at the expense of employing the 'Offending Parties' (*pawang*'s patrons) as middlemen![152]

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149 WL Malay Folder 3D. *Buffalo-Fighting and Other Ceremonies Connected with Padi-Planting*. See the attached memo - Acting Superintendent of Police, '[Memo] No. 131/90', (18 June 1890).

150 SOAS MS 297484. C. O. Blagden, 'Propitiation of the Padi God', in *Notes on Matters Connected with the Malay Peninsula and Far East*, Book III (1893).

151 Also see J. R. Logan, 'Five Days in Naning, with a walk to the foot of Gunong Datu in Rambau', *Journal of the Indian Archipelago, 3,* (1849); Skeat, *Malay Magic*, 64.

152 WL Malay Folder 3D. *Buffalo-Fighting and Other Ceremonies Connected with Padi-Planting*. See the attached memos - Acting Superintendent, '[Memo] No. 131/90'; and Hervey, '[Memo commencing with] Please obtain a full account' (19 June 1890).

Miraculous Expertise: *Pawangs* on the Agricultural Frontiers of Malacca and Negri Sembilan

> The cold, mystic, melancholy aspect of the plain, which fancy might now people with the Hantus and other aerial beings who yet live in Malayan superstitions.
>
> - J. R. Logan, 'Five Days in Naning', 1847.

This sardonic comment of the editor of the *Penang Gazette* and English ethnologist was one recorded in February 1847 en route to the interior of Naning from the Tankerah road, and targeted at the 'superstitious care' Malay Muslims in Naning and Rembau had undertaken to people the hazardous forested frontiers of the Peninsula's interior with a range of 'aerial beings' including *hantu*s, *shetan*, Muslim and non-Muslim *jinns*, and Muslim prophets and supernatural beings.[153] Logan's notes on his 'walk' from the small-town worlds of Tanjung Kling, into the forested interior of Naning and thereon to the foot of Gunung Datu in Rembau, also contain numerous references to the fact that the 'tombs of Malayan saints … [were] preserved with superstitious care' probably due to the prevalent belief that these saints were indispensable intermediaries of simultaneously agricultural and supernatural frontiers. Unfortunately, the ethnologist's notes express more of his frustrations at being denied access to Muslim terrains 'guarded' by supernatural powers than a scholarly interest to explore such supernatural powers. The preceding section focused upon the religio-historical sensibilities of dry and wet rice producers and the centrality of 'the Malayan saints' or *pawang*s to agricultural operations upon the forested interior of Malacca and Negri Sembilan. This section shifts the focus of the chapter from rice worlds to the miraculous powers or expertise of *pawang*s or 'Malayan saints' whose supernatural careers revolved around their intermediation and control of simultaneously agricultural and supernatural frontiers of the interior.

[153] Logan, 'Five Days in Naning', 3, 24-41, 278-287, 402-412, 489-493.

Miraculous Expertise and Pawang-ic Negotiations with Spiritual Forests

Historians of rice in Malaya are still struggling to determine the extent of forests in the interior of the Peninsula by the late 19th century and the impact such frontiers had upon the organization of Malay socioeconomic life.[154] Relying on late 19th century *Agricultural Reports*, Gullick has concluded that even by the 1890s, the intermediation of jungles was the key socioeconomic activity in Malay states such as Negri Sembilan wherein only 100, 000 out of 1, 600, 000 acres of interior land had been transformed to ricefields.[155] Indeed, the transcriptions of Negri Sembilan traditions by Newbold and the Superintendent of Census, J. E. Nathan, at Lingie, Sungei Ujong and Raub, Ulu Pahang respectively, are informative about how the socioeconomic worlds of early 19th century forest pioneers and *ladang* pushers pivoted upon sophisticated mediations with eclectic *hantu*s who 'actually' represented the forest frontiers of the interior and determined both the success of intricate agricultural operations and the lives and deaths of forest pioneers.[156]

Beyond these published records that suffer from brevity, there is an unpublished, exceptionally rich document of the socioeconomic stratums of forest and *ladang* pioneers, a Malay compendium of demonologies and the technological expertise of talisman-bearing and demonology-knowing *pawangs*, the *Cherita Hantu Shetan* (*Narrations Concerning the Demons and Armies of Iblis*). Transcribed in 1885 by the *munshi* Muhammad Jaafar for 'the honorable the *tuan Besar*' (probably, a reference to the Resident-Councillor), and housed as *Malay 3B* at the Wellcome Library, *Cherita Hantu Shetan* contains an introductory note by its scribe, specifying that it was orally transmitted by a peripatetic expert or intermediary of forested frontiers, the *pawang* Pendekar Jamain from the Ulu Muar in Kuala Pilah, Negri Sembilan who was present in the interior of Chin Chin,

154 For instance, see Lim, *Peasants and the Agricultural Economy,* 52-67.
155 Gullick, 'The Negri Sembilan Economy of the 1890s', 39.
156 Newbold, *Political and Statistical Account of the British Settlements*, 110-111; J. E. Nathan, 'A Malay Ghost Story', *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 67, (1914), 89-93.

Naning in November 1885. Furthermore, that while the *munshi* specified that he had reproduced the 'precise nature of the oral narrations … without concealing a figment', it was plausible that these narrations had been intentionally restricted in content by the transmitter-*pawang* since the expertise of penetrating the 'residing places of *hantu shetan*' was an esoteric science and one directed by the *petua* (fatwas) of elder *pawang*s such as Pendekar's guru gained through intimate contact.[157]

Ultimately, *Cherita Hantu Shetan* is a detailed record of four key *hantus* that appear to have inhabited the forested frontiers of Malacca and Negri Sembilan. These demons include, firstly, the resident of ravine valleys, the forest *Polong*, which darted into human bodies in the interior as green grasshoppers. Secondly, the red snake-appearing resident of the timber of forests, *Penanggalan*, which sucked the blood of pregnant women and fetuses. Thirdly, the venomous resident of tall forest trees, *Hantu Pemburu* (Demon of the Hunter) whose demonology, as narrated by *pawang* Pendekar, traced his transmogrification from a Sumatran human trespasser of the interior overwhelmed by growth and creepers into a *hantu*, and as such, seemed to contain a warning for aspirant colonizers of the interior to employ the mandatory services of supernatural experts. Fourthly, the bloodsucking *Pontianak* which, according to Newbold's 1836 account of Naning, was the prime 'haunter' of the forests of the Minangkabau lands of Malacca and Negri Sembilan.[158] Pendekar Jamain's *Cherita Hantu Shetan* serves as an important historical record in terms of how it serves as a window into how forest clearing operations of late 19th century colonizers in Kuala Pilah and Naning which were disturbed by the overwhelming presence of *hantu*s such as the *Pontianak* that resided throughout the interior in the intimate segments of rocks and trees, appeared deceivingly

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[157] WL Malay 3B. *Cherita Hantu Shetan.* Muhammad Jaafar, '[Note commencing with] *yang dihormat tuan Besar*' (26 November 1885).

[158] WL Malay 3B. *Cherita Hantu Shetan.* See sections on the '*Pontianak'*, '*Polong'*, '*Penanggalan'* and *Hantu Pemburu'*; also refer to Newbold, 'Account of Naning'; Newbold, *Political and Statistical Account of the British Settlements*, 191.

enticing to sexually vulnerable male colonizers, and 'undertook the task of torturing human beings, delivering illnesses to penetrators of the forest or bushes' through 'running into … and locking its teeth' in their human bodies.[159]

Emphasizing the 'reality of the matter' that such agricultural frontiers, overwhelmed by the *Pontianak*, were inaccessible without the *pawang*'s powers of intercession, Pendekar Jamain narrated the '*inilah tangkalnya atau tawar*' (herein lies the talisman or miraculous remedy) to the *munshi*, that would allow forest clearing operations to proceed. This '*tangkalnya atau tawar*' is a specialized ritual of communication that the *pawang* undertook with the *Pontianak* wherein the *pawang* repeatedly boasted his esoteric knowledge of the bloodsucker's embarrassing semi-Islamized genesis from a 'drop of [Muhammad's daughter] Fatimah's first menstrual blood' that was stolen by Iblis, and esoteric powers of curing any victim of the demon through miraculous concoctions. Having belittled the demon, the *pawang*'s '*tangkalnya atau tawar*' summoned the '*anak* [dependent, upon the *pawang*] *Pontianak*' through a polite formula for non-Muslim or semi-Islamized supernatural beings ('*hong*'), and through a threat that the *pawang* was 'bringing the *parang* [cleaver, timber-knife] that was not going to be disgorged briefly [and] the *kerah* [conscripts-laborers] with the longer and shorter versions of *sumpitan* [bamboo blowpipes shooting poisonous darts]' into the interior.

Pendekar Jamain's narrations that are didactically driven towards producing a record of the *pawang*'s expertise on the frontier provide little specification of both the social worlds of forest clearers or the nature of *kerah* employed for forest clearing. Nevertheless, it is possible to draw inferences that the *kerah*, often a term used by historians of Malaya to depict Muslim debt-bondsmen exclusively, included both

[159] WL Malay 3B. *Cherita Hantu Shetan*. See sections on the *'Pontianak'*, *'Polong'*, *'Penanggalan'* and *Hantu Pemburu'*. I am grateful to the contemporary *bomors*, Muhammad Hashim, Muhammad A. Ridhwan and Hajji Abdul Kadir for their clarifications that the *Pontianak* is still feared in the Malaysian interior as a deceivingly enticing demon that 'locked its teeth' into the bodies of male penetrators of the forest, and was intermediated through miracle-workers.

aboriginal and Habshi slaves. On the one hand, this appears to be suggested in the *pawang*'s emphasis on the *sumpitan* and its materials; this could be either revelatory of the *pawang*'s expertise of the *tuju* or ritual of slaughtering enemies with the miraculous weapon associated with aboriginal horticulturalists or the fact that the *sumpitan*-bearing *kerah* consisted of aboriginal horticulturalists of Jakun or related stock. On the other hand, Pendekar Jamain's physical description of the deceptively attractive *Pontianak* as having an 'ugly', 'Negroid' mien with Negroid hair' in reality, could either be a reflection of the social composition of the Habshi *kerah* or be in line with the popular Malayan notion of the 'Habshis of Africa being residents of the *hulu*' that was circulated in charms for forest-residing *Zanggi* (Habshi) spirits, some of which are discussed in the following chapter, and *Boriah* (Muharram bands') songs.[160] Beyond the composition of the social worlds of forest clearers, texts such as *Cherita Hantu Shetan* furnish valuable data on the 'very stuff of history', the supernatural 'categories and constructs' forest pioneers employed in the late 19th century to make their agricultural frontiers and in turn, compelled them to rely upon *pawang*s who served as intercessors between these frontiers and the small-town worlds of pioneers and laborers.

Another compendium that serves as a resource into these supernaturally-imagined frontiers and the role of miraculous expertise in intermediating frontiers, in the fashion of the *Cherita Hantu Shetan*, is an untitled manuscript housed as *Malay 3A* at the Wellcome Library which contains a header, '*Malay Demonology and Charms*'. Unfortunately, *Malay 3A* appears to lack any mention of its provenance, scribe and transmitter-*pawang*, and one is left to assume from its handwriting that Hervey was its scribe and that its transcription occurred in Hervey's research areas, late 19th century Malacca and Negri Sembilan. In spite of this lack of detail on its provenance, the manuscript appears to be

160 WL Malay 3B. *Cherita Hantu Shetan*. See 'Pontianak'; R. A. W. Hamilton, 'The Boria', *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 82 (1920), 142-143.

particularly informative about socioeconomic stratums wherein forests were perceived as being replete with demons and as agricultural frontiers to be transformed into ricefields through miraculous *tawars* (miraculous remedies), *chincas* (spells to silent or confuse), *tangkals* (talismans), esoteric knowledge of demonologies and moral violence. This is particularly apparent in how *Malay 3A* introduces its readers to agricultural frontiers that had been made inaccessible by fourteen *hantus*. These demons include the dysentery-causing *hantu bandan* (demon of the waterfall) that operated through dead forest animals; the *hantu* Iblis that caused severe vomiting upon penetrators of forests; the *hantu mati anak* (demon causing the death of children) that 'enfevered' the 'rice child' of mud fields trampled and made soft for rice planting by buffaloes, extensive wet rice fields and side valleys; the perennial pest of frontiers, the supernatural snake that threatened the *semangat padi* (vital force of rice); and, the fatalistic *hantu ribut* that, according to Newbold's 1836 account of 'Superstitions', was a 'storm fiend and resides in the whirlwind'.[161]

According to *Malay 3A*, the forest pioneer's penetration of such spiritually inaccessible frontiers and agricultural operations from forest clearing to wet rice production, were dependent on the prototypical supernatural adept who ferried into the agrarian frontier a range of talismans, demonologies and miraculous remedies. These included the *tawar* that compelled the *hantu bandan* into performing a submissive, ecstatic dance; the embarrassing demonology of the *hantu Iblis* which traced his origin to the 'urine of *wali*s' and the *tawar* for the 'piss-like' demon's victims; the *tawar* that expelled the *hantu mati anak* and confined it to the netherworld, leaving the ricefield under the 'command of the *tawar*'; the *tawar* that returned the predatory snake to its 'Maker' and cured its victims, with a *chinca* that repelled the reptile from the vital force of rice; and, a *tangkal* for the *hantu ribut* that reminded the demon of the fact that the miracle-working

[161] WL Malay 3A. [Malay Demonology and Charms]. Refer to sections '*Hantu Bandan*', '*Hantu Iblis*', '*Hantu Mati Anak*' and '*Chincha*'; also see Newbold, *Political and Statistical Account of the British Settlements*, 191-192.

'guru was the huger demon of the storm' and possessed the powers of 'knifing' the demon. Whilst the transmissions recorded in *Malay 3A* make no explicit mention of the precise socioeconomic worlds they were catered towards, a close reading of the internal dynamics of the aforementioned list of demons and miraculous expertise of the archetypal *pawang* or guru, is revelatory of striking references to a form of *paya* and *sawah* agriculture that, on the one hand, employed buffalo ploughing and puddling and in probability, suggested the text's Malaccan origin. On the other hand, was solely reliant on adequate rains, implying cultivation upon lands characterized by heavy clay soils of the gentle gradient valley plains in need of lesser irrigation.

The miraculous expertise of *pawangs* or gurus on the frontier was not simply limited to combating hazardous non-Muslim or semi-Islamized *hantu*s, and involved collaborations and friendships with supernatural beings that were mobilized for intricate agricultural operations. According to an early 20th century pamphlet on the *Akuan* (spirit-friends) produced by the reformist scholar Zainal Abidin bin Ahmad, *pawang*s were 'much sought after personages' in the subaltern socioeconomic worlds of Negri Sembilan due to their being 'credited with the possession of the spirit-friends [who were] good and serviceable auxiliaries' for agricultural operations.[162] Indeed, the aforementioned epistle by the *pawang* Abdullah Pillai of Rembau contains a number of references to the fact that the upstream interior (*hulu*) comprised of both malevolent spirits and 'friendly' supernatural beings that could be collaborated with in agricultural projects, and to the fact that the '*pawang* of provenance' Muhammad Saleh expanded agricultural frontiers through terrifying away malevolent *hantu*s and *shetan* via *berpuar* and befriending beneficial *jinn* and *shetan* through instructing buffalo sacrifice.[163] Similarly, *Malay 3A* concludes with a transcription of a '*Padi Planting Charm*' that is illustrative of socioeconomic stratums

[162] Zainal Abidin, 'The *Akuan* or Spirit Friends', *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 86 (1922), 378-384.
[163] LKCRL NL 24114. Abdullah Pillai *Darihal Pawang* (*Of that concerning the Pawang*), 1922. Jawi Microfilm Collection, (1922).

wherein forests were perceived as being replete with both demons and 'friendly' Muslim or semi-Islamized supernatural beings that could be mobilized for rice production through the miracle-worker's charm. In this charm, successful agricultural operation is associated with the supernatural adept's, firstly, oath of friendship with the *Sri genum*, which was a supernatural 'fruit of the tree formerly planted by the ancients in the midst of then padi' that circumvallated the seven oceans twice in a week. Secondly, friendly dedications of 'direct, unadulterated seeds' to the *Sri genum* and matured seeds to the unnamed time-traveling and weather-determining '*pawangs* who guarded the four corners of the world'. Thirdly, friendly exactions from the 'bachelor spirits who supervise the opening of blossoms and quantities of padi'.[164] Whilst containing no direct reference to the type of cultivation that the supernatural expert's 'friendships' facilitated, the mentions of 'direct, unadulterated seeds' and weather-determining *pawang*s seem to imply that the charm was directed an audience of aspiring rice producers who planned to directly dibble or transplant seeds or nurseries into common upland arable lands without artificial irrigation that were dependent upon rainfall.

An exceptionally detailed record of a specific type of cultivation being spearheaded by the *pawang*s' 'friendships' with Muslim or semi-Islamized prophets, sheikhs and *dato*s on forested frontiers who could be mobilized for *ladang* production, is found in the narration of Pendekar Jamain that concludes the *Cherita Hantu Shetan*. This is the narration entitled '*Pawang Tanah*' (*Pawang* of the Land) that provides readers an insight into socioeconomic worlds wherein forest clearing operations for the *ladang* from site selection to the felling of timber were dependent upon the '*petua* [fatwa of the] *pawang*', defined as an assembly of three esoteric rituals of communication undertaken by the *pawang* to propitiate *ladang*-pushing supernatural beings.[165] The first of these rituals of

[164] WL Malay 3A. [Malay Demonology and Charms]. Refer to 'Padi Planting Charm.'
[165] WL Malay 3B. *Cherita Hantu Shetan*. See '*Pawang Tanah*'.

communication involved the pedological adept, the *pawang*, selecting an appropriate forested site and invoking the Muslim 'holder of the land' and spirit-friend, Nabi Tap, for permission to 'establish a *ladang* stretching numerous *depa* [a measure of approximately six feet] of land', and for his friendly services of 'making the *hantu shetan* retreat and refraining from destructing and tyrannizing the dependent-laborers'. This image of *Nabi Tap yang memegang bumi* (*Nabi Tap who holds the land*) as a spirit-friend, conveyed by Pendekar Jamain and circulated through socioeconomic stratums he was employed within, was also one popular within the Minangkabau rice worlds of Kuala Langat, Selangor wherein the prophet was mobilized by *pawang*s for site selection, combating demons, sowing and the collection of the 'rice soul', as the 1897 observation notes of the English ethnographer Skeat reveal.[166]

The second of these rituals of communication entails the *pawang* conjuring the four 'personages who hold the forest' (who are identifiably non-Muslim or semi-Islamized through the polite formula of *hai* instead of *assalamualaikum*), 'the honorable sheikh in chivalry', 'the honorable sheikh in the forest', 'the *dato* of beasts' and 'the head *dato* of the divan'. These sheikhs and *dato*s, whose appearances and residences appear to be exclusively visible to the esoteric eye of the *pawang*, were requested by the *pawang* to refrain from 'destructing and tyrannizing the dependent-laborers in the *ladang* site' and to 'ensure the [forthcoming agricultural operations] of making holes for seeds through dibbling and direct planting proceed on excellent terms'. The final ritual of communication involved the *pawang* invoking the Muslim 'prophet who holds timber', Nabi Ilyas, as a spirit-friend who was appealed to, to 'refrain from destructing and tyrannizing the dependent-laborers' and allow the *pawang* to 'conquer and fell a stem of timber of the frontier'. As Pendekar concludes, it only after these friendly exchanges of invocations and the *pawang*'s commencement of forest clearing that frontiersmen or

166 W. W. Skeat, 'Some Records of Malay Magic by an Eye-Witness', 4; Skeat, *Malay Magic*, 238-239.

laborers were able to commence upon the 'felling of all the timber'. Ultimately, the '*Pawang Tanah*' serves as a valuable historical record of socioeconomic settings in late 19th century Naning and Kuala Pilah wherein dangerous operations associated with the transformation of forested lands into dry hill clearings were particularly dependent upon *pawang*s' intercession with supernatural beings of both demonic and 'friendly' stock who were in turn, capable of 'destructing and tyrannizing dependent-laborers' in the *ladang*. Furthermore, the narration is an accurate reflection of agrarian frontiers whereupon the careers of *pawang*s such as Pendekar Jamain were based on their intermediation of hazardous forests and the small-town worlds of pioneers and laborers through their supernatural rituals of communication and miraculous expertise of conjuring frontier-based spirits.

Planting as a Religious Rite: Miraculous Expertise in Production and Reaping

Complementing the *Cherita Hantu Shetan* and *Malay 3A* in terms of its rich descriptions of Malayan socioeconomic worlds that were dependent upon miraculous expertise for the intermediation and control of simultaneously agricultural and supernatural frontiers, is a Jawi text entitled *Surat Fasal Pertahunan Artinya Bertanam* (*The Epistolary Chapter Concerning the Pertahunan [Religious Rite] that Means Planting*).[167] Housed as *Malay 1* at the Wellcome Library, the *Surat Fasal Pertahunan* contains little detail regarding the transmitter and scribe of the manuscript or the context of its transcription beyond a note suggesting that the text was acquired upon the 'fourth of December 1890'. However, we find a replica Jawi transcription of the *Surat Fasal Pertahunan* in Blagden's 1895 *Notes on Matters Connected with the Malay Peninsula and the Far East*, housed as *MS 297496* at the SOAS. Herein a memo by Blagden clarifies that the 1890 *Surat Fasal*

[167] WL Malay 1. *Surat Fasal Pertahunan Artinya Bertanam*; for a contemporary work on *pertahunan* in Negri Sembilan, see Norhalim Ibrahim, *Adat Berpuar dan Pertahunan*, (Seremban: Lembaga Muzium Negeri Sembilan, 2007).

Pertahunan was an original copy of a Jawi manuscript that Hervey had attained from the *Mata-mata* (policeman) 'Daud of Taboh Naning', Malacca, and a text completed by the '*tuan* Guru Hajji Abdul Kahar', a manifestation of the '*ma'na Kala*' (the gracious Siva the Destroyer), upon the Thursday night of 28 Shawwal 1202 (1 August 1788).[168] The notion of Abdul Kahar being the transmitter of the *Surat Fasal Pertahunan* appears to be confirmed by the fact that the *Malay 1* folder also contains a Jawi text of the guru, *Undang-Undang Minangkabau* (*The Laws of Minangkabau*), replicated in *MS 297496* as *Kitab Undang-Undang Keturunan tuan Guru Hajji Abdul Kahar* (*The Book of Laws as transmitted by the tuan Guru Hajji Abdul Kahar*). This *Kitab* is a manual of two customary Minangkabau law systems that were plausibly circulated by itinerant 'gurus traveling up to the frontiers of the *hulu*' in Malaya, and concludes with a display of the guru's esoteric expertise in a '*Surat Raksi* [Epistle of the Esoteric Astrological 'Star'] as revealed by *tuan* guru hajji Abdul Kahar'.[169] This *Surat Raksi* suggests, albeit briefly, that the customary legal worlds that Abdul Kahar catered to were ones wherein economic activities were organized by gurus' sophisticated astrological calculations.

It is the *Surat Fasal Pertahunan*, however, rather than the customary legal manual that provides historians valuable windows into socioeconomic worlds wherein the agricultural operations of planting, sowing and reaping were spearheaded by supernatural expertise. For instance, the *Raksi* transmitted by Abdul Kahar in the *Surat Fasal Pertahunan* provides a significantly detailed portrayal, colored with divination tables, of socioeconomic activities ranging from profitable or unprofitable labor in the ricefield, specifically constructive and damaging outcomes of planting, the attainment of *kuasa*s for

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168 SOAS MS 297496. Untitled transcription in Blagden C. O., in *Notes on Matters Connected with the Malay Peninsula and the Far East*, Book IV (1895).

169 WL Malay 1. Cited from Tuan hajji Abdul Kahar, *Undang-Undang Minangkabau.* Acquired 4th December 1890; SOAS MS 297496. Tuan hajji Abdul Kahar, '*Surat Raksi keturunan tuan guru hajji Abdul Kahar*' attached to *Undang-Undang Minangkabau*; 'Kitab Undang-Undang keturunan tuan guru hajji Abdul Kahar' in SOAS MS 297496. Blagden C. O., *Notes on Matters Connected with the Malay Peninsula and the Far East*, Book IV (1895).

colonization, the patronage of courtiers and the chieftain (*orang besar*), the pursuit of slaves, the expedient bearing of metallic tools, and the recovery of slaves and cattle at specific cardinal directions, to the collaboration or disruptions of supernatural beings on the frontier, being determined by the *takdir* (predestination) and 'meeting' of twelve *saat*s (supernatural moments). These *saat*s are referred to in the *Surat* as Ahmad, Jibrail, the 'extremely detrimental' Ibrahim, 'beneficial' Yusuf, 'extremely detrimental' Azrael, 'beneficial' *Shams* (Sun), 'beneficial' *Zahrah* (Venus), 'beneficial' *Utar* (Mercury), 'extremely beneficial' *Qamar* (Moon), *Zuhal* (Saturn), *Mushtari* (Jupiter) and *Marrikh* (Mars).[170] In spite of the fact that the *Surat Fasal Pertahunan* appears to have been transmitted in the late 18th century, Blagden's 1895 *Notes* and Skeat's aforementioned 1897 observation notes suggest that the text is a useful historical source of even late 19th century socioeconomic worlds wherein *pawang*s intermediating the agricultural and supernatural frontiers of Naning and Kuala Langat were reproducing the incantations and talismans of the guru Abdul Kahar with little variation.

The aforementioned narrations of *Cherita Hantu Shetan* and *Malay 3A* appear to be reflections of the attitudes of forest pioneers or clearers and aspiring rice producers. Nevertheless, the *Surat Fasal Pertahunan*, as its title suggests, is a record of supernatural frontiers that were witnessing secondary agricultural operations beyond forest clearing, and the necessary miraculous expertise of interceding with resident supernatural beings. Indeed, the only discussion of penetrating the forest is provided in the opening and especially brief '*bab on the miraculous remedy for the upas*' that alleviates the fears of colonizers penetrating forests occupied by aboriginal horticulturalists armed with arrows poisoned

[170] See WL Malay 1. *Surat Fasal Pertahunan Artinya Bertanam* - '*Fasal pada menyatakan takdir saat* Ahmad', '*jika saat* Jibrail', '*jika saat* Ibrahim', '*jika saat* Yusuf', '*jika saat* Azrael', '*fasal pada menyatakan jika bertemu kepada* Shams', '*fasal pada menyatakan jika bertemu kepada* Zahrah', '*fasal pada menyatakan jika bertemu kepada* Utar', '*fasal pada menyatakan jika bertemu kepada* Qamar', '*fasal pada menyatakan jika bertemu kepada* Zuhal', '*fasal pada menyatakan jika bertemu kepada* Mushtari' and '*fasal pada menyatakan jika bertemu kepada* Marrikh'.

with the latex of the *upas* (antiaris toxicaria) tree.[171] Beyond this, the *bab*s (books), *sharats* (clauses) and *fasals* (sections) of the Jawi text pertain to agricultural activities that follow the securing of an appropriate site for wet rice cultivation. This is evident in the '*bab that is a talisman for swine, rats and hulat [a caterpillar-like rice pest]*' that details how prior to sowing, planters had to 'secure the frontier of the selected ricefield' which was inhabited by supernatural pests, through the miraculous talisman that was in all probability, directly transmitted by the guru to the frontiersman. This talisman was in turn, to be planted at junctures of the incumbent ricefield through meditative postures and pledges of allegiance to the buried talismans that in turn, communicated with resident and incoming pests.[172] Unfortunately, this *bab* contains little detail on the rituals of communication that the supernatural expert might have possibly undertaken with pests through a buried talisman, and one is left to speculate on the nature of talismanic contents from a Jawi transcription of a pests-ridding talisman in *MS 297496* that appears to have been transmitted by Abdul Kahar and in use in late 19th century Naning, entitled '*who is coarse, no more, I am not to be among the coarse*'.[173] The contents of this talisman appear to be revelatory of its audiences and terrified rice-producing stratums wherein pests were feared as demonic beings such as the *babi* (supernatural swine) that had transmogrified from an oceanic demon into a 'covetous', 'agonizing', 'impenetrable' and 'epidemic ferrying' terrestrial being that appropriated multiple pest forms in the *sawah* and *ladang*. Moreover, archetypal experts such as the guru Abdul Kahar, who as the transmogrification of Siva and the 'playmate of the son of Fatimah', served as indispensable pesticides, protecting the the *sawah* and *ladang* from vermin-inflicted 'destruction'.

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171 WL Malay 1. *Surat Fasal Pertahunan Artinya Bertanam. See Bab ini hubat upas*'.
172 WL Malay 1. *Surat Fasal Pertahunan Artinya Bertanam. See* '*Bab ini tangkal babi dan tikus dan hulat'*.
173 SOAS MS 297496. Blagden C. O., 'Incantation against damage to crops: *Yang gubas ta' bas ku ta' yang gubas*', in *Notes on Matters Connected with the Malay Peninsula and the Far East*, Book IV (1895).

One of the most detailed discussions related to the frontier being replete with Muslim and non-Muslim supernatural beings and the need for miraculous intermediaries upon simultaneously agricultural and supernatural terrain, emerges in the Jawi text's *'sharat kita menurunkan padi'* (*clause on our bringing down [direct sowing into soil] padi*).[174] This *sharat* contains rich information on rice worlds wherein planting operations, beyond the uncomplicated activities of sowing seeds or nurseries performed by planters, were dependent upon the guru's invocation of supernatural beings residing at junctures of the agricultural frontier. Identifiable to the esoteric eye of the expert via the texture of the land, '*menurunkan padi*' entailed the supernatural adept's rituals of communication with, firstly, the Muslim 'mother earth' and 'father water' who are mobilized to ferry the '[rice] child, *Si Sedang*, the Sufficient, who appears like Rama'. Secondly, the '*Si Dayang*, the lady-in-waiting, who is the staff and pillar of *iman* [faith] in the *negri*' who is conjured to 'refrain from damaging and destructing' the *La Seri* (*Skr.*: luster; a reference to the nursery), *Taman Seri* (a reference to the site of planting) and *Sri Semangat* (the vital force of rice). It is possible that the *sharat*'s references to the 'mother earth' and 'father water' were influenced by aboriginal Mentra traditions of Negri Sembilan regarding the parents of the first *poyang* (*pawang*), to whose lineage rice cultivation is credited, being a 'handful of land' and a 'drop of water' respectively, and that the late 18th and 19th century Minangkabau naming of the nursery as *La Seri* was one connected to the 'Goddess of Fertility' who reappears in Greek mythology as 'Ceres'.[175] What is probably more certain from the *sharat* is that it depicts a form of 'rice tillage … [in] the common upland arable lands [arability assured by the 'mother earth'], lands, in short, which … cannot be subjected to the process of flooding [under the protection of the 'father water' and where] grain in this mode of culture is sown … by dibbling [, direct sowing] or by

[174] WL Malay 1. *Surat Fasal Pertahunan Artinya Bertanam.* See '*Sharat kita menurunkan padi*'.
[175] D. F. A. Hervey, 'The Mentra Traditions', *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 10 (1882), 189-190; Hill, 'Kelantan Padi-Planting', 64.

broadcast, and reaped in seven or five months'.[176] Indeed, as the *sharat* reveals, this type of rice tillage based on the prospect of reaping in five months, was fundamentally driven by the esoteric powers of 'befriending' the three aforementioned supernatural beings as *sawujud saanggota sedarah sedaging* (associates by selfness, organs, blood and bones), and subjecting them to an oath-bearing contract wherein they were legally bound to nurture the nursery for four months, wherefrom 'the time [for reaping] will come on the fifth'.[177]

Beyond furnishing data on the interweavement of supernatural expertise and socioeconomic activities such as direct sowing in the *ladang* and *sawah*, the *Surat Fasal Pertahunan* is demonstrative of how the process of reaping or harvesting was premised upon the prototypical guru's 'governance' of agricultural frontiers represented by demons such as the *Langkesa*, at least for the audiences of Abdul Kahar. In fact, Abdul Kahar's '*herein lies the tangkal [talisman] for the the Langkesa*' appears to contain a brief mention of the guru's *Langkesa*-terrorized food-producing audiences who consisted of 'nine obediently participating villages', 'obediently' prepared his required articles and 'submitted their destiny' to the guru's ritual of communication with the padi demon.[178] To comprehend the economic threat that the *Langkesa* posed to such audiences, one can refer to Skeat's 1897 *Malay Magic* and Winstedt's 1925 *Shaman, Saiva and Sufi* wherein readers are introduced to, on the one hand, the socioeconomic fact that the *Langkesa* or 'The Spectral Reaper' was believed to be the actual factor determining the fate of the produce of the *sawah* and *ladang* within the Minangkabau lands of Negri Sembilan and Selangor. On the other hand, the socioeconomic logic prevailing in these Minangkabau rice worlds of *pawang*s' miraculous expertise and talismans being indispensable for the mediation of the socioeconomic hazard. Skeat's and Winstedt's writings also allow us to locate a tradition of *Langkesa*-'governing' *tangkal*s and *pemanggil*s (harbingers for

[176] John Crawfurd, *History of the Indian Archipelago: Containing an Account of the Manners, Arts, Languages, Religions, Institutions, and Commerce of its Inhabitants* (Edinburgh: A. Constable and Co., 1820), 360-363.
[177] WL Malay 1. *Surat Fasal Pertahunan Artinya Bertanam.* See '*Sharat kita menurunkan padi*'.
[178] WL Malay 1. *Surat Fasal Pertahunan Artinya Bertanam.* See '*Ini tangkal Lankesa*'.

supernatural beings), employed by late 19th century *pawang*s, that was traceable to the 18th century transmissions of Abdul Kahar.[179] Indeed, we find somewhat exact replicas of the '*herein lies the tangkal for the Langkesa*' and the '*sharat on our pemmangil for padi production*' transcribed in the *Surat Fasal Pertahunan,* within Skeat's and Winstedt's records of the incantations in vogue amongst the food-producing majority in late 19th century Negri Sembilan and Kuala Langat.[180]

In the '*talisman for the Langkesa*', the demon is summoned by the supernatural adept to refrain from 'scattering or creating tasteless' padi, and belittlingly threatened by the esoteric knowledge of the demon's *asal mula jadi* (genesis and creation) or fetal membranes and the guru's possession of the homicidal *berkat* [power-grace of] *lailahalilallah muhammadrasulallah*'.[181] A clearer image of the guru's expertise of controlling the agricultural frontier emerges in a ritual of communication within the '*sharat on our harbinger for padi production*' wherein the *Langkesa* is both befriended and violently cautioned, an extract of which is as follows:

> *Hai Langkisa Langkisi who stand as four [befriend and stand as] five with us … beware against tyrannizing destructing our [rice] child … in the circumstance of tyranny destruction … be it known [-] transgressed is loyalty with us … be then you munched by poisonous influence of the sacred iron … be then you crushed under the sacrosanct pagar ruyung [courtly lineage of mytho-historical Minangkabau colonizers] … be then you liable of eating thirty sections of the Qur'an … this is under the approval of God.*[182]

Blagden's 1895 *Notes* speculate that the aforementioned reference to *Langkisa Langkisi* was one directed at two demonic forms of the frontier-encircling *Langkesa.*[183] However, Skeat's more detailed discussion in *Malay Magic* clarifies that the reference to '*Langkisa Langkisi* who stand as four' was reflective of the ways in which fearful rice producers

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179 Skeat, 'Some Records of Malay Magic', 9-13; Winstedt, *Shaman, Saiva and Sufi: A Study of the Evolution of Malay Magic* (London: Constable, 1925), 66.
180 WL Malay 1. *Surat Fasal Pertahunan Artinya Bertanam.* See '*Ini tangkal Lankesa*' and '*Ini sharat seruan kita bertanam padi*'.
181 WL Malay 1. *Surat Fasal Pertahunan Artinya Bertanam. See* '*Ini tangkal Lankesa*'.
182 WL Malay 1. *Surat Fasal Pertahunan Artinya Bertanam.* See '*Ini sharat seruan kita bertanam padi*'.
183 SOAS MS 297496. Blagden C. O. Notes jotted in his transcription of '*Ini sharat seruan kita bertanam* padi', in *Notes on Matters Connected with the Malay Peninsula and the Far East*, Book IV (1895).

understood the four corners of the late 19th century agricultural frontier as being engulfed by the *Langkesa*, and how the miracle worker's talisman and harbinger allowed reaping operations to proceed through confining 'The Spectral Reaper' to the boundaries of the slated ricefield, wherefrom the botanical expert would search the esoteric rice ear wherein the *semangat padi* resided.[184] Both Abdul Kahar's 'harbinger' to rid the frontier of socioeconomic threats, and an accompanying conversation that the guru appeared to undertake with his miraculous article, the *tepung tawar* (a rice paste concoction sprinkled by the expert on the select site), '*here is the recitation for the tepung tawar*', illustrate that miraculous expertise was essential to replacing demonic threats on the frontier with economically profiting *berkat*.[185] Indeed, the 'recitation for the *tepung tawar*' connects the prospect of 'the [exorcised] land being banked with rice heaps [of] thousands of katis [1.33 lb.] and *gantang*s' to the spiritual expert's delivery of the '*berkat* of the prophet of God [-] Ibrahim [-] *berkat* of the *dato keramat*s extant on four corners of the world [-] *berkat* of *lailahilallah muhammadrasulallah*'.

Muhammad Jaafar's aforementioned 1893 *Darihal Pkerja'an* provided valuable insights into Malaccan *sawah* worlds wherein reaping was a customary religious ritual. In a similar vein, the *Surat Fasal Pertahunan* is exceptionally informative about how the supernatural adept's rituals of communication with aerial beings and instructions for reapers were deemed necessary for harvesting operations and entrenched the spiritual basis of reaping upon Malayan frontiers. This is evident in both the aforementioned '*sharat kita menurunkan padi*' and the '*pemanggil semangat padi*' (harbinger of the vital force of rice) that the guru reserved for the 'period of harvesting'.[186] Whilst the *sharat* issues an early caution to prospective reapers of religiously cutting individual stalks close to the esoteric rice ear with the *tuai* only until the residing place of the *La Seri* so as to ensure

[184] Skeat, 'Some Records of Malay Magic', 9-13; Skeat, *Malay Magic*, 247-249.
[185] WL Malay 1. *Surat Fasal Pertahunan Artinya Bertanam.* See '*Ini perkataan tepung tawar nya*'.
[186] WL Malay 1. *Surat Fasal Pertahunan Artinya Bertanam.* Refer to '*Sharat kita menurunkan padi*' and '*pemanggil semangat padi*'.

that the *semangat padi* is undisturbed by the blade, the *pemanggil* lists religious methods of preventing the fall of the reaper's shadow upon the padi's. Furthermore, the 'harbinger' details the centrality of the miracle-worker to actual reaping that was operationalized through the guru's invocation of the four semi-Islamized supernatural beings, *Sidang Muri* (the assembly of flute), *Sidang Kemala* (the assembly of magical stone), *Sidang Tetap* (the assembly of the settled) and *Sidang Hiasi* (the assembly of decoration) to shift from the agricultural frontier to the nether-land, preserving the surface land for rice production, and to refrain from 'damaging destructing the surface rice-land', a religious crime that was tantamount to 'eating thirty sections of the Qur'an'. It is unfortunate that the socioeconomic rationale of the guru's expertise in the aforementioned *Sharat* and *Pemanggil* is not vividly spelled out for readers. Nevertheless, Skeat's observation notes pertaining to the reproduction of these rituals of communication and stipulations in late 19th century Kuala Langat propose that taboos on the type or make of the reaping knife, methods of harvesting, overlapping shadows, and negotiations with specific semi-Islamized supernatural beings, were Minangkabau rites observed following the birth of both a rice and real child, rites that in the guru Abdul Kahar's words, made economic sense in terms of how they 'produced a [rice] child with more slender husks'.[187]

Muhammad Jaafar's *Darihal Pkerja'an* was also illustrative about how Malaccan *sawah* operations were religiously and meteorologically synchronized around the season that fell approximately in the months of Zilkaidah or Zilhijjah and the 'season of the west wind' wherein regular rainfall and softening of the *sawah* earth enabled convenient ploughing respectively, a synchrony that appears to have been conducted by the calendar-bearing *pawang*.[188] This image of the *pawang* as an intermediary of time, and even *saat*s, astrology and orbits, was not one exclusive to the late 19th century Malaccan

[187] Skeat, *Malay Magic*, 248-249; Skeat, 'Some Records of Malay Magic', 14-15; WL Malay 1 *Surat Fasal Pertahunan Artinya Bertanam*. See *'Sharat kita menurunkan padi*'.
[188] Muhammad Jaafar, *Darihal Pkerja'an Bersawah di Malaka*, 285.

frontier, and the late 19th and early 20th century records of Winstedt and A. H. Hill are informative about a widespread belief in rice worlds throughout the Peninsula of the produce being dependent upon the planting calendars of *pawang*s which were 'even [possessed by] the illiterate peasant'.[189] While both Muhammad Jaafar's epistle, and Winstedt's and Hill's documents, fail to elaborate upon the content of such popular calendars, the *Surat Fasal Pertahunan* contains a series of *bab*s and *fasal*s that offer us a view into both the content of such calendars or almanacs and the value of the supernatural expert's mediation of the time, astrological and orbital frontiers within rice worlds. Beyond the aforementioned *Raksi*s of Abdul Kahar, these *bab*s and *fasal*s are revelatory of the Siva-incarnation's esoteric insights regarding the weekly and daily times and cardinal directions in which 'the door of heaven is opened by God' and 'an audience is gained with the countenance of Muhammad'; the socioeconomically 'malevolent' annual orbit of the *naga* (supernatural dragon); the monthly orbit of the *Rijalulghaib* (the '*ghaib* spirits of protective saints' that accompany the *jenazah* or funeral procession of Ali bin Abi Talib); 'the desirable days for planting' in an Islamic month (namely, the first, second, eight, tenth, twelfth, fifteenth, eighteenth, twenty-sixth and twenty-eight); the 'twelve detrimental times of a year when the labor of planting cannot proceed'; and, 'narrations that provide knowledge on the beneficial and detrimental eight years'.[190]

The clearest illustration of the socioeconomic importance of the calendar-bearing intercessor of frontiers emerges in the '*fasal* of narrations that provide knowledge on the … eight years' which concludes the *Surat Fasal Pertahunan*.[191] Whilst Winstedt's early 20th century note on the 'Malay Rice Cycle' merely mentioned the '12 year cycle of the rice

189 Hill, 'Kelantan Padi-Planting', 59; Winstedt, *The Malay Magician*, 45.
190 WL Malay 1. *Surat Fasal Pertahunan Artinya Bertanam*. Refer to '*Bab ini pada menyatakan pintu langit terbuka*', '*Bab pada menyatakan hadap muka nabi*', '*Bab pada menyatakan per edaran naga*', '*fasal pada menyatakan edaran Rijalulghaib*', '*fasal pada menyatakan hari hendak bertanam*', '*Bab ini pada menyatakan di dalam satahun ada dua belas kali nahas*' and '*fasal pada menyatakan peri mengetahui tahun yang delapan*'.
191 WL Malay 1. *Surat Fasal Pertahunan Artinya Bertanam*. See '*Fasal pada menyatakan peri mengetahui tahun yang delapan*'.

pawang, the years of which are designated by animal names' in Kedah, the richly detailed '*fasal* of narrations' comprising the rice guru's eight years rice cycle demonstrates how the guru's expertise involved insights into the socioeconomic nature of supernatural years. Herein, we get an impression of how a widespread belief in the calendars or rice cycles of experts such as Abdul Kahar was, in all probability, premised upon the guru's esoteric knowledge of the Alif, Ha, Jim, Zai, Dalawal, Ba, Waw and Dalakhir years (designated by animal names) and their 'predestination' and 'determination' of beneficial and detrimental direct sowing, beneficial and detrimental periods of sowing, attacks of predatory rice pests and the scale of devastation, the specific volume and times of rainfall in the year and expedient padi types, epidemics, wind strength or cardinal directions and expedient padi types, flooding, drought, the scale of damage or destruction of padi, the ultimate ability of rice to materialize, the quantity of the rice produce, rinderpest and widespread cattle deaths, the selection of padi types for junctures of the year, the necessity of rain-invoking prayers and sowing rites of 'the ulama', and the survivability and longevity of specific padi types planted at junctions of the year.

It is regrettable that the rich '*fasal* of narrations' fails to mention specific Malay rice frontiers and settings. Nevertheless, it is a useful resource into socioeconomic contexts wherein the unpredictability of rainfall, winds and pest attacks, in terms of intensity and timing, made rice production a hazardous occupation requiring miraculous intercession. Indeed, the *fasal*'s multiple references to the guru's prophetic powers of predicting rainfall for the grain crop that peculiarly requires a definite water regime, are telling of rice worlds wherein padi cultivators were 'completely at the mercy of the elements' because water wheels, driftwood dams, small drainage canals and aqueducts

aimed at water management and lessening a dependence on rainfall proved to be inefficiently expensive and vulnerable to flash floods.[192]

Appearing to reflect the historical sensibility of Abdul Kahar's audiences, the *bab* on 'twelve detrimental times of a year when the labor of planting cannot proceed' within the *Surat Fasal Pertahunan* premises on the primordial cultivator being the prophet Muhammad, a representation that also emerges in the Tamil *pawang* Abdullah Pillai's aforementioned 1922 epistle.[193] The '*bab* on twelve detrimental times', however, seems more didactically driven towards detailing the guru's mediation of the contemporary Minangkabau agricultural frontier through his esoteric powers of accessing the primordial Muhammad's work ethic and listening to the *sabda nabi* (say of the prophet) that declared agricultural labor strictly prohibited on the following days of the year, 28 Muharam, 10 Safar, 4 Rabilawal, 8 Rabilakhir, 22 Jamadilawal, 20 Jamadilakhir, 12 Rejab, 29 Shaban, 27 Ramadhan, 7 Shawal, 28 Zilkaidah and 28 Zilhijjah.

Beyond this *sabda nabi*, the guru's expertise appears to transport him to a historical era wherefrom he eavesdrops upon a conversation between the primordial planter Muhammad and his planter associate Ali wherein Muhammad conveys another *sabda nabi* for Ali's agricultural progress, cautioning his associate of 'the seven detrimental days [connected to detrimental events affecting the prophets] that exist in a month when extreme care must be undertaken so as to ensure that the work meets its completion'. These 'detrimental days' included the third of the month when Adam was banished from heaven, the fifth when the community of Nuh was sunk, the thirteenth when Ibrahim was burnt by Namrud, the sixteenth when Yusuf was thrown into the lake by relatives, the twenty-first when Ferun was sunk in the Nile, the twenty-fourth when Yunus was

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192 Lim, *Peasants and their Agricultural Economy*, 40.

193 WL Malay 1. *Surat Fasal Pertahunan Artinya Bertanam*. See *Bab ini pada menyatakan di dalam satahun ada dua belas kali nahas*'; LKCRL NL 24114. Abdullah Pillai *Darihal Pawang* (*Of that concerning the Pawang*), 1922. Jawi Microfilm Collection, (1922).

swallowed by a fish, and the twenty-fifth when Muhammad was hurled into the cave by infidels.

If we adopt the aforementioned narrations in the *Surat Fasal Pertahunan* as accurate reflections of facets of late 18th century rice worlds, they offer us an avenue into the stratums of fearful audiences desperate for the supernatural adept's esoteric knowledge of prophetically determined detrimental times. This is also evident in the *fasal* on the 'orbit of *Rijalulghaib*', colored with a divination table, wherein Abdul Kahar provided his terrified audiences who would have been physically debilitated upon meeting the *jenazah* of the historical planter Ali, with detailed instructions about the days of the month and cardinal directions at which the procession pauses, so as to ensure agricultural work meets completion with the 'intercession of Muhammad and the *berkat* of the *keramat* [of the] *Rijalulghaib*'.[194] Perhaps driven by a need to entrench the guru's expertise as the key intercessor of supernatural beings residing on the frontier and Abdul Kahar's spiritual elitism vis-à-vis *Rijalulghaib*-fearing audiences, the *Fasal* contains a ritual of communication and comportment between the miracle-worker and the Muslim *ghaib aulia*s (invisible saints), 'angels of the four corners of the frontier' and *Si Putar Alam* (the rotating spirit of the world), wherefrom the fearless guru attains for his associated frontiersmen the 'help and mercies of God', 'blown *jampis*' (miraculous charms) and regenerated bodies to transmogrify forested frontiers into religious rice fields.

Conclusions on the Religious Rice Frontier

In this chapter, I have explored a range of materials that were produced in late 19th and early 20th century Malacca and Negri Sembilan, and suggested that these sources which include epistles, demonologies, fatwas, planting manuals and observations notes,

[194] WL Malay 1. *Surat Fasal Pertahunan Artinya Bertanam.* See *Fasal pada menyatakan edaran Rijalulghaib*'.

are unparalleled historical records of socioeconomic stratums and trends upon the Malayan rice frontier. These historical records are illustrative of socioeconomic settings wherein wet and dry hill rice production had attained a distinct religious meaning by the late 19th century, cultivators employed religious terms to understand agricultural terrain and rice, and the expansion of rice frontiers was centered upon *pawang*s who possessed the miraculous expertise of transforming forested tracts into rice clearings and fields.

In undertaking this study of religious rice worlds and miracle-workers, this chapter has attempted to redress both the impasse historians have faced in accessing the religious frontiers and sensibilities of subsistence planters, and the conspicuous academic silence in scholarship on *pawangs* and their miraculous expertise. Furthermore, in analyzing Malay and Anglo-Malay historical documents produced 'very close to the action' upon rice frontiers, my work is distinctive from post-colonial scholarship on rice in Malaya that has largely relied on extant records of formal governmental agencies, at the expense of documentation of religious mine worlds and simultaneously agrarian and supernatural expertise in unpublished manuscripts.

This chapter now draws certain conclusions about the Muslim nature of the rice frontier in late 19th century and early 20th century Negri Sembilan and Malacca. Beyond the transcultural scholarly networks that appear to have led to the transcription of epistles produced by Abdullah Pillai and Muhammad Jaafar, and the *Notes* of C. O. Blagden, these sources appear almost mute about, on the one hand, the impact of the pre-1824 *Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*, the post-1824 East India Company and the British administrations of the Straits Settlements (1826-1867) and post-1867 Crown Colony, upon the rice-worlds of Malacca. Alternatively, the impact of the British Residencies that were established in Negri Sembilan from the period of 1874 to 1895, and the post-1895 British administrative apparatus, the Federated Malay States that incorporated Negri Sembilan, upon the subsistence planting worlds of the Malay state.

This conspicuous silence is striking since historians of rice in Malaya such as Hill and Lim Teck Ghee have elaborated upon the British colonial administrations' expansion of their dominion into Malay socioeconomic stratums through late 19th and early 20th century circulars that called upon District Officers in the western Malay states to 'guard against any extension of the nomadic practice' of *ladang* cultivation, and the repressive Malacca Lands Ordinance of 1886 which assisted the 'Government in getting their pound of flesh from the people indigenous to the soil regardless of their customs' through making Malay cultivators tenants who were annually liable to pay one tenth of their crops (and later equivalent in money) to the Crown.[195]

One might be able to account for the texts' silences about the European administrations' penetration into rice worlds through the widespread belief within the food producing sector of Malaya, as Hill and Lim acknowledge, of their ability to escape central monopolies through upstream *ladang* cultivation that was hallowed in religio-historical tradition, their 'hold [of] the land by an ancient unwritten right', or the very peripatetic nature of the Malay Muslim peasantry which allowed them to migrate from Malacca wherein the government enjoyed a right to the tithe, to provinces of the Federated Malay States such as Negri Sembilan wherein land was acquired on a rent-free basis for the first three years subsequent to its clearance.[196] Alternatively, the texts' neglect of the British colonial administration or Residencies appear to be a reflection of social worlds wherein agricultural operations of transforming forests into rice fields or clearings were driven by Muslim pioneers and under the direction of Muslim capital until 1930, as historians such as Kratoska have more recently highlighted.[197] As such, the very silences of these materials from Malacca and Negri Sembilan on the 'colonial administration' serve as reminders of Muslim pasts for historians of the Malay Peninsula

[195] *Straits Times*: 2.7.1886; Hill, *Rice in Malaya*, 123; Lim, *Peasants and their Agricultural Economy*, 49.
[196] Roff, 'The Origins and Early Years of the Majlis Agama Kelantan', 182-183.
[197] Kratoska, 'Rice Cultivation and the Ethnic Division of Labor in British Malaya', 285.

who have often 'contrived a [non-European] relationship of reciprocity' between *hulu* and *hilir* areas that was ruptured by the first generation of European colonizers in Negri Sembilan and Perak, associated with the British Residencies established in 1874.[198]

Beyond being mute on European power and particularly informative about powerful Muslim miracle-workers, these materials unfortunately provide readers little data on certain topics that would further enhance our understanding of the sophisticated Muslim rice frontier. These subjects include local permutations of Malay Muslim customary land tenure, the Muslim peasantry's ownership or rental of lands, the gender of the Muslim peasantry (a notable silence in light of how ancestral landholders and *changkul*-bearers were largely women in the Minangkabau lands), incentives or *kuasas* (land grants) attained by colonizers directly from Malay-Muslim courts or indirectly from Muslim or non-Muslim providers of capital, and the sophisticated agricultural economy of the forest and frontier which comprised of the gathering of food (essential upon crop failure), medicine, fuel and raw materials for boats and tools and exchanges between the Muslim peasantry and aboriginal horticulturalists.

Such issues seem to be of lesser priority to the 'indigenous' and European producers of the sources discussed in this chapter, who were clearly concerned with revealing religious rice stratums characterized by a Muslim peasantry highly engaged on the land, religiously non-monetized subsistence economies, pious technologies, and ubiquitous indispensable Muslim *pawangs*. In spite of the aforementioned silences, these materials help us chart the way in which a Malayan history of religious sensibilities in socioeconomic stratums, and the importance of supernatural expertise in operations on the agricultural frontier, can be written. Appropriating the words of the Rembauan Tamil *pawang* Abdullah Pillai, 'narrations of the history of the *pawang* … and the devotional

[198] Cited from Harper, 'The Politics of the Forest in Colonial Malaya', 2; Grove, Damodaran and Sangwan, *Nature and the Orient*.

practices of planters' might be the point at which we can 'commence crafting' new socioeconomic histories of Malaya.

2 'The Melody of a Foothold': Religious Rice Worlds and *Pawang*s on the Frontiers of Perak

This chapter undertakes a historical investigation of socioeconomic stratums in late 19th century Perak wherein rice production had attained a religious meaning, and cultivators employed distinct religious terms to understand agricultural frontiers and rice. This is a history centered upon *pawang*s who were central to expanding the rice frontier in the western Malay state that was in turn, replete with cosmopolitan Muslim and Christian miracle-workers and laborers. These *pawang*s were indispensable to the intermediation of frontiers through their miraculous expertise, and central to a 'socioeconomic system geared to the production of rice' and a 'religious ideology that conferred special meaning on agrarian life'. In writing a history of religious rice worlds and the experts of rice cultivation, Muslim miracle-workers and their associates, this chapter attempts to redress both the impasse historians have faced in accessing the sensibilities of subsistence planters in Perak, and the academic silence on the socioeconomic importance of *pawangs* and their miraculous expertise in post-colonial scholarship.

This chapter is divided into two sections, '*Rice Worlds in Perak: Historical Sensibility, the Commander of the Ricefield and Saintly Networks*' and '*Pawangs on the Perak Frontier: Miraculous Expertise and Negotiations with Spiritual Forests*'. The opening section draws attention to, firstly, a sensibility prevailing among *ladang* (dry hill rice) pioneers in Perak, by the late 19th century, of their socioeconomic worlds and operations being directly associated with traditions of historical rice *pawang*s and prophets, and secondly, technologically and supernaturally proficient miracle-workers or holymen being physically present commanders within the forest clearings and ricefields of late 19th and early 20th century Perak. I base these arguments largely upon the data provided by a late 19th century, exceptionally detailed Jawi compendium of the prototypical Perak *Pawang*'s *Command* and an early 20th century Jawi record of the *Arrangement and Customary Usage* of Perak *pawang*s. These manuscripts also provide snippets of information regarding socioeconomic factors, patronage patterns and transcultural networks that produced Jawi texts pertaining to rice *pawang*s, and in all probability, sustained the careers of *pawangs* in the Malay state. The subsequent section of this chapter shifts the focus from rice worlds to the miraculous expertise of *pawangs*, and discusses how the aforementioned unpublished Jawi texts are particularly illustrative of *pawang*s in Perak being coveted personages due to their intermediation and control of simultaneously agricultural and supernatural frontiers. Herein, I suggest that the Perak materials introduce readers to the miraculous expertise of the archetypal *pawang* as one of establishing 'melodious', secure 'footholds' in spiritually hazardous forests through rituals of communication or negotiations with a plethora of spiritual beings including historical or cosmic *pawang*s, prophets and *batara*s ('saving powers'), and non-Muslim or semi-Islamized *jinn*s, demons, armies of Iblis; the exercise of moral violence; and, the initiation of spiritual 'contracts'.

Rice Worlds in Perak: Historical Sensibility, the Commander of the Ricefield and Saintly Networks

Historical Pawangs and Religious Sensibilities upon the Agricultural Frontier

> *Requesting the tumpu langgam [melody of a foothold] in this [forested] territorial space … my anak chuchu [descendants] raiat [agricultural laborers] tentera [armies] cut down scrub [or] bushes [-] fell large trees [-] plant directly through dibbling holes in the tumpu langgam of this territorial space … in this earth of beasts for the dry clearing [-] it is not I who fells timber by cutting fine notches [-] it is Pawang Sadia [-] Pawang Gantia [-] Batara Guru … retreat withdraw hantu shetan the children of Adam intend to make passage.*
>
> – *Kitab Perintah Pawang* (1879).[199]

The Jawi text, *Kitab Perintah Pawang* or *Book of the Pawang's Command*, comprises of transcriptions of orally-transmitted *bab*s (books), *kataan* (recitations), *fasal*s (sections) and *sharats* (clauses) pertaining to the archetypal '*pawang*'s command' over agricultural operations, the historical and supernatural basis of the '*pawang* command', and rituals of communication undertaken by the *pawang* with spirits resident upon the forested frontier. A concluding note on the 144 pages long *Kitab* specifies that it 'reached completion upon the 21st of Shaaban of the year 1296' (10 August 1879) in the 'village of Belanja Kanan', in the upstream interior of Perak, and that its 'scribe was the Hajji Raja Yahya [bin Raja Daud Siak]' who is in turn described as the 'headman [*penghulu*] of the *mukim* [parish area, territorial subdivision] in Belanja'. A triangular caption on the text's title page clarifies that the *Kitab* containing the '*ilmu* [of the] sheikh *pawang* [recorded by] Yahya' was in the possession of the Assistant Resident of Perak, '*tuan* [W. E.] Maxwell'. While Hajji Raja Yahya provides no data regarding the transmitters of the *Kitab*, beyond certain names, and the connections of his transcriptions to specific rice worlds or rice *pawang*s in Belanja or Perak on the whole, the transmitters of the text appear particularly familiar with the actual socioeconomic trend of prototypical Perak *pawang*s selecting precise spaces of the

[199] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Kitab Perintah Pawang*. See *bab recited to benzoin when making intent to clear scrub [-] bushes [-] fell timber [-] establish a ladang*' and '*tangkal [for] rain-with-sunshine and the extinguisher of heat*'. I am indebted to the *bomor*s and *pawang*s, Muhammad Hashim, M. A. Ridhwan and Abas Ali Al-Aydarus for valuable discussions regarding the definition and intricacies of the *pawang*-ic concept, *tumpu langgam*.

tumpu langgam in forests, and directing charges of the *anak chuchu raiat tentera* (descendants, agricultural laborers and troops) to 'cut down scrub or bushes', 'fell large trees' and 'plant directly through dibbling' in the 'earth of beasts [preordained] for the dry clearing' or field of hill rice.[200] These recorded transmissions also appear to serve as windows into socioeconomic stratums in 19th century Perak wherein intricate agricultural operations such as the 'felling of timber by cutting fine notches' were directly associated with the labors of historical *pawangs* and prophets, oft-confused in the *Kitab*, who included the primordial Being, Pawang Sadia (Skr. *sadhya*, accomplishment or perfection), Pawang Gantia (Vice-regent Pawang, of Sadia), the grandson of Nuh, Batara Guru (Siva), and the father of the *semangat padi* (vital force of rice), Adam.

The image of historical *pawang*s as pushers of agricultural labor emerges in the *Kitab*'s preface, *'Origin and Genealogy of the Pawang*', that was transmitted by a '*to'* [*dato*] Sheikh Idrus'.[201] Rejuvenating a historical setting wherein 'God was not yet referred to as Allah, the Prophet not yet referred to as Muhammad' and the sky, earth, solar system, heaven, hell, *jinns*, humanity, Iblis, angels and the *nur* 'awaited creation', the *'Origin and Genealogy*' introduces the lonesome Pawang Sadia as 'the only existence' whose longing for a playmate leads to his creation of the bird-like *bidadari* (houri), Pawang Asal (Ar. *asl*, origin or extraction). Serving as the 'Pawang Gantia', Asal is, firstly, involved in the creation of the 'whole solid earth' in 7 days and a 'chain of *pawang*s … elements … *jinns* and humanity … *shetan* and Iblis … *beras* [raw husked rice] and *bertih* [parched rice]', and secondly, gifted the cloak of *to' sheikh belantrawan* (the *dato*, sheikh and expert of the forest) by Sadia. Almost at pains to prevent its audience from neglecting the socioeconomic relevance of 'the chronicle of Pawang Sadia and Pawang Asal', *to*' Sheikh Idrus's transmission contains an aide memoire on how contemporary *pawang*s were

[200] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Kitab Perintah Pawang. See 'bab recited to benzoin when making intent to clear scrub [-] bushes [-] fell timber [-] establish a ladang*'.
[201] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Kitab Perintah Pawang. 'Origin and Genealogy of the Pawang*'.

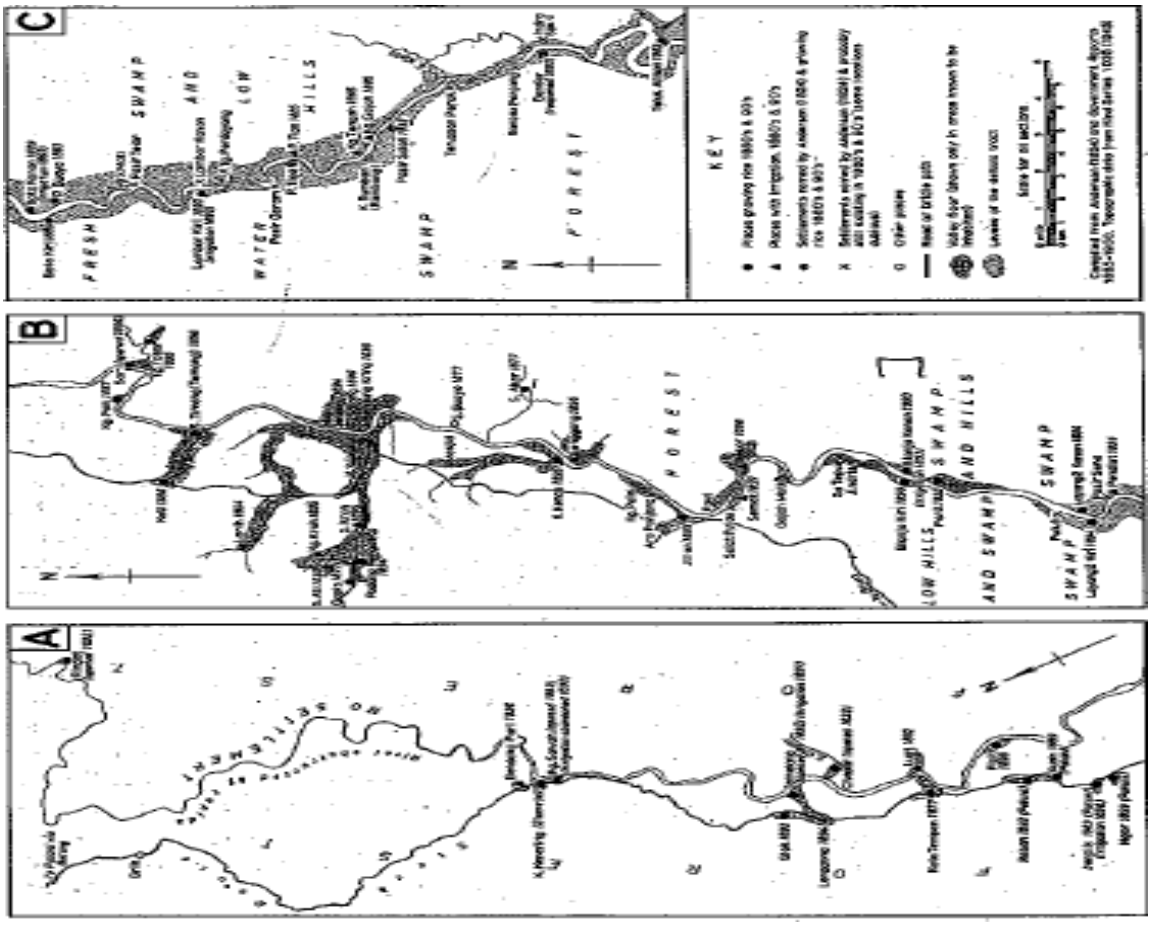
indeed heirs of the cloak of '*dato*, sheikh and expert of the forest', and *gantias* (vice-regents) of the Creative '*ilmu* and responsibility' of Sadia and Asal within forest settings. Similarly, the *'Origin and Genealogy*' comprises of a detailed discussion of 'the first human *pawang*', the 'prophet of God Nuh' being the second *gantia* and the pioneer of *ladang* (dry hill rice) production and husbandry involving iron tools. This discussion emphasizes that contemporary human *pawang*s had inherited the 'mantle of the labors of Pawang Asal' and the first human 'vice-regent', Nuh, as expert forest clearers and *ladang* pioneers.

Further connecting the labors of the hill rice pioneer, Nuh, to the ricefields of Perak, *to*' Sheikh Idrus's transmission contains a complicated anecdote pertaining to the descendants of the 'anonymous children' of the grandson of Nuh and the 'main deity of Perak', Batara Guru, who is introduced as the historical pioneer of 'riceflour … and enterprises [in the forest] under God's leadership'.[202] These great-great grandchildren of Nuh are depicted as hoverers over Malay ricefields and only appeased by a tradition of *genggulangs* (altars or platforms erected upon commencing rice agriculture) established by the 'four *pawangs'*, one of whom is Pawang Chulan. According to the 2nd '*Alqisah*' of the *Sejarah Melayu*, the descendant of Iskandar Zulkarnain (Alexander the Great), Chulan who set out for global conquest through a glass case in the Indian Ocean, expeditiously impregnated the princess of the Ocean and produced miracle-working offsprings who in turn, transmogrified dry hill rice clearings in Palembang, Sumatra, into fields of 'luminous golden rice'.[203] While this anecdote suffers from vagueness, it is clear from the *Kitab*'s multiple chains of transmission from Sadia and Asal to Chulan, that Chulan serves as a pivot connecting rice worlds in the Malay cultural zone of eastern Sumatra and Malaya to those of historical *pawang*s.

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[202] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. Maxwell refers to Siva (Batara Guru) as the 'main deity of Perak' in a note 'Still in remote hamlets […]' attached to *Kitab Perintah Pawang.*

[203] '*Alqisah [2]*' and '*Alqisah [3]*' Text of *Raffles Ms. No. 18*, romanized by Abdul Rahman Haji Ismail, compiled by Cheah Boon Keng, in *'Sejarah Melayu: The Malay Annals - MBRAS Reprint 17'*, (Kuala Lumpur: *Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society,* c1998).



Rice Worlds in the late 19th century Perak valley (Source: *Rice in Malaya*)

The *Kitab Perintah Pawang* also directly associates contemporary agricultural operations in Perak to Nuh through its multiple references to Nuh as the 'prophet of timber' presiding over the timber-related activities of contemporary *pawang*s.[204] Furthermore, the *Kitab*'s regular references to forest pioneers as 'the children of Adam', 'the human descent of Adam [-] the people of Islam' and 'the party [-] children of Adam', while lacking elaboration, appear to connect contemporary dealing with the simultaneously economic and supernatural article of padi with the *pawang*-prophet Adam who was commonly referred to in 19th century Perak as the 'father of the *semangat* padi'.[205] Indeed, according to a popular religious tradition documented by the Acting Assistant

[204] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Kitab Perintah Pawang*. For instance, see '*Origin and Genealogy of the Pawang*', '*bab [-] jampi for the hantu of timber*', '*bab recited whilst towards felling the pole of the door child*', '*kataan to benzoin towards the bund [of the ricefield]*', '*tangkal [for the] tiger*'.
[205] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Kitab Perintah Pawang*. For example, see '*tangkal [for] rain-with-sunshine and the extinguisher of heat*', '*Salasilah [transmitted by] Ngah Johor Andong*' and '*sempena [for the] arrow if* Ranjuna Sharif'.

District Officer of Krian (Perak), G. E. Shaw, the prophet who appears to have migrated to the Peninsula from Eden, Adam's paranoia about his emerging ummat's food scarcity led to his sacrifice of a son and daughter 'into the plains … [and] chopping [of] them into small fragments … [and] scattering these over the ground'. These 'chops' miraculously, in the course of six months, transmogrified into 'wide plains waving with golden harvest' and the trans-historical vital force of padi.[206]

In an 1881 pamphlet on *Malay Myths*, the possessor of the *Kitab*, the Assistant Resident of Perak, W. E. Maxwell, referred to the aforementioned *'Origin and Genealogy'* as 'the tradition of the Perak *pawangs*, or Shamans … [a] secret science … firmly believed in by the Malays … [despite being] inconsistent with the teachings of orthodox Muhammadanism'.[207] Maxwell's scholarly interest in the *Kitab*, however, was driven towards uncovering data on Malay religious evolution in terms of the text's 'jumble of aboriginal superstition … Hindu mysticism … [and] Muhammadan nomenclature', at the expense of connecting the tradition on historical *pawangs* to contemporary rice worlds. Indeed, in both the aforementioned pamphlet and an undated memo attached to the *Kitab*, Maxwell makes mere passing mentions of Perak *pawang*s seeking careers in historically sensitive rice worlds through 'show[ing] the antiquity of the *pawang*'s profession' via the *'Origin and Genealogy'*, and the socioeconomic phenomenon 'in remote hamlets [of Perak, of] invoking Siva [Batara Guru] … at clearing jungle for a ricefield'.[208] Maxwell's pamphlet and memo also fail to elaborate upon the *'Origin and Genealogy'* and the *Kitab* on the whole, being accurate reflections of the majority food producing sector of Perak society for whom agrarian historical *pawang*s held more significance than maritime ones such as the 'four grandchildren of Nuh [and siblings of Batara Guru] in

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[206] G. E. Shaw, 'Malay Industries: Part 3: Rice Planting', *Papers on Malay Subjects* (Federal Malay States Government Press, 1926), 20-21.
[207] W. E. Maxwell, 'Two Malay Myths: the Princess of the Foam, and the Raja of the Bamboo', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 13:4 (1881), 521-523.
[208] W. E. Maxwell, 'Two Malay Myths', 521; RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Kitab Perintah Pawang.* See Maxwell's note 'Still in remote hamlets […]' attached to *Kitab Perintah Pawang.*

the water' who are merely mentioned thrice in the *Kitab* and forgotten, and the use of the *perahu*s (small watercrafts) and *belat*s (screen fish-traps) were subsidiary activities to subsistence planting, deserving merely two *bab*s in the *Kitab*.[209]

The relevance of Hajji Raja Yahya's transcriptions to late 19th century Perak society is perhaps attested to in the fact that portions of the *Kitab* on the aforementioned 'tradition of the Perak *pawangs*' and agricultural operations, were circulated in aural circles and transcribed in an untitled Jawi text mentioned in the Introduction, *Maxwell 15* which 'was completed in Taiping [Perak] upon 3 Jemadalakhir 1299 [21 April 1882] … [by] the scribe [-] the slave of God … the humble Auda Muhammad Hashim bin al-marhum Khatib Usuluddin Perak'.[210] Alternatively, almost preventing its readers from losing the text's significance to contemporary socioeconomic stratums, the 1879 *Kitab* immediately connects the *'Origin and Genealogy*' preface to a range of transmissions on agricultural operations spearheaded by the prototypical Perak *pawang*. These transmissions include, firstly, the '*bab recited to benzoin towards establishing the tumpu langgam in this territorial space'*. Secondly, the '*bab recited to the parang [timber-knife] finely notched into the land of flour*' wherein the *anak chuchu raiat tentera* under the auspices of the contemporary *gantia* of the 'historical *pawang* … dislocate, deviate roots and sprout to the sky' forest timber. Thirdly, the '*bab recited to benzoin towards conducting burning*' wherein readers find a particularly violent expression of the *anak chuchu raiat* physically charging at the 'earth of beasts [preordained] for *ladang*'. Fourthly, the '*recitation whilst burning*' wherein the *pawang* channels the 'permission of God the All Powerful' into Belanja forests for burning the last logs in the clearing. Fifthly, the '*bab recited to benzoin whilst directed towards planting the seed directly in the*

[209] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Kitab Perintah Pawang*. Refer to the '*Origin and Genealogy of the Pawang'*, '*The Transmission of the Genealogy from Pawang Naam*', '*Bab of the recitation of the ilmu [of the] watercraft*' and '*bab [unclear] for the fish to be surrounded within the large screen fish-trap*'.
[210] RAS Maxwell 15. Untitled. Transcribed by Muhammad Hashim. Taiping [Perak], 1882.

ladang' wherein the operation of 'dibbling holes in the *tumpu langgam*' marks the miraculous transformation of the 'earth of beasts' to 'our dry clearing'.[211]

The connections the *Kitab Perintah Pawang* makes between historical *pawang*s and actual agricultural operations in Perak offer historians an insight into, in Eaton's words, the 'cultural, social class and worldviews of communities' that produced the traditions that the Jawi text comprises of.[212] Ultimately, the *Kitab*'s regular references to forest clearing and dry hill rice cultivation as being driven by prophetic or *pawang*-ic precedence serve as a way out of the impasse historians have faced in accessing the sensibilities of subsistence planters in Perak, for whom, by the late 19th century, the 'uneconomic' and 'unremunerative' occupation of rice production still remained 'the most important fact of Malay economic life' in spite of the reality that it provided a lower income than pepper, gambier or market gardening and wage labor, and involved the 'vagaries of water supply and rice pests … [and a] major investment of time, labour and capital'.[213] On the one hand, a generation of post-colonial scholars has inadequately assumed that the Malay Muslim obsession with rice agriculture in Perak was driven by the British Residency's formal and non-formal restrictions upon non-Malay participation within this field.[214] This theory, however, finds no supporting evidence in the 1893 *Reports furnished by Order of His Excellency the Governor upon the Best Means of Encouraging the Cultivation of Rice*, for both self-sufficiency and cash cropping, amongst both Malay Muslim and non-Malay pioneers in

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211 RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Kitab Perintah Pawang.* See '*bab recited to benzoin towards establishing the tumpu langgam in this territorial space*', '*bab recited to the parang finely notched into the land of flour*', '*bab recited to benzoin towards conducting burning*', '*recitation whilst burning*', '*bab recited to benzoin whilst directed towards planting the seed directly in the ladang*'.

212 Cited from Richard M. Eaton, 'Forest Clearing and the Growth of Islam in Bengal', in Metcalf (ed.) *Islam in South Asia in Practice,* 383.

213 Kratoska, 'Rice Cultivation and the Ethnic Division of Labor in British Malaya', 286-288.

214 See Ding Eing Tan Soo Hai, *The Rice Industry in Malaya 1920-40* (Singapore: Malaya Publishing House, 1963), 17-19; Gayl D. Ness, *Bureaucracy and Rural Development in Malaysia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 31; Lim Chong Yah, *Economic Development of Modern Malaya*, 175; Lim Teck Ghee, *Peasants and their Agricultural Economy*, 186-88; Michael Stenson, *Class, Race and Colonialism in West Malaysia* (St. Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1980), 4.

the late 19th century Peninsula.[215] On the other hand, the religious sensibility of subsistence planters in Perak has not received the scrutiny of 'serious' post-colonial historians. This is evident in P. J. Sullivan's study of 'Rice-Growing' in Perak wherein he devotes a mere footnote to 'religious functionaries … and a well-developed system of magic, practised by the *pawang*'.[216] Similarly, in Lim Teck Ghee's survey of the 'agricultural peasantry' in Perak, he contributes a concluding sentence pertaining to the 'high socio-cultural value' of the rice crop, 'customs … [and] elaborate [*pawang*] ceremonies which mark every stage of padi cultivation' and the 'popular belief in the semangat' within his speculations that the Muslim peasant's 'religious obligations' of undertaking the hajj, refusing usury and fasting, negatively 'affected … [his] economic efficiency'.[217]

It is unfortunate that Lim's attempt to write a history of the 'agricultural peasantry' in Perak has little record of subaltern rice worlds that were hallowed by traditions of historical *pawang*s and customary religion.[218] In comparison, the 19th and early 20th century records of Maxwell and the scholar-administrator, Winstedt on *karamat*s (miracle-working shrines and historical saints) in Perak serve as windows into socioeconomic circles wherein contemporary rice production and forest clearing was associated with the lives of historical saints who 'served as metaphors for the expansion of both religion and agriculture'.[219] Such a historical sensibility is apparent in Maxwell's 1874 record of the 'Legend of To [*dato*] Panglima Ghapar' that introduces readers to an overwhelming opinion in late 19th century Perak of the 'rice-fields of Rotan Segar … [being] the most fertile in Kinta' due to their physical association with the time-traveling, fairy-impregnating, expeditiously-fathering, elephant-riding and ricefields-wandering

[215] ICSA. *Reports furnished by Order of His Excellency* (1893).
[216] Patrick Sullivan, *Social Relations of Dependence in a Malay State*, 20, 38, fn139;
[217] Lim Teck Ghee, *Peasants and their Agricultural Economy*, 228, 237-8.
[218] Cited from Gullick, 'The Negri Sembilan Economy of the 1890s', 38–55.
[219] Cited from Eaton, 'Who are the Bengal Muslims,' in his *Essays on Islam and Indian History,* 266.

karamat from historical Kinta.[220] Similarly, Winstedt's 1924 article on '*Karamat*s' mentions that the lives of historical personages such as the 'famous [Bugis courtier] and medicine-man, [Gangga Shah] Johan', the itinerant and miraculous rice-producing Arab, Sayyid Makbuli (d. 1886) and the awe-inspiring 'Perak Malay dwarf' Imam Pandak whose *karamat*s (shrines) lay guarded by 'were-tigers' or crocodiles at Penkalan Baharu (Dindings), Taiping and Menlembu respectively, had swelled into popular memory as saintly metaphors and indispensable intermediaries of forest clearing in Perak by the late 19th century.[221] Beyond the aforementioned writings of Maxwell and Winstedt, Shaw's observation notes of 'Malay Industries: Rice Planting' in early 20th century Perak are replete with references to the fact that the majority of Perak subsistence planters adhered to a customary religion preoccupied with historical traditions of saints and an attitude of "Paul may plant and Apollos may water', but all must be ascribed to Providence'.[222]

While the aforementioned European records suffer from brevity, Jawi texts such as the *Kitab Perintah Pawang* provide rich detail on rice worlds that were steeped in customary religion, wherein rice or dry hill rice was valued as a supernatural product for nutritional sustenance, as revealed by historical *pawang*s such as Asal, Nuh and Adam, rather than a commodity of exchange. Indeed, as a text reflecting the non-monetized, subsistence agricultural charater of an economy wherein land was approached as a factor of production rather than a commercial article, the *Kitab* contains no reference to the blessed article of nutrition, *ladang* rice, as one for sale. Furthermore, the *Kitab Perintah Pawang* appears to be more telling of subsistence dry rice stratums that were predominant in the interior of late 19th century Perak rather than historical prophetic or *pawang*-ic ones. In fact, the *Kitab* seems to contain a romantic portrayal of subsistence agricultural economies in the interior that developed out of the prototypical Perak *pawang*'s 'melody

[220] W. E. Maxwell, 'Legend of Toh Panglima' in his 'Notes and Queries – MBRAS Reprint 15', (Kuala Lumpur: *Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 1997), 95-108.
[221] Winstedt, '*Karamat*: Sacred Places and People in Malaya', 271, 277-8
[222] Shaw, 'Malay Industries: Part 3: Rice Planting', 17.

of a foothold' upon unknown, inaccessible frontiers, forest clearing and transhumant upstream cultivation, that was present in late 19th century European expedition reports. For instance, the scholar-administrator A. T. Dew's 1883 notes of an 'Exploring Expedition from Selama, Perak, over the Mountains' and the curator of the Perak Museum, L. Wray's 1888 'Journal of a Collecting Expedition to the Mountain of Batang Padang' contain numerous references to a subsistence agricultural economy in the 'entirely unknown' and 'most inaccessible' interior of Perak. This was an economy that was characterized by *kampung*s strewn with dry hill ricefields, forests overcome by secondary growth and *lalang* (evidence of former *ladang* clearings), cultivators of *ladang*s in tracts of secondary forest upslope from a garden providing vegetables such as maize (and presumably, a hamlet) upon the piedmont, and a 'fertile [religious] imagination' that permitted supernatural actors to manifest themselves upon the frontier and determine the intricate organization of padi and the site of the *tumpu langgam*.[223]

Historians adopting the *Kitab Perintah Pawang* as an accurate reflection of 'unknown' and 'inaccessible' rice worlds in Perak will find sections such as the '*recitation to the seed*' particularly informative about the economic and religious rationale of subsistence dry hill rice planters. Indeed, the recitations to 'the seed' or nursery to reside in earth under 'foster care for a period of 5 months' and return to the 'palace … to God where an erotic death awaits' by the sixth month, appears to be a clear reference to a form of 'rice tillage … [in] the common upland arable lands' that 'cannot be subjected to the process of flooding' and wherein 'grain is sown … by dibbling … and ['quickly'] reaped in seven or five months' for subsistence.[224] This concern with the selection of 'upland arable lands' suitably bereft of flooding also finds emphasis in the '*bab recited to the parang*

[223] A. T. Dew, 'Exploring Expedition from Selama, Perak, over the Mountains', *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 19 (1887), 111-2, 114, 118, 121; Leonard Wray, 'Journal of a Collecting Expedition to the Mountain of Batang Padang', *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 21 (1890), 124, 126, 130, 137, 156.
[224] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Kitab Perintah Pawang. See 'recitation to the seed'*; Crawfurd, *History of the Indian Archipelago*, 360-363.

finely notched into the land' wherein we find the *pawang*'s emphasis upon locating an appropriate upslope '*pemidang*' (frame) for the *ladang* and proceeding gradually to remove scrub or bushes through careful observations of the presence of 'watery sediments'.[225]

Texts such as Hajji Raja Yahya's *Kitab* also enable us to understand the longevity of dry hill rice production in Perak in spite of the Order in [the Perak] Council No. 6 of 1890 that was passed 'with the object of discouraging the cultivation of ladang and encouraging permanent agriculture'.[226] Even with anti-*ladang* notices being circulated to rice worlds, official denunciation, the 'tightening of the land administration' and enforcement of the legislation under District Officers by 1893, Lim Chong-Yah's survey of acreage statistics of the Peninsula highlights that Perak subsistence rice worlds remained the prime producers of dry padi in the Peninsula, with *ladang*s occupying 26,400 acres in 1922.[227] Similarly, Hill's study of rice in 'The Northern Center: Perak' mentions that 'too much should not be read … [of] blocks of land opened near Belanja [to replace dry hill rice with wet rice production by 1891] … since the objective of the Perak Malay was self-subsistence'.[228] It is plausible that this Malay preoccupation with *ladang* cultivation that is described in Maxwell's 1884 'Laws and Customs of the Malays' as 'no doubt, the national Malay mode of agriculture', was encouraged by a range of religious traditions including those transcribed by Hajji Raja Yahya in Belanja.[229] In fact, the transmissions recorded in the 1879 *Kitab* and the 1883 *Maxwell 15* such as the aforementioned '*bab recited to the parang finely notched into the land*' and '*bab recited towards swinging the biliong [light hatchet]*', are revelatory of religious dry rice worlds wherein agricultural operations that contravened the Order in Council's prohibition upon forest

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225 RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Kitab Perintah Pawang*. See *bab recited to the parang finely notched into the land*'

226 'Order in [the Perak] Council No. 6 of 1890: Discouragement of Ladang Cultivation', in *ICSA. Reports furnished by Order of His Excellency (1893)*, 22.

227 'Order in [the Perak] Council No. 6 of 1890' in *ICSA. Reports furnished by Order of His Excellency*, (1893) 22-23; Lim Chong Yah, *Economic Development of Modern Malaya*, 153-4.

228 Hill, *Rice in Malaya*, 105.

229 See W. E. Maxwell, 'The Law and Customs of the Malays with Reference to the Tenure of Land,' *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 13, (1884), 75-78, 103-104.

clearing of 'jungle that cannot be felled without the use of an axe or *biliong* … [for] ladang cultivation', were conferred a special religious meaning through association with a range of historical *pawangs* including Asal, Nuh, Batara Guru and Chulan.[230] Nevertheless, while the *Kitab* is overwhelmingly preoccupied with *ladang* agriculture, it contains haphazard mentions of wet rice production in the brief '*bab [of] the recitations of turning the gaze'* of Iblis and *shetan* (armies of Iblis) to 'nurse the wet ricefield', and the minute '*recitation towards the beras to be irrigated*' and '*recitation towards the bertih to be irrigated*', which perhaps serve to defend the versatility of the text or its transmitters.

The Pawang as Commander of the Rice Field

Beyond providing the reader an insight into Perak rice worlds that were hallowed by religio-historical tradition, Jawi texts such as the *Kitab Perintah Pawang* are exceptionally informative about the image of *pawang*s, their technological or supernatural expertise and their unparalleled authority within these socioeconomic stratums. Indeed, the *Kitab* is the most detailed compendium of the image and authority of *pawang*s amongst the food producing sectors of Perak, within a broader corpus of Jawi manuscripts collected from the western Malay state that contain data on the subject including the *Undang Undang ke-99* (*99 Laws, of Perak*) which has been traced to a 'family of sayyid courtiers' in the reign of Sultan Iskandar Zulkarnain Shah (1752-1765).[231] The 12th, 29th, 59th and 80th *bab*s of the *Undang Undang ke-99* that are related to questions posed by the Sassanid emperor, Anushirwan (d. 579) to his minister, for instance, are telling of a Malay (rather than Persian) setting wherein the archetypal Perak *pawang*, firstly, 'held a position of king … in the ricefield, and in the mine'. Secondly, was 'entitled to maintenance from the faithful'

[230] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Kitab Perintah Pawang*. '*bab recited to the parang finely notched into the land*' and '*bab recited towards swinging the biliong*'; RAS Maxwell Malay 15 Untitled. '*bab recited to the parang finely notched into the land*' and '*bab recited towards swinging the biliong*'; 'Order in [the Perak] Council No. 6 of 1890' in ICSA. *Reports furnished by Order of His Excellency (1893)*, 22.
[231] James Rigby, 'Law: Part II – The 99 Laws of Perak' in *Papers on Malay Subjects* (Kuala Lumpur: Federal Malay States Government Press: 1908).

and 'escaped taxation and forced labor'. Thirdly, was held to possess superhuman qualities and the 'technological' expertise of 'locating matters that were improper [in the ricefield] and setting them right with appropriate incantations' and 'vivifying the padi' tri-yearly in return for customary fees from subsistence planters.[232]

The *Kitab Perintah Pawang* makes no reference to the customary fees of *pawang*s, or their liberty from taxation and forced labor from the Perak court, and is a text preoccupied with the unparalleled religio-economic presence and technological proficiency of the *pawang* in the *ladang* field. Indeed, whilst the aforementioned '*Origin and Genealogy*' section of the *Kitab* alludes to historical and contemporary 'vice-regent*' pawang*s enjoying statures as 'kings' or 'commanders' in the ricefield, the authority and expertise of the *pawang* is emphasized in a series of *bab*s pertaining to agricultural operations. Possibly illustrative of socioeconomic worlds wherein *pawang*s were venerated as indispensable, physically present authorities throughout forest clearing and seeding, these *bab*s include, firstly, the '*bab recited to beras*' wherein the danger-repelling *Sri* Indra *rasa* (the esoteric heart of Indra) that transmogrified into *beras* to be sowed in the forest clearing, is transmitted through the 'teeth of the *pawang*'. Secondly, the '*bab recited to bertih*' wherein the 'freer from dirt and danger [and] disastrous arthropods … [of] God's descent', is transmitted to the ricefield via the 'finger [and] toenail of the *pawang'*. Thirdly, the '*bab recited to tepung tawar*' wherein the 'freer from dirt and danger, disaster, and antidote to the venomous and gnomes that damage crops', falls from the heavens to be sprinkled upon the ricefield off the 'beard of the *pawang*'. Fourthly, the '*bab recited to the parang finely notched into the land of flour*' wherein the origin of virile forest clearing iron is traced to the 'semen of the *pawang*'. Fifthly, the '*bab recited whilst towards beginning felling the [forest for] ladang*'

[232] Refer to the 12th, 29th, 59th and 80th *bab*s of Rigby, 'Law: Part II – The 99 Laws of Perak'.

wherein the 'tool' (in all probability, the light hatchet) is clarified as having materialized through the 'snot of the *pawang*'.[233]

The bodily and 'kingly' presence of the *pawang* in these forest clearing operations, however, is most detailed in the aforementioned '*bab recited to the parang*' and '*bab recited towards swinging the biliong*'. Herein, the *pawang* is portrayed, firstly, as a topographical expert determining an appropriate *tumpu langgam* or 'melodious foothold' for conquest of the forest through 'inspecting' and 'surveying' the '*petua* [fatwa, of the] *pawang*' upon the husbandman's first 'fine notch' of the timber-knife and subsequently, upon the 'fine notching of 3 punches' of the light hatchet, following the clearing of preliminary scrub or bushes. Secondly, as an intercessor of flora, fauna and ecosystems through 'wiping', 'sprinkling' and 'scattering' miraculous articles, and commencing upon ecologically perfected processes of forest clearing. Thirdly, as the royal *to' sheikh belantrawan* demanding regular audiences and reports of husbandmen upon the completion of agricultural operations.[234] It is unfortunate that Hajji Raja Yahya's transcription fails to provide sufficient detail on the titles of a series of oral transmitters of the *Kitab* including Ahmad Gemok (Ahmad, the expert of rich soil), Ngah Tongkah (the intercessor of the way of the plough) and Sharif Itam Gambut (the *sharif* of crumbling black soil) to derive conclusions about the physical presence of these 'royal' *pawang*-transmitters within actual ricefields.

The portrayal of the *pawang* as a venerated bodily and sexual authority in rice worlds is not one confined to the *Kitab Perintah Pawang* and appears to be common to a number of manuscripts produced in Perak including an untitled 'remembrance … of the *ilmu akhirat* [esoteric science of the hereafter] … of the Perak personage … Pa' [*pawang*]

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233 RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Kitab Perintah Pawang*. '*bab recited to beras*', '*bab recited to bertih*', '*bab recited to tepung tawar*', '*bab recited to the parang finely notched into the land of flour*' and '*bab recited whilst towards beginning felling the [forest for] ladang*'.

234 RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Kitab Perintah Pawang*.'*bab recited to the parang finely notched into the land of flour*' and '*bab recited towards swinging the biliong*'.

Sulong Hamidullah', housed as *Malay 120* at the RAS.[235] Transcribed by a Muhammad Saleh in Shaaban 1304 (May 1887) and containing thirty physiological and erotic instructions by an Arab sayyid *pawang* who was the 'bearer of God's *dzat* [Essence]' for the *mualad* (creole, patrilineal descendants of the prophet Muhammad), *Malay 120* provides snippets of data on the unparalleled authority of erotic rice *pawang*s within late 19th century socioeconomic settings.[236] Indeed, the collection of instructions for multiple subjects including the transmission of the *shahadat* (Muslim confession of faith) through penis insertions into vaginas, the attainment of the experience of the hajj through breaking hymens, and the perfection of vaginal penetrations so as to enable female partners to experience the Black Stone of Mecca in their vaginas, comprises of lessons concerning the '*descent of peterah [tithe of crops paid after Ramdzan]*' and the '*provenance of zakat [almsgiving, in the form of crops]*' that reflect the *pawang*'s centrality to the production of rice and the calculation of proportions of the crop for tithes and alms.[237] These instructions are also revelatory of the *pawang*'s techonological and spiritual expertise to dictate to circles of rice producers that the required *sa-gantang* (a measure of rice equivalent to 3.125 kg) of *peterah* and zakat was to be esoterically issued through equivalent 'coitally ejaculated sperm' and charitably surpassed by 'powerful sexual performance … and additional coition with women' respectively.

The didactic concerns of *Malay 120* with the physiological and sexual proficiency of a *pawang* in late 19th century Perak who was 'gaoled in the 1880s' for his popular

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235 RAS Maxwell Malay 120. *Untitled* [*Ilmu Akhirat*]. Transcribed by Muhammad Saleh, 1887. While RAS Maxwell Malay 120 contains no page numbers, it has the numbers of instructions (1–30) that appear to be marked out by, or at the request of, Maxwell.

236 Also see Winstedt, *The Malay Magician*, 63, 76; Winstedt, *Shaman, Saiva and Sufi,* 131; Richard O. Winstedt, 'A Malay Pantheist Charm', *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 86 (1922), p. 265. For a discussion of the *mualad* in the Malay archipelago, refer to Engseng Ho, *The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean* (Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006), pp. 139, 150. Also see Engseng Ho, 'Hadhramis Abroad in Hadhramaut: The Muwalladin', in *Hadhrami Traders, Scholars, and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750s–1960s* eds. Ulrike Freitag and W. G. Clarence-Smith, (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 131-132. I am grateful to Abas Ali Al-Aydarus for tracing Sulong's elaborate, posthumous, Hadhrami genealogy, as an Alawi sayyid.

237 RAS Maxwell Malay 120. *Untitled* [*Ilmu Akhirat*]. See instructions 5 and 6.

'dangerous creed' provide the reader little data regarding the actual rice worlds or operations he dominated.[238] However, an untitled Jawi manuscript housed within the *MS40334* compendium at *SOAS* contains exceptionally rich detail on the *pawang* being an essential, 'kingly' and bodily presence within the Perak ricefield. Whilst the unnamed scribe commences with a description of this text as *Inilah Peraturan Resam Pawang Melayu* (*The Arrangement and Customary Usage of Malay Pawangs*), Winstedt's 1925 *Shaman, Saiva and Sufi* contains translated portions of the Jawi record (hereafter referred to as *Inilah Peraturan Resam*) and clarifies that 'two Perak headmen' had gifted the Jawi text to the scholar-administrator in 1913. Furthermore, his 1929 article on 'The Ritual of the Rice-Field' comprises of a romanized version of portions of the *Inilah Peraturan Resam* and emphasizes that the text contains 'many technical terms that should be of interest to agricultural and other officers interested in the cultivation of rice'.[239] The *Inilah Peraturan Resam* is distinct from Jawi texts such as the *Kitab Perintah Pawang* in terms of how it appears to be didactically driven towards exposing the subaltern world of the *peladang* (husbandman) in whose eyes and 'hopes', the *to' pawang* was 'second in line for obeisance … [after] the primordial God and the Prophet [Muhammad] … the only refuge of hope' and the 'king of the clumps and clods'.[240] It is through the eyes and 'hopes' of the prototypical Perak husbandman that the narrative in the *Inilah Peraturan Resam* proceeds, revealing socioeconomic settings wherein the instruction-imparting *to' pawang* was consulted and held an audience in the course of a range of forest clearing and planting procedures. Such agricultural operations included, in chronological order, the establishment of the *tumpu langgam*, the cutting of scrub or bushes for burning, the burning of dry felled timber, the selection and partition of a 'seed plot' for dibbling

[238] Winstedt, 'A Malay Pantheist Charm', 261–267; Richard O. Winstedt, *The Malays; A Cultural History* (Singapore: Graham Brash, 1981) 37–40; Winstedt, *Shaman, Saiva and Sufi*, 129.
[239] Richard O. Winstedt, 'The Ritual of the Rice-Field', *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 7:3 (1929), 437.
[240] SOAS MS40334. *Inilah Peraturan Resam Pawang Melayu.*

seeds, the *peladang*'s 'notching of the *changkul*' for the 'enclosure' of the seed, the direct planting of the seed within the 'holes of 7 burrows', comprehensive planting and gating of the ricefield, 'reaping with the *tuai* [tiny reaping knife concealable in the palm] in earnest', and the 'pounding [-] airing and cleansing of reaped padi'.

Beyond simply portraying the *to' pawang* as a consultative authority in socioeconomic stratums of Perak, the *Inilah Peraturan Resam* is illustrative of late 19th and early 20th century ricefields wherein the king of the clumps and clods was a physically present authority. As an 'indispensable functioning', the Perak *pawang* produced miraculous articles for sophisticated agricultural operations; 'fumigated', 'blessed' and selected root materials for tools such as *parang*s, *bilion*gs and dibbers; 'smelt', 'tasted' and created 'seed plots', and commenced the process of direct planting; and, surrounded the dry hill ricefield with his '*petua* [and] *isharat* [mark]', searching out the *semangat padi* and reaping the *semangat*-bearing freak ear, preserving the vital force of rice for the next season's crop, prior to the husbandman's comprehensive reaping. Moreover, the prototypical *pawang* supervised the *'to* imam's reading of *doa arwah* (supplication that serves as a *zikr* or remembrance) to 'avert calamity'; instructed specific days for felling, sowing and reaping, to propitiate the 'dead *pawangs'* residing in the ricefield; attended *kenduri*s (religious feasts) in the ricefield to 'avert calamity' prior to planting and upon the 'padi reaching pregnancy'; calculated and extracted a zakat for the 'destitute [-] imam and laborers'; and, stored the 'pounded [-] aired and cleansed' grain in a 'barn or square rice bin'.[241] Serving as a resource into *pawang* dominated rice worlds, the *Inilah Peraturan Resam* also provides historians a window into the economic rationale of subsistence *ladang* planters in sectors of late 19th and early 20th century Perak. On the one hand, the details on the usage of *pawang*-ed dibbers and the *'to pawang*'s calls for the rice 'child to return

[241] SOAS MS40334. *Inilah Peraturan Resam Pawang Melayu*; also see Shaw's discussion on reaping and storing the '*semangat* padi', 'Malay Industries: Part 3: Rice Planting', 19.

from its sojourn of five months, upon the sixth' upon reaping the *semangat*-bearing freak ear, introduce readers to the form of subsistence agriculture in 'the common upland arable lands', mentioned in the *Kitab Perintah Pawang*, wherein the 'tillage … [was not] subjected to the process of flooding' and the grain 'quickly' reaped within 5 to 7 months.[242] On the other hand, the details on the archetypal Perak husbandman's option of dry hill rice cultivation suggest that the preference for this form of agriculture was driven by both the supernatural association of historical and contemporary *pawang*s with *ladang* production, and the fact that the *ladang* produced 'a variety of different edible vegetables' including 'the cucumber', 'the papaya', 'the bottle gourd', 'the wax-gourd', 'the amaranth', 'the egg-plant' and 'beans [-] seeds of all sorts'.[243]

Whilst Jawi texts such as the *Kitab Perintah Pawang* and the *Inilah Peraturan Resam* particularly associate rice agriculture in Perak with holy men, we find compelling data on the centrality of holy men to rice worlds in a corpus of materials concerning European, Christian missionaries in late 19th century Perak. For instance, if we refer to the aforementioned 1893 *Reports furnished by Order of His Excellency*, we find evidence of officials including the State Commissioner of Lands, C. Leech, 'encouraging [projects of permanent, wet] rice cultivation' through Christian missionaries who were to be financially supported to introduce suitable immigrant planters.[244] Indeed, an 1892 memo of Leech compiled in the *Reports* portrays late 19th century Perak rice worlds as dominated by 'industrious and capable forest pioneers identified as holymen' such as a charismatic Roman Catholic priest in Larut, Father Gazeau, who 'ministered' a colony of

[242] SOAS MS40334. *Inilah Peraturan Resam Pawang Melayu*. '*recitation to the seed*'; Crawfurd, *History of the Indian Archipelago*, 360-363.
[243] SOAS MS40334. *Inilah Peraturan Resam Pawang Melayu*.
[244] See C. Leech's 28 April 1892 memo to 'The Secretary to Government. Taiping' in *ICSA. Reports furnished by Order of His Excellency* (1893), 25.

Chinese converts and required the Residency's financial assistance in 'inviting' rice planters from Fui Chew, China.[245]

The most detailed European missionary source on the prominence of holy men in late 19th century Perak rice worlds is an 1889 epistle of the first resident priest of a Tamil 'Pariah' (Paraiyar) Roman Catholic colony in the *mukim* (parish area) of Bagan Serai in Krian, Kampung Padre, H. E. Msgr. Rene Michael Marie Fee (d. 1904) of the *Missions Etrangeres de Paris* (Paris Foreign Mission).[246] This epistle is a detailed autobiographical record of Fr. Fee's seven years as an industrious pioneer of the subsistence wet rice colony wherein 'Christians till[ed] their fields' and were to attract 'pagans' from, in all probability, rice colonies dominated by 'pagan' (Muslim) saints, to 'salvation'.[247] In spite of Fr. Fee's apparent disgust with the prominence of 'paganism' (Islam) in Perak rice worlds, the 1889 epistle serves as a window into socioeconomic stratums wherein Christian saints such as Fr. Fee appeared to be indulging in similar agricultural operations as, and competing with, their 'pagan' counterparts described in the *Kitab Perintah Pawang* and *Inilah Peraturan Resam*. In fact, Fr. Fee portrays his 'Robinson Crusoe' life in Bagan Serai as one in the fashion of Muslim *pawang*s and involving the agricultural operations of establishing a 'foothold' and leading a warlike conquest of the inaccessible, virgin forest by 'Confessors of the Faith'; producing miraculous articles for sophisticated agricultural operations; 'preparing' and 'blessing' tools such as axes and

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245 Cited from Eaton, 'Who are the Bengal Muslims' in his *Essays on Islam and Indian History*, 266. Refer to the Acting British Resident, W. H. Treacher's 23 June 1892 memo to 'The Hon. The Colonial Secretary, Straits Settlements' and Leech's 28 April 1892 memo to 'The Secretary to Government. Taiping', in *ICSA. Reports furnished by Order of His Excellency* (1893), 24-25. For a mention of an early 20th century Chinese Methodist settlement 'under the sponsorship of [American] Methodist missionaries' at Sitiawan, see Kratoska, 'Rice Cultivation and the Ethnic Division of Labor in British Malaya', 293.

246 Fr. Fee, 'Kampong Padre: A Tamil Settlement Near Bagan Serai, Perak,' Fr. Manikam (trans.) *Journal of the Malayan Branch of Royal Asiatic Society,* 36:1 (1963), 153-181.

247 For further information on the Kampung Padre, see: *Perak Government Gazette* (Taiping [Perak], 1894), 38; G. E. Turner, A Perak coffee Planter's Report on the Tamil Laborers in Malaya in 1902,' *The Malayan Historical Journal*, 2:1 (1955), 26-27. Also see the 1937 Annual Report of the Controller of Labour in Malaya, 'The Settlement of Tamil Labourers on the Land,' *Malayan Agricultural Journal* 26:11 (1938), 453-454; Maxwell's 1892 report on 'Encouragement of Rice-Cultivation in the Malay Peninsula' in *ICSA. Reports furnished by Order of His Excellency,* (1893); W. H. Treacher's 1 April 1892 memo, and the Assistant Indian Immigration Agent, A. B. Stephens's 6 February 1892 memo to 'The Secretary to Government, Taiping', in *ICSA. Reports furnished by Order of His Excellency (1893),* 5, 13-15, 65.

sickles; miraculously commencing the felling of trees and the burning of dry felled timber; instructing specific times for planting; and, channeling 'God's Providence' into Bagan Serai for the ripening of the harvest. Furthermore, the expertise of the Christian 'rice *pawang*' included battling 'the devil … bent upon' the ruin of the crop in Kampung Padre; allotting 'shares of land' to 'Confessors' to expand acreage; appearing as a '*gantia*' of St. Joseph and invoking a visit of the 'Patron Saint' to Bagan Serai upon the Easter of 1885 to remedy the 'withering of padi' under drought; and, calculating and extracting '5 per cent of the harvest' for Joseph who was the historical saint or *pawang* venerated in both Christian and Muslim ricefields in the late 19th century Peninsula to 'drive away rats and mice'.[248]

Fr. Fee's epistle is replete with mentions of how the simultaneous growth of rice agriculture and religion in Kampung Padre from 1882 to 1889, was impeded by 'voracious mosquitoes', 'forest animals' including wandering elephants, rice pests, an outbreak of scurvy and the availability of water that had 'the color but not taste of coffee'. However, an 1891 memo of the Bishop of Malacca compiled in the 1893 *Reports*, emphasizes that Christian colonies such as the Kampung Padre were doomed to failure due to the fact that 'it was cheaper for … [the Tamil laborer] to buy rice in the bazaar than to grow it … [and] easier to live as a coolie than as a raiat'. The Bishop's memo seems to suggest that in performing similar socioeconomic roles in the ricefields of Perak, *pawang*s were apparently more effective in 'affixing' Malay Muslims to the life of the *raiat* or agricultural laborer, addressed as the *anak chuchu raiat tentera* and *pegawai* in the *Kitab Perintah Pawang* and *Inilah Peraturan Resam* respectively, than their Christian missionary counterparts.[249]

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[248] Fr Fee, 'Kampong Padre: A Tamil Settlement Near Bagan Serai, Perak'; Skeat, *Malay Magic*, 192.
[249] Bishop of Malacca, Edward Gasnier's 14 December 1891 memo to 'Mr [H. C.] Belfield' (Bishop House, Singapore) in *ICSA. Reports furnished by Order of His Excellency* (1893), 26.

The aforementioned Jawi and European missionary materials pertaining to rice worlds in late 19th and early 20th century Perak provide facets of information regarding factors and networks that sustained the careers of rice *pawang*s in the Malay state. For example, the *Kitab Perintah Pawang* and the *Inilah Peraturan Resam*, and Fr. Fee's epistle, allow us to draw the inference that the supernatural careers of holy men in Perak were intricately connected to the abundance of land which facilitated seemingly unreserved rice cultivation by forest pioneers who were in turn, dependent upon the technological and supernatural expertise of *pawangs*. While Fr. Fee's epistle and the 1893 'Krian Monthly Report' mention that Kampung Padre expanded from 200 acres in 1881 to 700 acres by 1882 through the Residency's grants, both the *Kitab Perintah Pawang* and the *Inilah Peraturan Resam*'s blatant depictions of husbandmen uninhibitedly selecting lands for dry hill rice cultivation and employing *pawangs* to establish *tumpu langgam*s in forests, appear to reflect the reality that late 19th century Perak had an approximate surface area of 5 million acres and a population of merely 214,754.[250] In fact, a significant number of memos or circulars of European administrators and missionaries pertaining to 'the encouragement of [wet] rice cultivation' in Perak, compiled in the 1893 *Reports*, state that the 'availability of land' in the forest-engulfed Malay state and dire 'want of population' encouraged the liberal 'destruction of forest trees and the temporary cultivation of land' or to be precise, *ladang* pioneering.[251]

The portrayals of uninhibited land acquisition for dry clearings in the *Kitab Perintah Pawang* and the *Inilah Peraturan Resam* also seem to be in line with the stipulations of an early 19th century '*Perak Code* … copied from a manuscript formerly belonging to Sultan JAFAR [Muazzam Shah (d. 1865)]' and reproduced in Maxwell's 1884 'Laws and Customs of the Malays', on the 'absolute right' and 'customary arrangement [-] agreed

[250] Lim Teck Ghee, *Origins of a Colonial Economy*, 23.
[251] For instance, see the Collector and Magistrate, Batang Padang, Cecil Wray's 14 March 1892 memo to 'The Secretary to Government, Taiping' in *ICSA. Reports furnished by Order of His Excellency* (1893), 11-12.

upon by the judges', of forest pioneers. According to the *Perak Code*, pioneers enjoyed 'unimpeded access to forest land that had not been acquired for *huma* [dry, hill rice] cultivation … [and] lands lying without *huma* cultivation' provided 'the clearer of scrub or bushes' was 'Islam[ic]'.[252] While Maxwell clarifies that this 'cardinal doctrine' of unimpeded access to abundant land in Perak was often based upon the pioneer's payment of a tithe to the grantee, who was in theory the Sultan or raja, the *Inilah Peraturan Resam* implies that this unreserved acquisition of land was tied to a tithe that was fixed in accordance with the zakat and extracted by the *pawang* for the imam who was in all probability, the authority who alienated land in the parish area and collected tithes off the rice crop.[253]

In these Perak materials, we also find evidence of rice *pawang*s being plugged into 'indigenous' and transcultural webs of patronage within and beyond the frontiers of the ricefield. On the one hand, Winstedt's acknowledgement of 'two Perak headmen' as the source of the *Inilah Peraturan Resam* in *Shaman, Saiva and Sufi*, is telling of transcultural scholarly networks that the scholar-administrator and Muslim courtiers were plugged into, which led to the production and circulation of Jawi texts. Similarly, the *Kitab Perintah Pawang* contains two notes clarifying that the text was transcribed by Hajji Raja Yahya under the 'command of *tengku* [and later, Sultan] Idris bin *al-marhum bendahara* raja Iskander'. One of these notes, found in a *Teyib Mantra Gajah* (Manual of Elephant Mantra) attached to the *Kitab*, highlights that the text was produced 'at the moment' when, firstly, Idris was sworn into office as the *Hakim Besar*' (Chief Justice); secondly, the 'Raja Muda [heir apparent] Yusuf [Sharifuddin Mudzaffar Shah]' became the Regent of Perak; thirdly, the Resident, 'the *tuan* Hugh Low [-] Sir', held 'residence … [at] the Bukit [Chandan of] Kuala Kangsar; and lastly, 'news arrived' that the possessor of the *Kitab*,

[252] Refer to Jawi extracts of the *Perak Code* in Maxwell, 'The Law and Customs of the Malays, 75-78, 103-104.
[253] SOAS MS40334. *Inilah Peraturan Resam Pawang Melayu*; also see Roff, 'The Origins and Early Years of the Majlis Agama Kelantan', 182.

Maxwell, had become the '*gantia*' of the Resident who was in Hong Kong.[254] Unfortunately, the aforementioned notes merely mention Idris's and Maxwell's scholarly collaboration in producing the *Kitab* and allude to the transcultural basis of the Jawi text in terms of its patrons, possessor and imagined audiences who were in all probability associated with Sultan Yusuf and the Resident, Low.

The references to Idris's 'command' and the scribe being Hajji Raja Yahya who was simultaneously a courtier and *penghulu*, allow us to deduce that the *Kitab* was a reflection of 19th century Perak wherein *pawang*s, or at least Jawi texts concerning the careers of *pawang*s, were intimately associated with segments of the Perak court. Indeed, the intimate connections between courtier-*penghulu*s and *pawang*s is apparent in the fact that texts such as the *Kitab Perintah Pawang* and the *Inilah Peraturan Resam* were produced and transcribed by headmen particularly familiar with the centrality of *pawang*s to the expansion of the Malayan rice frontier. Furthermore, the fact that the son of Tengku Busu Raja Daud of the Siak court and 'headman with Magisterial powers' over 'so many hundred families of his countrymen' who were probably mobilized for colonizing the parish area in Belanja, the *penghulu* Yahya, was involved in the production of a compendium devoted to the centrality of the prototypical *pawang* in rice worlds, is illustrative of sophisticated networks that miracle-workers were plugged into. It is unfortunate that Hajji Raja Yahya's acknowledgement of the courtly titles of *pawang*-transmitters of the *Kitab* such as Tengku Puan Jambi (the royal consort of Jambi), Raja Ismail Puteh (raja Ismail, the white one), Raja Perempuan Tuha (the old wise female raja) and Ma Agong (the manifestation of all important ministers) fail to provide further biographical details that would serve a study of *pawang*s' patronage or political

[254] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. Hajji Raja Yahya, *Kitab Perintah Pawang. Kitab Perintah Pawang.* See the attached *Teyib Mantra Gajah* 'Manual of Elephant Mantra'. For a genealogy of courtiers such as *tengku* Idris and Raja Muda Yusuf, see Hajji Raja Yahya, '*Salasilah … written on Wednesday the seventh day of Jamad-ul-akhir, A. H. 1299 [25 April 1882], at Kampung Belanja*' in W. E. Maxwell, 'The History of Perak from Native Sources', *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 14 (1884), 319.

connections. Nevertheless, B. W. Andaya has suggested that *Perak: the Abode of Grace* was peculiar to the rest of the Peninsula in terms of the how the Siak Islamic court involved *pawang*s in the 'affairs of the state' such as those who were sworn into the courtly office of 'Sultan Muda … a State Shaman … skilled in magic arts (*ilmu pawang*)' which was a position that had by the late 19th century assumed the stature of being that of *karamat*s (miracle workers) and was occupied by kin of Idris and Yahya.[255]

Whilst Andaya has concluded that historians can learn little about the history of *pawangs* who were associated with the Islamic court due to 'the lack of information', it is possible that texts such as the *Kitab Perintah Pawang* were accurate indications of sophisticated socioeconomic settings wherein *pawang*s were connected to the Islamic court through patterns of patronage and kinship, pivotal to agricultural operations and served as links between the *raiat* and court. Such networks are evident in an untitled and undated Jawi manual, the *Book of Charms formerly belonging to a Sultan Muda of Perak and given to R. O. Winstedt by Raja Haji Yahya of Chendriang* housed at *SOAS* as *25027/2* comprising of a series of *bab*s illustrative of the prototypical Sultan Muda's centrality to subaltern rice worlds including the '*bab in the condition of our intention to clear the primeval big forest that has not been cleared by pioneers*', and the '*amulet and remedy of padi if appropriately planted in the center of the dry hill ricefield or wet ricefield*'.[256] These *bab*s that appear to be congruent with the aforementioned stipulation of the *Perak Code* regarding 'unimpeded access to [un-cleared] forest land' are particularly detailed about the courtier-*pawang*'s authority in the forest, topographical expertise and experiments, miraculous rituals with timber, transmission of amulets and remedies, instructions regarding the planting of talismans and meditative postures upon agricultural frontiers, and ultimately, the *rejah* (supernatural charge

[255] B. W. Andaya, *Perak, The Abode of Grace,* 34, 40; also see Winstedt and Wilkinson, *A History of Perak*, 133-135.

[256] SOAS 25027/2. *Book of Charms formerly belonging to a Sultan Muda of Perak*. See *bab in the condition of our intention to clear the primeval big forest that has not been cleared by pioneers*' and the '*amulet and remedy of padi if appropriately planted in the center of the huma or bendang*'.

forward) upon the forest, from the *pawang*-established *tumpu langgam* or 'melodious foothold'.

Pawangs on the Perak Frontier: Miraculous Expertise and Negotiations with Spiritual Forests

Ilmu in the Service of Establishing Footholds in Ghostly Forests

> I never saw such a horrid ghostly place … the natives refer to it as *tampat hantu dan ular sawah*—'home of ghosts and boa constrictors' … It is a dispensation of Providence that we have got thus far in safety.
>
> – F. A. Swettenham, *From Perak to Slim*, 1880.

The Deputy Commissioner with the Perak Expedition, Swettenham's association of progress in the interior with 'a dispensation of Providence' was recorded in his journal of a 'Journey … from Durien Sebatang on the Perak river to Slim, and down the Slim and Bernam rivers to the sea' in February 1875, upon encountering the *tampat hantu dan ular sawah*.[257] While Swettenham's publication of his journal was driven by a need to affirm that he was indeed the 'first white man' to visit Slim in the upstream interior of Perak, it introduces readers to late 19th century stratums replete with forest tracks that were 'unbearable … [even for] a day's walking' and plagued by 'strange' pedigrees of pests, snakes and birds, undulating topography and *hantus*, and successfully penetrated through ceremonies religiously performed to propitiate 'mysterious agencies of the past' and weather-determining supernatural '*dato*s'. In a similar vein, Maxwell's 1876 journal of 'A Journey on Foot to the Patani Frontier' to capture the 'actual instigator of the murder' of the first British Resident of Perak, furnishes rich detail on the 'rough experience' of 'Malay traveling' in the 'depressing … dense and still … monotonous … never-ending forest' that was 'stifling for want of air', suffered the 'torrents of the rainy season' and

[257] Swettenham, 'Journey … from Durien Sebatang on the Perak river to Slim', 65-66.

was 'abound in traps … [and] tangled nets' of both flora and resident spirits.[258] Maxwell's journal also contains numerous references to this late 19th century 'rough experience' being intermediated by the 'occult sciences' of aboriginal horticulturalists, 'curious customs' and historical traditions of the 'wonderful adventures' of supernatural personages, and elaborates upon an urgent ceremony of propitiating 'the spirits of the stream' between Jambai and Tampan that was undertaken by a Muslim middleman to ensure 'all danger was over'.

Drawing upon European expedition records on 'rough experiences' in the interior, post-colonial historians of agricultural frontiers in Perak such as Lim Teck Ghee and Hill have concluded that late 19th century Perak was 'very much a frontier territory' populated by 'restless people in search of elusive fortune' through hazardous forest pioneering and rice production, and that a study of the 'methods and round-of-work' of native authorities who intermediated 'horrid ghostly' forests of the interior is almost impossible due to 'scanty' data available from the 19th century.[259] Unfortunately, post-colonial scholars of Perak have neglected Jawi materials such as the *Kitab Perintah Pawang* which serves as an exceptionally detailed resource into Perak's late 19th century frontiers being dominated by *pawangs* who intermediated and controlled simultaneously agricultural and supernatural forests through their miraculous methods of colonization and sophisticated negotiations. This academic silence on the supernatural expertise of *pawang*s on the frontier is especially surprising since the aforementioned journals of Swettenham and Maxwell, Winstedt's 1924 '*Karamat*s' and Shaw's 1911 'Malay Industries: Rice Planting', are informative about the socioeconomic worlds of 19th century forest pioneers or dry hill rice and wet rice pushers pivoting upon *pawang*s' mediations with eclectic *hantu*s, *jinns* and spiritual *dato*s who 'actually' represented the forest frontiers of

[258] W. E. Maxwell, 'A Journey on Foot to the Patani Frontier in 1876: Being a Journal Kept During an Expedition Undertaken to Capture Datoh Maharaja Lela of Perak', *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 9 (1882), 26.
[259] Lim Teck Ghee, *Peasants and their Agricultural Economy*, 55; Hill, *Rice in Malaya*, 98.

the interior, and *pawang*s' absolute determination of the success of intricate agricultural operations, the 'destruction of vermin', weather conditions, the required rainfall for the crop and the health, lives and deaths of forest pioneers.[260] Indeed, in an 1925 article comprising of 'Notes on Malay Magic', Winstedt's observations of the 'heathen [aboriginal horticulturalists of] Mantra' stock who had been convinced that rice operations required propitiating the '*semangat* padi' and eclectic spirits with the expert formula of '*Basmala* [*bismilliah* or 'in the name of Allah'] … charms that invoke the aid of Allah and his Prophet' appear to be revelatory of the phenomenon that Muslim miracle workers were conceived of as prime agricultural and supernatural adepts in the 'the gate of the trackless forest' in Perak.[261]

Whilst the published records of Maxwell, Swettenham, Shaw and Winstedt suffer from brevity, the *Kitab Perintah Pawang* is a rich document on the miraculous expertise of *pawang*s to establish 'footholds' or 'secure positions' within the 'trackless forest' in the capacity of, as spelled out in the '*Origin and Genealogy*', '*dato*s, sheikhs and experts of the forest'. In fact, the *Kitab* comprises of a '*Salasilah [transmitted by] Ngah Johor Andong*' that commences with a brief reminder for its audience to 'strictly avoid the talk of the ignorant [*jahil*] and astray who fail to possess the expertise of the guru over them', elaborates upon how the spread of 'the resplendent light of industry and progress' on agrarian frontiers populated by *hantu shetan* (a collective of demons and armies of Iblis) was tied to the miraculous *isharat* (mark) and *tilek* (second sight) of *pawang*s.[262] Drawing the audience of the *Kitab* 'back to the narrative of Pawang Sadia and Pawang Asal', Ngah Johor Andong's *Salasilah* emphasizes that the primodial *pawangs*' Act of 'breaking the cylinder of essence' (*baluh dzat*) to Create the earth had a side effect the 'beginning of the *hantu shetan*'s roaming of the earth … [and] entering of the earth through the *pusat bumi*'

[260] Also see Newbold, *Political and Statistical Account of the British Settlements*, 110-111; Nathan, 'A Malay Ghost Story', 89-93.
[261] Winstedt, 'Notes on Malay Magic', 10-11.
[262] RAS Maxwell Malay 106 *Kitab Perintah Pawang* '*Salasilah [transmitted by] Ngah Johor Andong*'.

(navel of the earth). Cautioning forest pioneers against the reality that agricultural operations such as the clearing of scrub or bushes, the felling of trees via notching, and the bunding or breaching of ricefields to trap or drain water 'perturbed the *pusat bumi*' and evoked the ire of the *hantu shetan*, the *Salasilah* counsels that the '*hantu shetan* held not the *ilmu* or powers to qualify as *pawang*s', and that 'industry and progress' was guaranteed under the *isharat, tilek*, *petua*s and *ilmu* of *pawang*s or gurus who had 'armies of the Truthful Treasury' at their disposal. On the whole, the transmissions in the *Kitab* serve as a reminders for its audience, of the prototypical *pawang*'s expertise or esoteric *ilmu* of propitiating and mobilizing 'armies of the Truthful Treasury' for service in the forests and ricefields of late 19th century Perak. In fact, all the *bab*s, *kataans*, *fasal*s and *sharats* of the Jawi compendium appear to boast of the *pawang*'s coveted expertise through variegated, lengthy proclamations that the *pawang* was in reality facilitating agricultural operations on the frontier through the *kuasa* (power) of God; the *shafaat* (intercession) of Muhammad; the *berkat* (transferrable power-grace) of all historical *aulia anbia*s (saints and prophets), historical prophet-*pawang*s, historical (non-prophetic) *pawang*s, *batara*s and the miraculous formula for forests, *lailahalilallah*; and, the exorcisms of God, Muhammad and other historical prophet-*pawang*s.

The portrayal of *pawang*s or sheikhs as physical manifestations or channels of Godly and prophetic *kuasa*, *berkat* and speech in late 19th century Perak rice worlds was not exclusive to the *Kitab Perintah Pawang*, and we find evidence of such a trope in a Jawi '*Epistle from the tuan Sheikh Husain of Pulau Tiga [-] a Khaus on Kias*' addressed to the '*sahabat* [friend] *tuan* [Acting] *Resident'*, Maxwell, which appears to have been produced in October 1881 and is currently housed as *MS 46945* at SOAS.[263] This *khaus*, produced in between 'a series of villages surrounded by their rice lands' and complete with *zikr*

[263] SOAS MS 46945. Sheikh Husain, *Surat tuan Sheikh Husain of Pulau Tiga [-] malumkan khaus kias baharu [-] silam salam disurat sila susila [-] yang menghukumi kerhanya tuan Resident [-] Taiping*. A stamp of Kuala Kangsar allows us to deduce that the epistle was received upon 3 October 1881.

formulae and warnings against believers' 'suspicion' and 'forgetfulness' of Sheikh Husain's esoteric *kias* (miracle-working theology), firstly, connects the *kuasa*, desire, speech, brightness and vital force of God to the physical labors of the sheikh's devotees.[264] Secondly, relates that the *ilmu* of God operated mechanically as the 'soul' for the '*amal* [equated with 'labor' here] producing human body' that was in turn, a product of the *nur* of God and Muhammad. While Sheikh Husain's epistle fails to draw clear linkages between actual labors or *amal* in the key center of permanent wet rice cultivation in Perak and the mechanical attributes of God or Muhammad, the *Kitab Perintah Pawang* vividly describes the 'armies of the Truthful Treasury' as being functionally associated with the agent of 'industry and progress' upon agricultural frontiers, the *pawang*. This is obvious in how the *Kitab* regularly portrays the *pawang* as a personage cohabitating a cosmic universe beyond time and space, with agriculturally-efficient Muslim armies of *batara*s, historical prophet-*pawang*s, *pawang*s, *dato*s and *aulia anbia*. Ngah Johor Andong's *Salasilah*, for example, specifies that these armies of the *pawang* included a series of *bataras* including Batara Alam, Batara Guru (Siva), Batara Kala (Siva the Destroyer), Batara Sakti (Brahma) and Batara Kisna (Krsna) whose 'raja-ic origin and genealogy' certified their powers to 'order and punish the *hantu shetan*' emerging from the 'navel of the earth' in the course of agricultural operations.[265]

The aforementioned *Salasilah* and the *Kitab* on the whole, seems directed towards an aural audience familiar with the term '*batara*'. However, the Christian missionary, Rev. J. Perham's 1881 study of Sea Dyak reverence of '*Petaras'* (*bataras*) defines the term as one connoting agents of 'saving power', 'superior knowledge and civilization … over the growth of rice' and 'watching over the farm and guarding it from evils' who were invoked in the course of 'yearly farming operations' by *pawang*s with whom they shared

[264] Cited from Hill, *Rice in Malaya*, 103; SOAS MS 46945 Sheikh Husain, *Surat tuan Sheikh Husain of Pulau Tiga*.
[265] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Kitab Perintah Pawang*. See *Salasilah [transmitted by] Ngah Johor Andong*.

'special acquaintance'.[266] Such a perception of *bataras* being 'saving powers' and 'superior knowledge' for employment upon the agricultural frontier is conveyed in a '*jampi [miraculous charm] recited to benzoin*' in Ngah Johor Andong's *Salasilah* discussing the *pawang*'s proficiency to invoke *batara* armies to 'intervene and cooperate with the *teman*' (friend, the *pawang* and/or associated frontiersmen). Herein, the *pawang*'s *jampi* directs his *batara* associates towards, firstly, messengering the forest pioneer's ambitions of sharing the *tumpu langgam* held by '*keramat*s [-] *jinn*s [-] *peri*s [fairies -] *dewas* [-] *mambang* [the bright hoverers] [-] *Chandra* [and] *Indra*' in the forest, secondly, undertaking trusteeship of the rice seeds or nurseries of the colonizer, and thirdly, summoning the spiritual 'rajas of the great virgin forests [-] recently felled forests and wet ricefields' to 'order and punish their [*hantu shetan*] armies'.[267]

The *pawang*'s expertise upon Malayan frontiers also involved the faculties of inviting a range of trans-historical *pawang*s and *dato*s listed in the *Kitab*, into contemporary forests and employing these technologically advanced supernatural beings for the transformation of forests into ricefields. One of the prominent cosmic *pawang*s involved in negotiating the forested frontier and expanding 'the melody of the foothold', by the prototypical Perak *pawang* in the *Kitab*, is the Si Raja Pawang (the sayyid *pawang* of the sun and moon). For instance, in the '*bab recited to the parang*', both the timber-knife and forest are cautioned that the Si Raja Pawang 'stands positioned' with the contemporary frontiersman in the conquest upon the forest, and that the cosmic *pawang* operates as the 'actual agency … finely notching the *parang* … dislocating growth [-] deviating the roots of timber [-] sprouting roots to the heavens' and 'lifting traps of fronds' with the physical support of armies consisting of Batara Guru, Batara Kisna, Batara Bisnu and the

[266] Rev. J. Perham, 'Petara, Or Sea Dyak Gods', *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 8 (1881), 134-136, 138, 141-147, 149; also see R. J. Wilkinson, 'Batara Guru', *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 30 (1897), 307.
[267] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Kitab Perintah Pawang.* See *Salasilah [transmitted by] Ngah Johor Andong*'.

historical Indian Ocean *pawang*, Chulan.[268] The 'main deity of Perak', Batara Guru, along with the Muslim armies of Batara Kala and Batara Sakti, are often confused in the *Kitab* as *bataras* and as the 'historical *pawang*s of the land' produced through the loins of the dry rice pioneer, Nuh.[269] On the other hand, on multiple occasions, the *Kitab* displays the *pawang*'s expertise of mobilizing cosmic Muslim saints towards the task of transforming forests populated by game animals and spirits into *ladang* nurseries. This is particularly apparent in the consecutive '*bab recited whilst towards dibbling to benzoin*', '*kataan towards beras*', '*kataan towards beneh* [seed]' and '*kataan towards benzoin*'. Herein, the *pawang*'s chants, firstly, gather the physical protection of the comprehensive 'selection of *aulia anbia* [-] *dato*s who are *keramat*s [miracle-working shrines] [-] ancient *pawang*s [and the] graves of instructors of Islam' to convert the *bumi haiwan* into a dry clearing and secure the 'affixing of the *anak chuchu raiat tentera*' upon the *tumpu langgam*. Secondly, conjure and employ 'the crosser of 190 afflictions [and] illnesses', *Gandom Suri Sulong* (the eldest queen of wheat), as the *kawan* (playmate) and 'foster mother [and] nurse' of the nursery who 'enchants the hearts' of the '*Seri* [Ceres] the children of nine lights' through the six months period from seeding to reaping.[270] Furthermore, in the '*kataan to retrieve [reap] the semangat [transmitted by] Itam Dembut*', the *pawang* is depicted as an adept of religious reaping whose chanting fetal membranes transport *pawang*s such as Ranjuna (Arjuna), Bima and Chulan into contemporary ricefields to reap the *Seri mani* (sperm-like Ceres) and return the 'vital force of padi' to the 'storage womb of the *kalimah*' and Sadia Kala (Pawang Sadia performing as Siva the Destroyer).[271]

As a text that commences with a detailed discussion of contemporary human *pawang*s being *gantias* (vice-regents) of both the *ilmu* of Pawang Sadia and Pawang Asal

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[268] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Kitab Perintah Pawang*. See '*bab recited to the parang*' and '*recitation towards the parang the fine notcher*'
[269] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Kitab Perintah Pawang*. See '*Origin and Genealogy of the Pawang*'.
[270] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Kitab Perintah Pawang* '*bab recited whilst towards dibbling*' and '*kataan* towards *beras'*.
[271] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Kitab Perintah Pawang* '*kataan to retrieve [reap] the semangat [transmitted by] Itam Dembut*'.

and Asal's cloak of '*dato*, sheikh and expert of the forest', the *Kitab* is conscious to emphasize the *pawang*'s exceptionally intimate and economically-beneficial relationship with the prophet-*pawang* Muhammad. Indeed, while the *Kitab* makes frequent references to the historical *pawang*s Nuh, Batara Guru, Ibrahim and Luqman al-Hakim as key 'armies' mobilized by the contemporary *pawang* for topographical and timber-related operations and exorcizing forests-plaguing *hantu shetan*, a series of *sempena*s (blessed transmissions) clarify that Muhammad was the key agent of expanding the Islamic frontier via his powers, which were on par with God, of exorcizing eclectic *hantu shetan* residing upon the agricultural frontier. For instance, in a '*sempena [for] the hantu Bhuta*', the *pawang* penetrates the frontier represented by the colossal goblin, *Bhuta*, through a *doa* that '*rasulallah* personally made efficacious … with the efficacious *berkat* of *lailahalilallah*'.[272]

A series of *bab*s and *fasal*s of the *Kitab* further express that the *pawang*'s expertise of establishing an Islamic position or *tumpu langgam* upon the frontier was directly connected to the propitiation of Muhammad. This is particularly evident in the '*fasal pronouncing the command of the genggulang*' wherein the contemporary *gantia*'s establishment of an altar to appease Muhammad through *arwah* (remembrance or *zikr*) is equated with 'the establishment of an Islamic pillar of [Sadia's] Command in the *bumi haiwan*' and the authoritative statement of 'the melody of an authoritative presence' in the forest'.[273] While the '*Origin and Genealogy*' of the *Kitab* mentions that the tradition of historical Perak *pawang*s such as Chulan to 'appease' the 'hovering' great-great grandchildren of Nuh via *genggulangs*, the '*bab of support charmed upon burnt benzoin … wiped upon the personage among us who is qualified as pawang*' and the '*bab recited whilst towards filling the genggulang*' that are subsequent to the '*fasal pronouncing the command of the genggulang*' elaborate upon the

[272] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Kitab Perintah Pawang*. '*sempena [for] the hantu Bhuta*'.
[273] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Kitab Perintah Pawang*. See '*fasal pronouncing the command of the genggulang*'.

practical returns of the contemporary Malayan *pawang*'s propitiation of Muhammad through altars 'filled' by historical *pawang*s including Bima, Ali and Chulan and *bataras*.[274] This 'appeasement' of Muhammad results in the *pawang*s' and accompanying frontiersmen's radical transmogrification into ideal conquerors of the forest, to whom pedigrees of *jinn*s 'performed obeisance', whose bodies were engulfed by thousands of *jinns* serving as 'laborers [-] armies [and] guards', whose intricate features and organs were protected from corporeal and supernatural hazards of the frontier by subservient 'staffs of support', *malaikat*s (angels), and who 'stood with God' on the frontier and 'conquered with Muhammad'.[275]

It is apparent from the titles of the *babs*, *kataans* and *fasal*s of the *Kitab Perintah Pawang* such as '*bab recited to benzoin towards establishing the tumpu langgam'*, '*bab recited to the parang'* and '*bab recited to the tepung tawar'*, that the *pawang*'s negotiations in Perak's forests were not simply conducted with Muslim supernatural beings but also involved a range of material articles including benzoin, the *parang*, the *biliong*, *beras*, *bertih* and *tepung tawar*. In fact, these tools of colonization are regularly portrayed in the *Kitab* as both supernatural and Muslim products, politely greeted with *assalamualaikum*, and as bearers of genealogies as elaborate as the *tepung tawar*'s which is described as a miraculous product from 'the presence of God', ferried by Muhammad to the Kaaba and to the office of the key exorcist, Fatimah, and in turn, delivered to Malay frontiers by Jibrail.[276] The *pawang*'s negotiations with these simultaneously material and spiritual artifacts, however, are ultimately functional and directed towards employing these tools as *sahabat saudara* (friends and relatives) or agents to protect frontiersmen against malignant *hantu shetan*, 'afflictions', 'accursed ricefields', 'tyranny', 'disaster and destruction', '190 pedigrees of

[274] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Kitab Perintah Pawang*. See *'bab of support charmed upon burnt benzoin […] wiped upon the personage among us who is qualified as pawang*' and '*bab to be recited whilst towards filling the genggulang*'.
[275] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Kitab Perintah Pawang*. See '*bab of support charmed upon burnt benzoin […] wiped upon the personage among us who is qualified as pawang*' and '*bab to be recited whilst towards pulling the veil*'.
[276] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Kitab Perintah Pawang*. See '*kataan towards the tepung tawar* [ii]'.

venom' and game animals, and 'guard and restore the vital force' of both laborers and the 'drooping crop'.[277]

Pawang-ic Threats, Bloodbaths, Friendships, Contracts and Romances upon the Agricultural Frontier

The trope of Muslim superhumans communicating with supernatural forces for the purposes of forest clearing is not one peculiar to Jawi manuscripts such as the *Kitab Perintah Pawang*. For instance, the 5th '*Alqisah*' of the *Sejarah Melayu* is a chronicle of a Muslim frontiersman from Sayong (Perak), Badang, whose negotiations with a *hantu* whose 'eyes were red as fire, hair coarse and matted, and beard hanging down to the navel' resulted in Badang's miraculous potential to 'shiver huge trees into pieces in the course of walking, extract the all-embracing forest from its roots with a palm and clear brushwood through the waving of a hand … [and] reconstruct the deep forest into a somewhat wide plain in a moment'.[278] However, as a document of the archetypal Perak *pawang*'s supernatural negotiations upon the agricultural frontier, the *Kitab Perintah Pawang* serves as the most detailed Jawi collection of communications undertaken by *pawang*s with non-Muslim or semi-Islamized spirits for the procedure of establishing an Islamic 'foothold'. These rituals of communication with *jinns*, *hantu*s and *shetan* that epitomize forests throughout the *Kitab* are, in all probability, accurate reflections of the operations or ambitions of Muslim forest pioneers and frontiersman-*pawang*s to establish a *tumpu langgam* in the non-Muslim or semi-Islamized forests north and northeast of the Islamic frontiers in late 19th century Perak. For certain, the *Kitab*'s abundant references to hazardous *jinn*s, *hantus* and *shetan* as faces of the agricultural frontier provide historians a window into the 'rough experiences' of encountering 'horrid ghostly places' in the interior of late 19th century Perak, and the fact that such dangerous encounters were

[277] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Kitab Perintah Pawang*. Examples include the *'bab recited to benzoin when making intent to clear scrub [-] bushes [-] fell timber [-] establish a ladang*' and '*bab [unclear] to secure the benzoin*'.
[278] '*Alqisah [5]*' Text of *Raffles Ms. No. 18*, in 'Sejarah Melayu – The Malay Annals, 96-104.

mediated by the rituals of communication of the *pawang* on the frontier. This is illustrated in the opening pages of the *Kitab* which contain a statement on the coveted '*ilmu* [of the] *pawang*' being 'the esoteric science of intimately accessing the pedigree and genealogy of the *jinn* and *shetan* along with the expertise to control all the *jinn*s and *shetan*' through sophisticated supernatural negotiations.[279] This science of 'intimate access' to and 'negotiation' with non-Muslim and semi-Islamized *jinn* and *shetan* is directly connected by the *Kitab* to a series of operations on the Perak frontier through the aforementioned *bab*s and recitations concerning *'establishing the tumpu langgam'*, the '*the parang finely notched',* '*swinging the biliong*' '*conducting burning*' and '*planting the seed directly in the ladang*'.

It is unfortunate that the *Kitab Perintah Pawang* fails to mention precise settings in the Malayan interior whereupon the prototypical *pawang*'s supernatural negotiations were directly undertaken or indirectly employed by frontiersmen. Nevertheless, these rituals of communication are exceptionally informative about how forest clearing and colonization progressed through the *pawang*'s conversations with the spirit-ual faces of the forest that were 'dangerous', 'tyrannous', 'afflictive', 'economically accursing', 'disastrous', 'destructive', 'venomous', 'crop scorching', 'crop plaguing' and weather and beasts 'exciting'. In these conversations, which share a schematic form, the supernatural expert narrated oft-embarrassing demonologies, bound non-Muslim or semi-Islamized spirits to 'friendships' with clearly defined purposes of assistance in agricultural operations, politely requested 'loyalty' and cooperation in establishing a secure position for colonization, and pronounced violent conditional curses for 'treasonous' spirits that conveyed horrid reminders of the *pawang*'s potential to transport cosmic and historical Muslim beings and God's *kuasa* into the forests of Perak. For example, the '*bab serving as a talisman for the Islamic slaughtering of the hantu ayer and its propitiation*' records a ritual of communication with

[279] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Kitab Perintah Pawang* Refer to the first 2 pages.

the 'spirit of the stream'.[280] Possibly similar to the aforementioned urgent ceremony undertaken by Maxwell's Muslim middleman with the *hantu ayer* for progress in the upstream interior in 1876, the *bab* which commences with a 'salutation inviting the prophet Khidzr' into the interior, records the following chant of the *pawang* concerned about the 'traps', the psychological abuse, and material and supernatural damages suffered by frontiersmen in the course of establishing a *tumpu langgam*:

> *Hai [polite formula for the non-Muslim] hantu ayer [-] jembalang ayer [gnome that damages crops, residing in the stream] … I know your origin and genealogy and your becoming [from cosmopolitan parentage] … Refrain from imposing traps … abusing the anak chuchu … if you covet the vital force and possessions [-] accept the request of rendering these up … if you are treasonous [-] I command you be crushed into smithereens by [the historical pawang] Laksmana's bucket [-] you will die excreting under the Khorassan stone … thus the berkat doa lailahalilallahmuhammadrasulallah.*[281]

Similarly, in a '*bab to distance the hantu shetan from the path*' transmitted by a *pawang* Imam Shamsuldin, we find a rich ritual of communication that conveys the authentic fears of frontiersmen who perceived the *rimba* (primeval forest) of late 19th century Perak as personified by spirits who 'heard', 'spied upon', 'transgressed' and 'plagued' every single step taken towards the colonization of the interior.[282] In this *bab*, progress upon the frontier is directly associated with the *pawang*'s request to the *hantu*, 'the court herald of the *rimba*', to behave as a *sahabat* (friend) that 'departed from the path' of the colonizer and facilitated the *pawang*'s 'ferrying of the *anak cucu*' into the forest. Reminding the *hantu* of its semi-Islamized roots through its congenital 'flesh relationship' with Muslim frontiersmen that had been corrupted by its demonic parentage, the *pawang* establishes a secure position in the *rimba* for the *anak cucu*, warning the *hantu* that 'hearing', 'spying upon', 'transgressing' and 'plaguing' the progress of the colonizers would result in its

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[280] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Kitab Perintah Pawang*. See '*bab serving as a talisman for the Islamic slaughtering of the hantu ayer and its propitiation*'.
[281] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Kitab Perintah Pawang*. See '*bab serving as a talisman for the Islamic slaughtering of the hantu ayer and its propitiation*'.
[282] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Kitab Perintah Pawang*. See '*bab to distance the hantu shetan from the path*'.

'hearing thumped into deafness', 'sight brittled into blindness', 'venomous tongue broken into splits' and 'heart being vomited out'.

The '*bab recited to benzoin towards establishing the tumpu langgam*' in the *Kitab Perintah Pawang* clarifies that the establishment of a secure position in the interior pivoted upon the *pawang*'s miraculous protection of the 'laboring *anak cucu raiat tentera*' from 'heat [-] rain [-] storms [-] dangerous weather conditions … [and resultant] disease [and] fevers' through sophisticated negotiations with *hantu shetan*.[283] This image of the *pawang* as an intercessor of the atmosphere or meteorological adept is particularly apparent in a series of *sempenas*, *jampis* and *tangkal*s pertaining to sun-showers and solar energy absorbed and radiated by the earth, feared for demonic and economic reasons, such as the '*sempena for rain-with-sunshine [transmitted by] Imam Shamsulddin*', the '*jampi [for] rain-with-sunshine*', the '*tangkal [for] rain-with-sunshine and the extinguisher of heat*' and the '*jampi [for] [unclear] extinguisher of heat [transmitted by] Pawang Imam Alidin*'.[284] In these blessed transmissions, charms and talismans, communities of *hantu shetan* are identified as the real causes of adverse weather and as the energies absorbed and radiated in Perak's forest clearings, reminded of their embarrassing origins and genealogy from hellfire and Iblis's 'private parts', summoned by the *pawang* to 'bow', 'migrate', 'dislocate' and 'retreat withdraw' to allow 'the children of Adam … to make passage' and penetrate the frontier, and threatened that the *pawang* negotiated the atmosphere with the 'physical support' of the prophet Suleiman. Moreover, a series of *sempena*s and *jampi*s for the aforementioned goblin, *Bhuta* in the *Kitab* appear to comprise of detailed descriptions of how the Perak *pawang* facilitated the penetration of forests and labor upon forest clearings through specialized rituals of communication with the forms of the *Bhuta* that were 'the person of

[283] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Kitab Perintah Pawang*. See '*bab recited to benzoin towards establishing the tumpu langgam*'.
[284] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Kitab Perintah Pawang*. See '*sempena for rain-with-sunshine [transmitted by] Imam Shamsulddin*', the '*jampi [for] rain-with-sunshine*', the '*tangkal [for] rain-with-sunshine and the extinguisher of heat*' and the '*jampi [for] [unclear] extinguisher of heat*'.

[or actual cause of] radiating terrain', 'the person of scorch[ing heat]', 'the person of the tremor', 'the person of brumous' and 'the person of the sun-shower'.[285] In these rituals, the *pawang*, firstly, belittled the non-Muslim goblins through boasting possession of God's 'consciousness' and *kuasa* and esoteric knowledge of the *hantu*'s embarrassing genesis from the 'phosphorescence of hellfire'. Secondly, summoned the multiple forms of the *Bhuta* to dislocate immediately from the bodies, settlements, 'paths' and 'livelihoods' of the frontiersmen (*anak Adam*) and migrate to 'distant jungles [-] primeval forests' and 'the navel of the whirlpool *pauh Zanggi*' (colossal Habshi coconut palm), a cosmological abode for exorcized spirits. Thirdly, threatened that the *pawang*'s 'insufflation was suffice to annihilate the living [-] multi-gendered *Bhuta*' and of the *pawang*'s powers of conducting a merciless 'Islamic slaughter … [as] the intermediary of the surface of the earth'.

Beyond containing vivid records of the connections between the *pawang*'s moral violence and the establishment of a *tumpu langgam*, the *Kitab Perintah Pawang* documents contracts undertaken by *pawang*s to expand the Islamic frontier into semi-Islamized or non-Muslim forests possibly located within the north and northeast of Perak. Such a contract is evident in the '*bab recited to benzoin towards establishing the tumpu langgam'* wherein the *pawang* binds a series of *jinns* and *hantu shetan* including the resident of ravine valleys, the forest *Polong*, the red snake-appearing resident of timber, *Penanggalan*, and the *jinn ghai Zanggi perkasa tuha* (old gallant Habshi forest banshee) into a *surat muapakat*, a (*ghaib*) letter of agreement, with Muslim agents of colonization. These Muslim agents constituted of the *pawang* and Muslim frontiersmen (referred to as *teman* or 'friend' in the *ghaib* contract), and a range of Muslim spirits including *aulia anbia*, *dato*s, *jinn*s, fairies, *dewa*, 'hoverers', Chandra and Indra.[286] If this *bab* is an accurate reflection of the Muslim penetration of

[285] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Kitab Perintah Pawang. See 'sempena [for the] hantu bhuta'*.
[286] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Kitab Perintah Pawang. See* '*bab recited to benzoin towards establishing the tumpu langgam in this territorial space'*.

forests in late 19th century Perak, the operations of 'establishing the melody of a foothold … cutting down scrub [or] bushes [-] felling large trees [-] planting directly through dibbling' by the *anak chuchu raiat tentera* were premised upon the *pawang*'s expertise of assigning spirits such as the *jinn ghai Zanggi perkasa tuha* to a series of tasks. These included the responsibilites of 'awakening, to order' the upstream and downstream-residing semi-Islamized *anak rajas* (children of princes) of the Muslim *pawang*s, Ranjuna and Bima, and the non-Muslim spirits of the head, foot and navel of the *ladang*, and 'putting to order the 190 *raiat* of raja Sulaiman [d. 1575]' comprising of pests, crawlers, reptiles and predatory arthropods 'spread over the earth'. This image of semi-Islamized spiritual *anak rajas* being disruptive and economically detrimental beings is similar to the image of actual *anak rajas* in late 19th century Perak that we find in historiography, and a subsequent '*bab recited prior to the call*' specifies that the spiritual *anak raja*s of the secondary and primeval forests were notorious for 'disrupting and damaging the *anak* [rice child of the] dry clearing' and causing 'fevers, anxieties and loss of consciousness' among frontiersman.[287]

Another example of a *ghaib* letter of agreement is found in a '*bab recited whilst towards melambas [an unclear agrarian term]*', transmitted by a Pawang Naam and an Imam Ungu Hajji Abdul Kadir, wherein the *pawang* is depicted as the legal authority forging contracts with spirits such as the vampire cricket-shaped nigget, *Pelesit*, and the *jinn Zanggi perkasa tuha* upon the Perak frontier, on behalf of the *pawang*'s *anak buah* (dependents, clients).[288] Herein, the Habshi spirit is bound to a pact with Muslim agents of colonization who 'held the *tumpu langgam*' including historical *pawang*s from Bima to

[287] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Kitab Perintah Pawang. See* '*bab recited prior to the call*'. For instance, B. W. Andaya refers to the 'problem of *anak raja*' in Perak and to *anak rajas* as 'absorbed by such activities as flirtations, court intrigues, opium smoking, cock-fighting, and perhaps piracy', *Perak: The Abode of Grace*, 31. Also see the British Resident, J. W. W. Birch's 'Report on Perak, 2 April 1875' wherein he refers to the 'most troublesome young Rajahs' of Kota Lama as being infamous for 'evil doings' and being a 'constant terror' in P. L. Burns (ed.), *The Journals of J. W. W. Birch, first British resident to Perak, 1874-1875* (Kuala Lumpur; New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 390-391.

[288] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Kitab Perintah Pawang. See bab recited whilst towards melambas [an unclear agrarian term]*'.

Chulan and *dato keramat*s, to endorse the *pawang*'s polite request for a conquest upon the forest from a secure position, and in turn, appropriate the *pawang*'s *anak buah* as its own and refrain from 'plaguing', 'enfevering', 'burdening' and 'spiritually abducting' the frontiersmen. The *Kitab Perintah Pawang* also contains a number of references to Habshi spirits such as the '*Zanggi Ilyas [actually] the stiff convulsive Ilyas*' and the 'stiff haired courtier of the *Zanggi* mountain', both of which are obligated by the *pawang* to refrain from 'dislocating', 'molesting', 'damaging', 'destructing', 'transgressing' and 'taking the [food] remains' of frontiersmen, through compacts whose contravention amounted to violent punishment by a list of Muslim agents of colonization.[289]

Whilst the transmissions in the *Kitab* are didactically driven towards producing a record of the *pawang*'s expertise on the frontier and provide little specification of both the social worlds of forest clearers or the nature of the *anak buah*, we can draw inferences that the depiction of Habshi forests was a reflection of the social composition of laborers which, in all probability, included Habshi slaves. Basu's work on the 'migration of African spirits' in conjunction with the 'forced of voluntary migrations' of Habshis across the western Indian Ocean, for instance, helps us understand texts such as the *Kitab Perintah Pawang* as sophisticated historical records of the 'high mobility of [*Zanggi*] spirit pantheons' that travelled to the Malay frontier along with Habshi laborers who were employed for forest clearing.[290] Moreover, these depictions of Habshi forests were in line with both the popular Malayan notion of the 'Habshis of Africa being residents of the *hulu* [interior]' and the Perak tradition of populating its list of 'common folk genies' with *Zanggis*.[291]

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[289] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Kitab Perintah Pawang. See 'bringing the head of rice*' and '*kelaminya* [the supplement, to Ngah Johor Andong's *Salasilah*]'.
[290] Helene Basu, Drumming and Praying, 303-304; Lewis, *Religion in Context*, 140-145
[291] See: W. E. Maxwell's mention of '*Abdi*' in Perak constituting of 'Habshi slaves and their descendants' in 'The Law Relating to Slavery Among the Malays', *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 22, (1890), 254; and Richard O. Winstedt's discussion of 'common folk genies' in 'The Perak Genies', *Journal of*

Beyond its references to *Zanggi* spirits, the *Kitab Perintah Pawang* documents the profitable bargains undertaken by *pawang*s with a series of prominent *jinn*s such as the *jinn bumi jembalang tanah* (the androgynous combine of the earth *jinn* and the gnome that damages crops), to expand the Islamic frontier into semi-Islamized or non-Muslim forests. This is particularly apparent in the '*bab recited to benzoin towards conducting burning*' wherein the *pawang* coordinating the violent charge of the *anak chuchu raiat tentera* at the 'earth of beasts [preordained] for *ladang*', bargains with both the *jinn Zanggi perkasa tuha* and *jinn bumi jembalang tanah* via the 'esoteric speech of God and Muhammad'.[292] In the course of this bargain, the *jinn bumi jembalang tanah* is summoned to, firstly, prepare the site for the onslaught of the Muslim *anak chuchu raiat tentera* through 'repositioning [-] migrating … caravanning [its] *anak chuchu raiat tentera* [and] ending their presence' in 'earth of beasts [preordained] for *ladang*'. Secondly, extract the 'Congregation of Idols playing in … hovering over [and] rummaging' the 'earth of beasts for *ladang*'. Thirdly, refrain from producing 'uproars of shock and fear' amongst the *pawang*'s clients. Possibly illustrative of the authentic fears of late 19th century Perak frontiersmen, a number of *bab*s of the *Kitab* depict the *jinn bumi jembalang tanah* as the agency of 'shock and fear', 'obstacles', 'handicaps', 'defects', 'fevers', 'tremors', 'vertigo', 'anxiety', 'riots', 'hemorrhage', 'inflammations', 'errors' and 'dislocations' suffered by the *anak chuchu raiat tentera* upon the Perak frontier, and as the colossal office whose 'deviation from the artery of the earth' was necessary for the establishment of an Islamic pillar of Pawang Sadia's Command in the interior.

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the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, 7:3 (1929), 460-466. Also refer to Hamilton, 'The Boria', 142-143.

[292] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Kitab Perintah Pawang. See bab recited to benzoin towards conducting burning*'.

The aforementioned androgynous *jinn*-gnome, nevertheless, attains an exceptionally amoral quality in the '*bab recited whilst towards dibbling*'.[293] This *bab* comprises of a 'agreement of trust' drawn up by the *pawang* with a docile, mechanical and meticulous *jinn-jembalang* that is 'entrusted the [rice] child … *Seri mani* [the sperm-like *Ceres*] … and delegated duties of rearing and harboring … [the child from] the 190 maligned intentions and diseases', and bestowed the rank of 'the intermediary gifted by God' and 'mechanical partner [of the *pawang* bound by] … companionship [-] relationship [-] collusion … continual passionate love'. The *pawang*'s romances on the frontier, however, find most detailed expression in the prototypical Perak *pawang*'s rituals of communication for water management in the '*kataan to benzoin towards the bund [of the ricefield]*' wherein five *jinn*s that had a semi-Islamized genesis from Hawa (Eve) are passionately invoked to become 'companions [-] relatives [-] undying lovers […bound by] unwavering permanency', refrain from 'cheating', 'blemishing' and 'arousing beasts', and serve as erotic 'bodily supports of human attributes' upon the agricultural frontier.[294]

The *pawang*'s rituals of communication, relationships, friendships or romances with Muslim armies of colonization, non-Muslim *hantu shetan* and non-Muslim or semi-Islamized *jinn*s, are all revelatory of the *pawang*'s expertise of employing efficient supernatural clients for intricate agricultural operations. Throughout the *Kitab Perintah Pawang*, within aggrandizing conversations undertaken by the *pawang* with semi-Islamized or non-Muslim spirits and even in humble communications with Muslim armies, the *pawang* emerges as the agency initiating functional supernatural associations of grave socioeconomic and religious responsibility. This is particularly evident in how the 'friendships', 'contracts', 'agreements' and 'bargains' initiated by the *pawang* were bound by the clause of failure to perform economically being tantamount to *mungkir*

[293] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Kitab Perintah Pawang*. See '*bab recited whilst towards dibbling*' in Hajji Raja Yahya, *Kitab Perintah Pawang*. Also see '*bab to be recited whilst towards filling the genggulang*' and '*bab recited to the parang finely notched into the land*'.
[294] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Kitab Perintah Pawang*. See '*kataan to benzoin towards the bund [of the ricefield]*'.

(repudiation) of, and *derhaka* (treason) against, God. In fact, various rituals of communication undertaken by the *pawang* in the *Kitab* to elicit efficient armies and clients for the establishment of the *tumpu langgam* and the passage of 'the children of Adam' or *anak chuchu raiat tentera* in the interior contain mentions of performance failures being equivalent to 'treason against God'. While the *Kitab* fails to elaborate upon the corporeal or moral ramifications of 'treason' and was directed towards an audience familiar with the self-explanatory consequence of *derhaka*, historians of Malaya such as L. Y. Andaya and B. W. Andaya have emphasized that the concept of *derhaka* was a key ideological component of Islamic control within both Malay courtly circles and society wherein 'treason' against God's representative(s), often in the form of the Sultan or prominent rajas, was perceived as an 'odious culturally abhorred … crime' against God.[295] It is in the *Kitab*'s multiple mentions of 'treason' that we perhaps find data on a local manifestation of Muslim control on the semi-Islamized or non-Muslim frontiers of Perak.

Whilst the *Kitab Perintah Pawang* serves as the most detailed document of the *pawang*'s economically beneficial supernatural negotiations, the significantly shorter Jawi text, *Inilah Peraturan Resam*, comprises of data on Perak rice worlds wherein the typical *peladang*'s devotional relationship with the *to' pawang* transpired into a series of supernatural associations pivotal to forest clearing and rice production. This devotional relationship between the *to' pawang* and the husbandman is portrayed as one between a *teman* (the *pawang*-friend, of social rank) who possessed the coveted technological expertise of negotiating with spirits resident upon the Perak frontier, and a *mika* or *anak pawang* (an intimate, dependent of the *pawang*). Throughout the text, readers are introduced to the miraculous powers of the *pawang*-friend to bind the *anak pawang* into functional relationships with a plethora of Muslim spirits or agents of colonization including, firstly, the authorities ensuring comprehensive forest clearing and reaping, the

[295] Andaya and Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 27, 47, 64, 81-82, 86.

spiritual '*dato*s who held the *tumpu langgam*' and were propitiated by both 'testaments of truth' and *kenduri*s. Secondly, the 'calmness and pacification-gifting ancestors who died recently or of times long past' who presided over the cutting of scrub or bushes for burning. Thirdly, the nursery presiding prophet, Muhammad, who was transported into the dry clearing upon the *pawang*'s inauguration of direct planting. Fourthly, the assurers of successful reaping, the ancient *pawang*s, who were enticed with *kenduri*s upon the *pawang*s' reaping of the *semangat padi*.[296] The *Inilah Peraturan Resam* also represents the *to' pawang* as an esoteric horticultural specialist whose intimate associations with the Muslim supernatural article 'vital force of padi' are central to the ricefield's 'pregnancy' (blooming). Indeed, while the 1897 observation notes of the English ethnographer, Skeat contain references to *pawang*s in Negri Sembilan spearheading 'padi-ceremonies … [wherein padi was] induced to bear, by pretending it had borne a child', the *to' pawang* in *Inilah Peraturan Resam* undertook sophisticated rituals of communication with the Muslim padi through surrounding the ricefield with his 'fatwa and mark' (*petua isharat*), conversing with individual stalks to locate the *semangat*, intimately identifying the 'name' of the vital force in the ricefield, and appropriating the role of an adept midwife delivering the rice 'child' to the husbandman's hamlet and protecting the 'infant' through charms and miraculous articles.[297]

Beyond its data on Muslim spirits on Perak's agrarian frontiers, the *Inilah Peraturan Resam* makes numerous mentions of the *pawang*'s communication with non-Muslim or semi-Islamized spirits being central to the establishment of a Muslim foothold in the interior. This is particularly evident in a chant transmitted by the *pawang* to the archetypal *anak pawang* and to be recited upon 'the moment dry felled timber has been prepared for burning' wherein we find a reference to the foundation of a *tumpu langgam*

[296] SOAS MS40334. *Inilah Peraturan Resam Pawang Melayu.*
[297] Skeat, 'Some Records of Malay Magic', 14-15.

requiring the deviation of overwhelming *jinns* such as the *jinn tanah*, *peris* (fairies), the *Bhuta raya* (the great *Bhuta*), *jembalang bumi*, *bayu paksi* (bird of the air) and the *langsuyir* (hostile whinnying female banshee, occasionally embodied in a night-owl).[298] Unlike the *Kitab Perintah Pawang*, the *Inilah Peraturan Resam* is didactically driven towards revealing the religious sensibility of the husbandman and fails to elaborate upon the content of communications that occurred between the typical *to' pawang* and supernatural beings. Indeed, even the transcription of the aforementioned chant suffers from brevity, providing readers mere detail to conclude that the *pawang*'s negotiations often shared a schematic form of facilitating a secure position for colonizers through threatening 'intervening interposing [yet] blindly guided [-] lame and crutched' non-Muslim spirits to 'retreat withdraw' from the prospective *ladang* and 'refrain from ignorance of [-] forgetfulness and postponement of acting upon' the communicated instructions of the *pawang*.[299]

It is, however, possible to deduce that the *to' pawang*'s communication with non-Muslim spirits mentioned in the *Inilah Peraturan Resam* such as the *langsuyir* was akin to a Malay 'call' upon the banshee by a Pa' [*pawang*] Mek Chik of Temengor, Upper Perak, recorded by Winstedt in 1909.[300] In this 'call', the *pawang* in the interior of Perak boasted the prototypical Perak *pawang*'s knowledge of the 'names' or manifestations of the '*langsuyar*' (*langsuyir*) in timber, tree stumps and the earth, and potential as the 'great eccentric *rishi'* to 'kill without questioning [-] behead without verifying … [and as] the captain of God within earth [-] destruct all creations', and cautioned the banshee that 'spite [-] treachery against the children of Adam' upon the Perak frontier was tantamount

[298] SOAS MS40334. *Inilah Peraturan Resam Pawang Melayu*. Maxwell refers to the *langsuyir* as 'a flying demon of the nature of the…banshee [often personified in a] woman who dies before 40 days of 'uncleanness' expired'; see W. E. Maxwell, 'Folklore of the Malays', *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 7, (1881), 28.
[299] SOAS MS40334. *Inilah Peraturan Resam Pawang Melayu*.
[300] Richard O. Winstedt, 'A Perak Invocation to the Langsuyar', *Journal of the Malayan Brancg of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 3:1 (1925), 83-84.

to '*durhaka* [*derhaka*] against God!'. Similarly, the *Kitab Perintah Pawang* contains a '*sempena hantu langsuyir*' wherein the 'filthy-haired' non-Muslim demon, greeted with the polite formula '*om*', is, on the one hand, belittled by the *pawang*'s esoteric knowledge of its genesis from urine and the *pawang*'s potential to crumble its body in 'excitement' and 'drag it along 7 steeds of the orbit' through a whistle. On the other hand, threatened that its failure to dislocate immediately from the bodies and paths of the frontiersmen ('ummat of Muhammad'), migrate to 'distant jungles and primeval forests' and 'the navel of *pauh Zanggi*', and facilitate the ummat of Muhammad's secure conquest of the forest without 'tyranny and injustice', would have brutal consequences. These brutal ramifications included 'five ablaze *gantang*s [of rice] being pinned as lanterns on the neck' of the demon, Muslim *jinns* forcibly dragging the overturned demon out of the orbit, the 'raja Jibrail's snatching of the soul' of the *hantu*, the *pawang*'s collaboration with Jibrail and the *Malik al-Maut* (angel of death) to 'snatch' the *langsuyir's* soul, and ultimately, the *pawang*'s assumption of the office of *Malik al-Maut* to mercilessly 'snatch out [the *hantu*'s] soul' singlehandedly.[301]

The *Inilah Peraturan Resam* also contains mentions of the non-Muslim *Nenek Kemang* (female earth spirit, feared for haunting fields and sowing tares in crop) and *Rengkesa* (*Langkesa* or 'The Spectral Reaper'). However, these references merely introduce readers to the phenomenon of employing miracle-workers in Perak, to liberate clearings from the *Nenek Kemang*'s planted seeds, timbers and weeds or grass via miraculous concoctions of 'exorcizing water for the venomous fire', and protect ricefields from 'the *Rengkesa* attack' via instructions on religious reaping of the rice ear with the *tuai* (tiny reaping knife concealable in the palm of a hand) technology, pious methods of

[301] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Kitab Perintah Pawang. See* '*sempena [for the] hantu langsuyir*'; SOAS 25027/2 *Book of Charms formerly belonging to a Sultan Muda of Perak* also contains a '*bab of the talisman [for the] langsuyir*' that contains a remedy for victims of the *hantu*, a demonology and the *berkat* of the miraculous forest formula '*laillahalilallah*'.

preventing the fall of the reaper's shadow upon the padi's, observations of silence and meditational postures. Whilst the materials from Negri Sembilan discussed in the preceding chapter such as the 1890 *Surat Fasal Pertahunan* are much more informative about the *Rengkesa* than the *Inilah Peraturan Resam*, the *Nenek Kemang* is repeatedly referred to in the *Kitab Perintah Pawang* as the non-Muslim 'resident of the foot of the *ladang*' and finds an anecdote devoted to it in a Perak courtly *Salasilah* 'written on Wednesday the seventh day of Jamad-ul-akhir, A. H. 1299 [25 April 1882], at Kampung Belanja' by Hajji Raja Yahya.[302] In this anecdote, Hajji Raja Yahya directly associates reaping methods in late 19th century Kampar and Teja to the negotiations of Muslim superhumans, specifically 2 pious dry rice-pushing damsels subjected to debt-slavery during 'the reign of Marhum Kahar [Sultan Iskandar Zulkarnain Shah]', with an amoral *Nenek Kemang* whose homoerotic saliva-sharing and waist-stroking miraculously results in the imparting of the art of rice cultivation and reaping with the *tuai*.

Conclusions on the Religious Rice Frontier

Historians of Perak and Malaya on the whole, have often denied the potential historical value of manuscripts such as the *Kitab Perintah Pawang* and condemned texts of this genre to being mystical 'legends' or 'fantasies', 'hagiographies' and 'entertainment' rather than the 'stuff of historians'.[303] This chapter has suggested that texts such as the *Kitab Perintah Pawang* and the *Inilah Peraturan Resam,* and even Fr. Fee's epistle, serve as windows into a history of religious rice worlds, socioeconomic trends and miraculous expertise upon the forested frontiers of Perak that 'would otherwise remain unrecoverable'. This is a history less preoccupied with the courtiers in Perak and the

[302] Refer to: *'bab recited to benzoin when making intent to clear scrub [-] bushes [-] fell timber [-] establish a ladang*' in Hajji Raja Yahya, *Kitab Perintah Pawang*; and, Hajji Raja Yahya, '*Salasilah … written on Wednesday the seventh day of Jamad-ul-akhir, A. H. 1299 [25 April 1882], at Kampung Belanja*' in W. E. Maxwell, 'The History of Perak from Native Sources', 308-309.
[303] Bottoms, 'Malay Historical Works', 36-38.

European Companies and post-1874 British Residency, and more geared towards highlighting historical sensibilities of subsistence planters in Perak; the economic authority of technologically or supernaturally proficient miracle-workers within forest clearings and ricefields; socioeconomic factors, patronage patterns and transcultural networks that produced texts pertaining to, and sustained the careers of, rice *pawangs*; socio-religious circles' explanations and understandings of the oft-hazardous transformation of forested lands to rice fields; miracle-workers being pivotal to operations of creating 'footholds' in the forests of Perak; and, the esoteric science of miracle-workers being central to the intermediation and control of simultaneously agricultural and supernatural frontiers.

Whilst post-colonial scholars of rice in Malaya have largely relied upon records of formal governmental agencies, my work has scrutinized Jawi manuscripts such as the 1879 *Kitab Perintah Pawang* that are replete with data on the religious sensibilities of frontiersmen and terms, categories, constructs and tropes employed by them to understand their simultaneously dangerous, nutritional, spiritual and cosmopolitan rice frontiers. In doing so, I suggest that these manuscript materials provide historians an 'insider's history' of rice frontiers, and in Adas's words, 'make it possible to fully integrate the much neglected history of the "peasant masses"' into a broader socioeconomic history of Asian rice frontiers.[304] These are also records that reveal a history of rice frontiers that were dominated by Muslim miracle-workers who pushed prohibited dry hill rice production and agricultural operations that were 'untouched' even by the 'sound' of the 'colonial administration'. Indeed, beyond mentions of transcultural scholarly networks that appear to have led to the transcription of the *Kitab Perintah Pawang* and the *Inilah Peraturan Resam*, these sources appear almost mute about the impact of the *Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*, the East India Company and the British Residency

[304] Adas, *The Burma Delta: Economic Development and Social Change on an Asian Rice Frontier*, 5.

upon the subsistence planting worlds of Perak. This conspicuous silence is striking since historians of rice in Perak such as Lim Teck Ghee have elaborated upon the British colonial administration's of its dominion into Malay socioeconomic stratums through, firstly, the *ladang*-prohibiting Order in [the Perak] Council No. 6 of 1890 and late 19th and early 20th century circulars that called upon District Officers to 'guard against any extension of the nomadic practice' of dry hill rice cultivation. Secondly, the establishment of an agricultural department, and the passing of land regulations in Perak and Sungei Ujong, in 1897/1898. Thirdly, the equation of 'British capital … with cultivation' by the turn of the century.[305]

One might be able to account for the texts' silences about European administrations' penetration into rice worlds through considering the the *Kitab Perintah Pawang* and the *Inilah Peraturan Resam* as literature evidentiary of the 'widespread belief of autonomy' within the food producing sector of Perak. In fact, 19th century ethnographers and historians such as Hill and Gullick have portrayed the prototypical Perak subsistence cultivator as one enjoying an 'innate love of liberty, and freedom from all shackles' of state control and monopolies over river systems that snaked into the interior through upstream dry rice cultivation that was hallowed in religio-historical tradition, and the 'hold [of] the land by an ancient unwritten right' as stipulated in the aforementioned *Perak Code*. These texts' silences are also plausible illustrations of the fact that the opening of the interior of Perak and expansion of areas of cultivation was a particularly Muslim phenomenon associated with Muslim frontiersmen rather than European colonizers. As Hill noted in his comprehensive historical geography of *Rice in Malaya*, post-1848 East India Company and Residency records are illustrative of the fact that Perak Muslim forest pioneers spearheaded a 'form of transhumant cultivation'

[305] These regulations were 'styled' as an 'Enactment to consolidate and amend the Law [a draft Federal Land Code prepared in 1896] relating to Land, 1897.' The most in-depth study has been undertaken by Lim Teck Ghee, *Origins of a Colonial Economy*, 40.

throughout the 19th century, expanding rice areas in Upper Perak and Lower Perak, Krian and Kurau to reach 27,910 *orlong*s (a Malay land measure equivalent to 1.3225 acres), unperturbed by both the 'fratricidal struggles' of upstream and downstream chiefs and the establishment of the British Residency.[306] The aforementioned 1893 *Reports furnished by Order of His Excellency* have also convinced economic historians such as Kratoska of the reality that the British Residency's intervention in Perak rice worlds only emerged in the 1930s, that rice production remained a subsistence activity hallowed by religious tradition and under purely Muslim capital until the early 20th century, and that even prominent permanent cultivation hubs such as Krian were spearheaded by the 'spasmodic efforts' of Muslim forest pioneers rather than 'outstanding examples of enlightened colonial government and administration' as historians of Perak have oft-assumed.[307] Indeed, even Lim Teck Ghee's scrutiny of 'half-hearted, disjointed and niggardly regulations' that preceded the establishment of the agricultural department in Perak provide data on 19th socioeconomic stratums being dominated by prominent Muslim frontiersmen rather than the Residency whose 'land legislation [was] practically non-existent' due to 'haphazardness, uncertainty' and 'official rivalries and ambitions'.[308] As such, the very silences of these Jawi materials from Perak may serve as reminders of Muslim pasts for historians of the Malay Peninsula who have often 'contrived a [non-European] relationship of reciprocity' between upstream and downstream areas that was

306 Hill, *Rice in Malaya*, 94-96.

307 Cited from: the Superintendent, Lower Perak, N. Denison's 10 October 1892 memo to 'The Secretary to Government' in *ICSA. Reports furnished by Order of His Excellency* (1893), 27E, and Lim Teck Ghee, *Origins of a Colonial Economy*, 49. Drawing upon the 1893 *Reports*, Kratoska criticizes scholars such as Lim Chong-Yah and Gayl Ness for ignoring how it was only in 1930 that projects led by European colonizers were undertaken to provide a 'cheap supply of food' for the tin mining and rubber estate sector; See Kratoska, 'Rice Cultivation and the Ethnic Division of Labor in British Malaya', 285. Also see John Overton, *Colonial green revolution?: Food, irrigation and the state in colonial Malaya* (Wallingford, Oxon.: CAB International, 1994), 3-4.

308 Lim Teck Ghee, *Peasants and their Agricultural Economy*, 38, 40, 42-43; Lim Teck Ghee, *Origins of a Colonial Economy*, 14, 26, 40-41, 82.

ruptured by the first generation of European colonizers associated with the British Residency established in 1874.[309]

Texts such as the *Kitab Perintah Pawang* and Fr. Fee's epistle also serve as valuable windows into 19th century rice frontiers in western Malaya that were replete with cosmopolitan agricultural peasants, laborers or slaves involved in projects of forest clearing. Fr. Fee's epistle for instance, specifies that the 'Confessors' laboring for the establishment of the permanent Bagan Serai colony were itinerant Tamil Paraiyars who circulated between the Bay of Bengal in the fashion of Tamil *lebbai*s mentioned in Abdullah Al-Aydarus's 1892 letter. Alternatively, the references to the cosmopolitan social worlds of forest clearers in the *Kitab* that emerge in the multiple *bab*s pertaining to Habshi or *Zanggi* spirits in Perak's interior, challenge Lim Teck Ghee's depiction of the 19th century Malay Muslim 'agricultural peasantry' as one existing in 'isolated and self-subsisting societies … [and] kampungs' and compelled to cosmopolitanism under British capitalism.[310] Moreover, a reader of the *Kitab* is left to speculate about the possibility of the *Kitab* being a biographical record of *pawang*s who were employed by headmen (*penghulu*s) such as Hajji Raja Yahya (who could also have combined the roles of *pawang* and *penghulu*), to exploit a cosmopolitan labor force that constituted Muslim 'debt-bondsmen', and non-Muslim aboriginal horticulturalists, Rawa, Mandiling, Korinchi and Habshi 'slaves in the strict sense', through simultaneously economic and religious bondage.[311] Ultimately, texts such as the *Kitab Perintah Pawang*, in spite of their silences, serve as important resources for writing new socioeconomic and labor histories of Malaya that are conscious of religious sensibilities, supernatural expertise and the actual

309 Cited from T. N. Harper, 'The Politics of the Forest in Colonial Malaya, 2.
310 Lim Teck Ghee, *Peasants and their Agricultural Economy*, 225-7.
311 For a functionalist discussion of the office of the *penghulu*, refer to: Gullick, *Indigenous Political Systems*, 35, 142; J. M. Gullick, *Malay Society in the Late nineteenth century*: *The Beginnings of Change*. East Asian Historical Monographs. (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1987), 99; Sullivan, *Social relations of dependence in a Malay state*, 45. Also see J. W. W. Birch's 'Report on Perak, 2 April 1875' for a comment on prominent Perak Muslim personages' mobilization of 'the men of Rawa, Batu Barra, Marniling' for 'jungle-cutting' in Burns (ed.), *The Journals of J. W. W. Birch*, 393.

connections of esoteric science and command or control upon cosmopolitan, spiritual frontiers.

3 The Excavation of *Ghaib* Ore: Prospector-*Pawang*s and the Spiritual Mining Frontier

This chapter recollects the history of socioeconomic stratums in late 19th century Perak, Selangor, Malacca and Negri Sembilan wherein open-cast mining of tin and gold deposits had attained a distinct supernatural meaning, and miners employed spiritual terms to understand alluvial frontiers and ore. This is a history centered upon *pawang*s who were central to expanding mining frontiers in western Malaya in collaboration with predominantly Chinese tin mining enterprises, who possessed *ilmu* and 'wonderful noses' for prospecting *ghaib* (invisible) alluvial deposits and miraculous powers of excavating, dressing and smelting alluvial ore. In writing a history of religious mining and the 'real experts' of mining, Muslim miracle-workers and their associates, this chapter attempts to redress both the impasse historians have faced in accessing the religious sensibilities of miners, and the academic silence on the socioeconomic significance of *pawangs* and their miraculous expertise in post-colonial scholarship.

The opening section of this chapter, '*Religious Mines in Malaya: Miracles and Networks of the Pawang*', compares the largely inadequate and 'yet relatively little' post-colonial historiography on tin mining in late 19th century Malaya that has contributed to the neglect of relevant Malay manuscripts, to the extant literature of 19th and early 20th century European scholar-administrators, geologists, ethnologists and missionaries. These European writings were particularly informative about religious mine worlds in Perak, Selangor and Negri Sembilan wherein, on the one hand, the socioeconomic and geological stratums and activities of alluvial tin and gold miners were intimately connected with the supernatural. On the other hand, mining *pawangs* were indispensable authorities due to their technological or supernatural expertise and served as 'metaphors for the expansion of mining', and were plugged into transcultural networks or webs of patronage within and beyond the frontiers of large open-cast mines. The subsequent section of this chapter, '*The Pawang's 'Wonderful Nose for Tin': Ilmu in the Service of Open-Cast Mining*' explores in detail the contents of five Malay manuscripts from the Wellcome Library, produced in 1892, and suggests that these texts serve as unparalleled historical records of the social history of mine worlds, a subject that historians of the late 19th century *Malayan Tin Industry* have ignored due to the supposed lack of available documentation. These Malay sources provide valuable data concerning, firstly, the esoteric science and powers of prospector-*pawangs* who were necessary intermediaries of the spiritually hazardous stanniferous and auriferous frontiers of the Peninsula's interior. Secondly, the sophisticated rituals of communication undertaken by *pawang*s with supernatural beings in possession of the '*ghaib* objects', tin-ore and gold. Thirdly, the technological expertise of *pawangs* who were physically present authorities in *lombong*s (large open-cast, predominantly Chinese excavations) throughout operations of prospecting for *ghaib* alluvial deposits, vertical excavation, dressing and smelting in the 'Chinese furnace'. Fourthly, the authentic fears of late 19th century miners who penetrated awe-inspiring, spectacular and supernatural geological frontiers of the interior, and the *pawang*'s absolute 'governance' of open-cast mines. These Malay sources are, in all probability, accurate reflections of Malay mine worlds wherein more than 90 per cent of the alluvial tin output was derived from open-cast excavations which employed *pawang*s for specific mining operations, and wherein the British Residency's mining regulations and European enterprises were, in the words of the Resident of Perak, 'infinitesimal'.

Religious Mines in Malaya:
Miracles and Networks of the *Pawang*

The introductory chapter has highlighted that there is 'yet relatively little' academic literature on the Malayan mining frontier in spite of the fact that Malayan mines contributed the largest proportion (55%) of tin produced internationally by the late 19th century. Moreover, the 'relatively little' post-colonial scholarship on tin mining in Malaya has often characterized the history of the tin industry as one related to purely extrageneous, non-Malay Muslim factors and the 'penetration of the indigenous economy' by Chinese enterprise and miners, and dismissed the need for a serious exploration of Malayan mine worlds that were overwhelmingly hallowed by customs and religion. For example, Wong Lin Ken's 1964 *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914* which remains the most informative monograph related to the mining sector of the western Malay states, comprises of a detailed survey of how Malaya's progress to 'the world's largest tin-producing country' by 1883 was connected to the total abolition of tin import duties in Britain and the tariff protection of the Cornish tin industry by August 1853, and the overwhelming reliance of British tin-plate manufactories, by the third quarter of the 19th century, upon 'cheap' Malayan alluvial tin that was qualitatively superior to Cornish lode tin.[312]

Ultimately, for Wong, the history of the *Malayan Tin Industry* was an 'extrageneous' history pertaining to 'Western industrialization' and the immigration of the Chinese 'rugged [mining] pioneer' who had 'political shrewdness' and the 'commercial acumen of a ruthless capitalist', rather than an 'indigenous' history of the 'Malays [who] were only part-time miners … clumsy and uneconomical … had neither the commercial shrewdness nor the attitude for hard and sustained work' and were

[312] Wong, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, 8-16, 29, 235; also see F. A. Swettenham, *British Malaya: An Account of the Origin and Progress of British Influence in Malaya* (New York: AMS Press, 1975), 232.

obsessed with 'costly mining superstitions' and 'crude ['magical'] methods of prospecting'.[313] Possibly influenced by sardonic comments that were littered within 19th century European observation notes on Malayan mine worlds and miners, post-colonial historians of the 'tin industry' such as Wong, and subsequently, Yip Yat Hoong and Khoo Kay Kim have, firstly, completely ignored a comprehensive historical enquiry into the prominence of Malay Muslim culture in 19th century mine worlds due to the Malay ethos being 'a live force without an acceptance of economic progress', naturally prone to 'utter laziness' and cultivating 'serious mining' as an economic activity subsidiary to rice production. Secondly, focused their attention solely upon 'frugal, hard working' Chinese miners, and in particular, the *towkay lombong* (mine leasee) who recruited immigrant Chinese laborers under a 'credit-ticket' or 'cash advance' system that produced debts to repaid through labor, shipped these 'coolies' to the Malayan hinterland via the Straits Settlements ports, and 'autonomously' organized mining operations.[314] The archetypal late 19th century *towkay* reached mutually advantageous bargains with both cosmopolitan advancers in British Malaya and mine owners for mining expenses and access to stanniferous terrain and hydraulic facilities respectively.[315]

In a 1982 examination of 'Capitalism and the Malay States', P. L. Burns criticized post-colonial historians of mining in Malaya including Wong, Yip and Khoo for ignoring historical evidence of sophisticated economic collaborations between Malay mine owners and Chinese mine leasees or *towkay*s.[316] Indeed, relying upon the data compiled in the Inspector of Mines in Kinta, Abraham Hale's 1885 pamphlet 'On Mines and Miners in

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313 Wong, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, 21, 46, 58.

314 K. G. Tregonning, *Straits Tin: A Brief Account of the First Seventy-Five Years of the Straits Trading Company, Limited, 1887-1962* (Singapore: traits Times Press, 1962), 3, 6; Newbold, *Political and Statistical Account of the British Settlements*, 98; Yip, *The Development of the Tin Mining Industry of Malaya*, 78; Wong, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, 64, 21, 26; Khoo Kay Kim, *The Western Malay States, 1850-1873; The Effects of Commercial Development on Malay Politics* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1972), 67.

315 For a depiction of the archetypal late 19th century *towkay*'s connections to cosmopolitan advancers and Malay Muslim mine owners in Padang, Johore, and Klang, refer to Munshi Muhammad Ibrahim, *Kisah Pelayaran Muhammad Ibrahim Munsyi* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1980), 6, 67.

316 P. L. Burns, 'Capitalism and the Malay States' in *Capitalism and Colonial Production*: *Essays on the Rise of Capitalism in Asia*, eds. H. Alavi et al., (London: Croom Helm, 1982), 159-178.

Kinta, Perak', Burns concludes that while Kinta mines had a Chinese facade due to the fact that almost every laborer was an immigrant transported to western Malaya's stanniferous frontiers through the industry of *towkay*s, approximately 70 per cent of registered Kinta mines, in 1885, were owned by 'adventurous and enterprising' Malay 'proto-capitalists' who actively collaborated with Chinese *kongsi*s ('special cooperative forms of labor organization') comprising of mine leasees.[317] Nevertheless, whilst calling for a writing of new socioeconomic histories of Malaya, Burns neglects Hale's meticulous discussion of late 19th century Kinta mine worlds as hallowed by customs and religion and dominated by religio-economic collaborations between, on the one hand, the Malay Muslim *pawang* who was the expert of 'propitiating and scaring those spirits who have to do with mines and miners', and on the other hand, the 'Chinese *towkay* who comes to mine in Malaya' out of whom the '*pawang* … squeeze[d] a hundred or perhaps two hundred dollars out' in 1885.[318]

For the Inspector of Mines, Kinta *towkays'* investments in Muslim miracle-workers were based upon prevalent socioeconomic sensibilities in western Malaya concerning professional and advisory *pawang*s being possessors of 'wonderful 'noses' for tin' and miraculous techniques to ensure 'more chances of success' in large open-cast excavations. Even the Collector of Revenue for Negri Sembilan, Martin Lister's 1889 *Mining Laws and Customs in the Malay Peninsula* which criticizes Hale's celebration of the 'practical importance' of 'mining superstitions' in Perak socioeconomic worlds, emphasizes that Malayan mine stratums were, overwhelmingly, characterized by, firstly, collaborations between the 'ubiquitous and all-enduring Chinaman' and the 'Malay [*pawang*, who had] a nose for tin and gold … very good knowledge of prospecting …

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317 Also see T. J. Newbold, *Political and Statistical Account of the British Settlements*, 4; see J. Errington Delacroix, 'Some Account of The Mining Districts of Lower Perak', *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 7 (1881). Definition of '*kongsi*' from Mary Somers Heidhues, 'Poor Little Rich Islands' in Bankoff and Boomgaard eds. *A History of Natural Resources in Asia*, 63.
318 Hale, 'On Mines and Miners in Kinta, Perak', 303-304.

[and the] quality of tin ores and of gold dust'. Secondly, 'customs in connection with tin mines … [and] the working of alluvial gold' which were 'Malay' in genesis but had become, by 1889, customary religion with the 'Chinaman playing '*le grand jeu*".[319] Moreover, the 1897 observation notes of the English ethnographer Skeat reveal that the mine worlds of the western Malay states were cosmopolitan religious economies wherein crucial sacred ceremonies conducted in open-cast excavations were 'purely Malay in character' and presided upon by the 'post of [the tin] mining wizard' or *pawang* regardless of the fact that 'something like 90 per cent of the laborers' were Chinese.[320]

Post-colonial historians such as Wong who referred, in passing, to Hale's 1885 pamphlet appear to have dismissed the subject of the *pawang* as one purely relevant to 'Malay mines', 'Malay mining' and 'Malay miners', and as one irrelevant to the 'actual' history of *The Malayan Tin Industry*.[321] For Wong, no further attention beyond three sentences had to be paid towards the *pawang* or 'Malay magician' in a historical study, due to the fact that this office merely personified negligible 'Malay', as opposed to 'Chinese', mine worlds which were 'hampered by the absence of economic rationalization … [and plagued by the] payment of customary dues', and 'determined so largely by custom and not by market conditions'.[322] In fact, scholars such as Wong and Khoo appear to reflect upon the 1840s as a distinctly transitional era, 'the most colourful story in the history of tin mining in the Malay Peninsula', wherein 'Chinese penetration in Selangor, Sungei Ujong and Perak' and in turn, 'great discoveries of rich and extensive ore deposits' in mining districts of Selangor and Perak, displaced both 'superstitious' and 'magical' Malay mining and associated 'charlatans who wield[ed] the virgula divinitoria' who were spotted

[319] M. Lister, *Mining Laws and Customs in the Malay Peninsula* (Singapore: Government Printing Office, 1889), 3-4.
[320] Skeat, *Malay Magic*, 250.
[321] Wong, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914, 46*.
[322] Wong, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, 46.

throughout Sungei Ujong mine worlds in the 1830s by an officer in the 23rd Regiment Madras Light Infantry, T. J. Newbold.[323]

On the contrary to Wong's and Khoo's conclusions, the aforementioned late 19th century observation notes of Hale and Skeat, the Geologist to the Federal Malay States Government, J. B. Scrivenor's 1928 *A Sketch of Malayan Mining*, and the Governor of the Straits Settlements, F. A. Swettenham's 1907 *British Malaya*, recount the 1840s era as constituting, on the one hand, 'the heyday of the *pawang*'. On the other hand, 'palmy days' wherein the *pawang* enjoyed 'an extraordinary reputation' through his/her particularly intimate religio-economic relationships with the 'first real [immigrant Chinese] miners of the country'.[324] Indeed, in refusing to write a 'dull geological' and 'unpoetical' history of *Malayan Mining*, Scrivenor laments the fact that *pawang*s were suddenly 'rarely in evidence' in 1928, in comparison to the 19th century wherein Chinese mining enterprises attributed the *pawang* 'powers of divination … of calling tin-ore to a [barren] mine, or of driving it away', sterilizing it, mobilizing arthropods to 'collect the grains of tin-ore', and miraculously 'assembling' the 'grains' for easy open-cast excavation.[325]

It is only in a comparison of late 19th century Malayan and Bankan (Sumatran) mine worlds that Wong, contradictorily, concedes that there is data suggesting that Malayan Chinese miners regularly 'employed Malay methods and, invariably, the *pawang*' due to prospector-*pawang*s' 'long record of success'.[326] Whilst compromising Wong's blatant dismissal of the *pawang* as a subject of historical enquiry, scholars such as Yip and P. J. Sullivan have, in the course of their surveys of late 19th century European literature,

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323 Wong, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, 21, 26; Khoo, *The Western Malay States, 1850-1873*, 67; Newbold, *Political and Statistical Account of the British Settlements*, 97-8.
324 Wong, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, 21, 26; Khoo, *The Western Malay States, 1850-1873*, 67; Newbold, *Political and Statistical Account of the British Settlements*, 424-5**;** Hale, 'On Mines and Miners in Kinta, Perak', 304-305; Skeat, *Malay Magic*, 250; Swettenham, *British Malaya*, 229.
325 J. B. Scrivenor, *A Sketch of Malayan Mining* (London: Mining Publications, 1928), 1-2; also see Skeat, *Malay Magic*, 250.
326 Wong, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, 58.

remarked (pithily, in the form of brief sentences and footnotes) that, firstly, 'the economic and ritual aspects of mining were not separable' in western Malayan mine worlds. Secondly, the archetypal Chinese miner simultaneously 'entrusted his tin prospecting to the Malay *pawang* … [whose] prospecting was done with a wand' and spearheaded mining operations. Thirdly, a 'form of extraction' engulfed Perak mine worlds, necessitating 'the *pawang* to discover the tin and perform the necessary rituals at the opening of the mine and throughout its life'.[327] This conspicuous academic neglect of *pawang*s in religious mine worlds has contributed to the fact that the religio-economic sensibilities of miners in 19th century Malaya have not received serious historical attention. Indeed, a generation of post-colonial historians such as Wong, Yip, Khoo and Sullivan have completely discounted the historical value of extant Malay manuscripts including the *Ilmu Pawang Melombong* as repositories of data pertaining to subjects such as the 'social conditions' of Malayan miners which is a topic that Wong did not even ambition to 'embrace in detail [as] a study' due to 'the information relevant' to this subject being, allegedly, 'not available'.[328]

In comparison to scholars of Malayan mining worlds, historians of coal mining in the late 19th century Ottoman empire, gold mining in 19th century California and silver mining in 18th century Spanish America have employed an eclectic range of materials as historical records of the sensibilities of actors in socioeconomic settings wherein production was centered upon the 'primary language of morality', religion, and its associated 'patriarchal hierarchies'.[329] For instance, Donald Quataert and Yuksel Duman have appropriated 'truly extraordinary and rare historical documents' such as a late 19th

[327] Sullivan, *Social Relations of Dependence in a Malay State: 19th century Perak*, 30, fn93, 35; Yip, *The Development of the Tin Mining Industry of Malaya*, 101.
[328] Wong, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, xi.
[329] John Tutino, *Making a New World,* 54, 59; Donald Quataert and David Gutman, 'Coal Mines, the Palace, and Struggles over Power, Capital, and Justice in the late Ottoman Empire', *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 44:2 (2012), 215-235; Donald Quataert and Yuksel Duman, 'A Coal Miner's Life during the Late Ottoman Empire', *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 60 (2001), 153-179.

century journal of a miner in the coalfields of the Anatolian Black Sea coast, as unparalleled historical records on 'the life of underground miners of the late Ottoman empire'.[330] While Quataert and Duman emphasize that the Turkish document served as a window into the 'brutality of miners' lives' beyond the protectionist 1867 Dilaver Pasha regulations, the journal is especially informative about Ottoman mine worlds that were steeped in customary religion, and the religious sensibilities of Muslim miners in the 'scared' and 'ill-omened' late 19th century coal mines of Zonguldak. Indeed, the journal is revelatory of, firstly, mines plagued with supernatural beings including 'the death angel' who resided upon 'ready to collapse' coal-bearing galleries and was propitiated through the fatalistic 'profitable [techniques] of the mine operators', and the hellish, demonic 'dark specter that scares mineworks … [hunting down miners, roaming] every pit in Zonguldak'. Secondly, mining being a simultaneously economic and spiritual project involving the recitation of 'the *bismillah* formula' or 'the *bismillah* prayer' upon specific operations, an absolute 'trust in [an awe-inspiring] God's hands' which determined the 'unexpected' and 'unimaginable' deaths of miners, and the observance of precise Muslim rituals within and beyond the mine. Thirdly, religious ceremonies in underground excavations and the physical presence of 'religious teachers' as administrators of these ceremonies.[331]

In a similar vein, Maffly-Kipp's *Religion and Society in Frontier California* employed a range of materials including journals of adventurers to the Californian gold mining frontier and 'few yet remaining' religious testimonies of miners, as historical records of mid-19th century mine worlds that were overwhelmed by 'magical practices' and a

[330] Quataert and Duman, 'A Coal Miner's Life during the Late Ottoman Empire', 153.
[331] Quataert and Duman, 'A Coal Miner's Life during the Late Ottoman Empire', 157-8, 164-7, 172, 175. For an exploration of 'folklore', 'magic', 'superstitions', and invocations of the devil that are directly associated with 'maintaining or increasing production' within Bolivian mines replete with 'proletarianized' peasants, see Michael Taussig, *The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

'peculiar mania of belief in the efficacy of [supernatural] signs'.[332] As Maffly-Kipp notes, these documents are particularly illustrative of the religious sensibilities of gold miners who, on the one hand, relied upon 'divination and other magical practices', 'popular religious practices', 'new gods' and miraculous intercessors to penetrate the spiritually hazardous frontier whereupon the 'capriciousness of fate was the central fact of existence'. On the hand, employed 'technologies' such as 'divining rods', 'mythical words and signs, evidently from the Bible' and 'dreams' to 'locate gold deposits'. Tutino's *Making a New World*, alternatively, recollects a history of mining frontiers in 18th century Spanish America through 'religious materials' that are compelling portrayals of the mentalities of silver miners who dared 'uncontrollable uncertainties' in 'bottomless dungeons' or 'mines that resembled hell', and understood mining as a simultaneously economic and spiritual project that involved the miraculous intermediation of virgins, saints, healers and Jesuit missionaries.[333] The following sections of this chapter explore a corpus of late 19th century Malay manuscripts that are 'truly extraordinary and rare historical documents' of western Malayan frontiers whereupon mining operations were spearheaded by the technological and supernatural expertise of *pawang*s, and the religious sensibilities of tin and gold miners who were dependent upon Muslim miracle-workers to penetrate the 'most lethal frontiers anywhere' in Malaya.[334]

Supernatural Sensibilities, Spiritual Operations and Prospector-Pawangs in Malayan Mines

> *upon the consumption of that very fruit [-] hurled violently was Adam into earth with the snake [that guarded the gate of heaven…] at this very point [-] descended all rezki [livelihood] from heaven together with the snake [-] materials which emerged from the mouth of the snake became gold and whatsoever emerged from its tail became bijeh [tin ore; literally: tin 'seed']*
>
> –*Ilmu Pawang Melombong* (1892).[335]

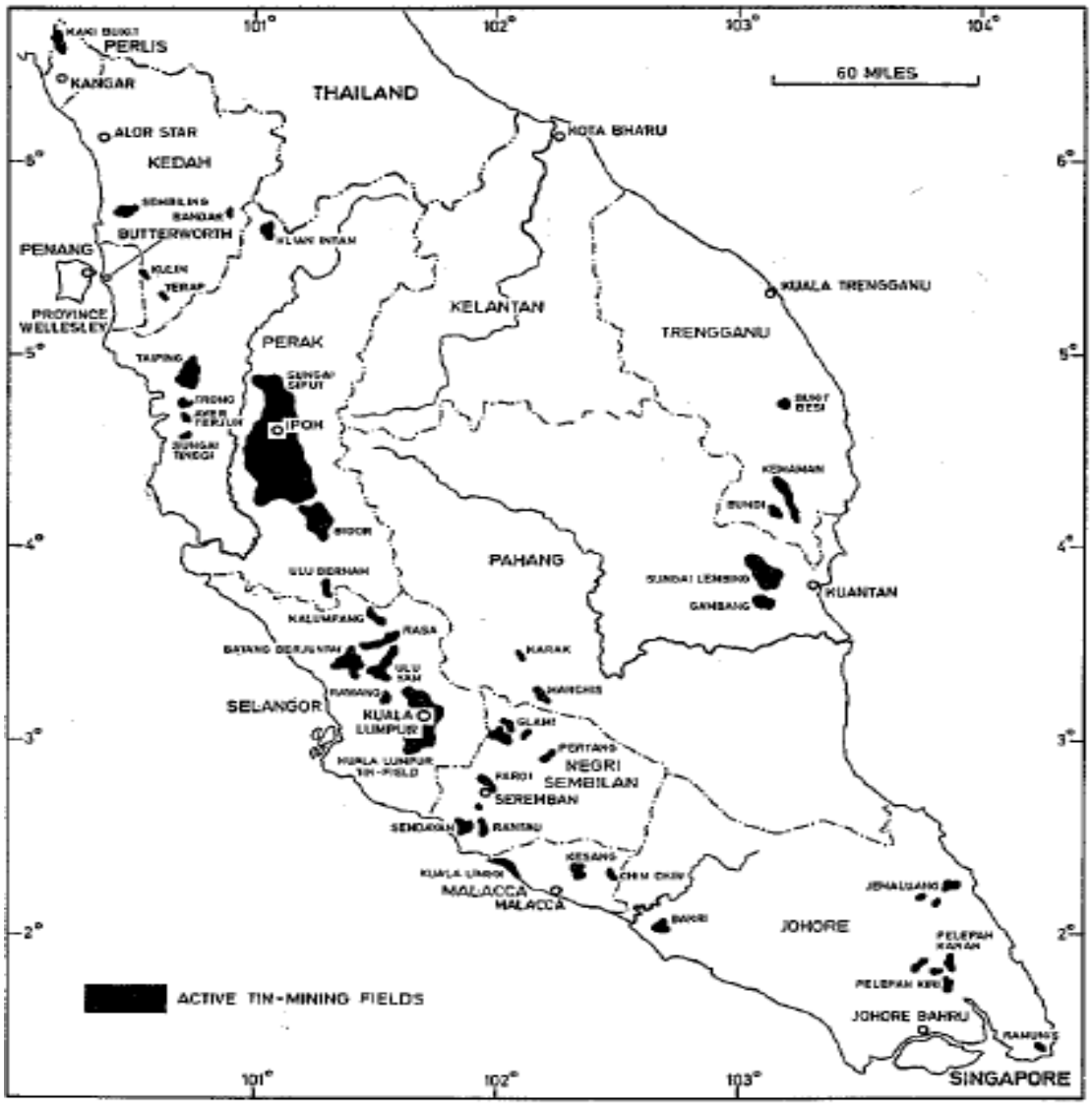
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[332] L. Maffly-Kipp's *Religion and Society in Frontier California*, 2-5, 122-129, 137.
[333] Tutino, *Making a New World*, 173, 183, 189, 419-420.
[334] Reid, 'Chinese on the Mining Frontier in Southeast Asia', 33.
[335] WL Malay 2G. *Malay folklore connected with mining & c.* Muhammad Jaafar, *Ilmu Pawang Melombong [Esoteric Science of the Pawang regarding Large Open-Cast Mining*]. Transmitted by Pawang Hajji Hassan.

Upon 6 August 1892, the *Mata-mata* (policeman), 'Mat [Muhammad of] Sungei Udang' of Malacca, taxied the 'Pawang Hajji Hassan [of] Selangor' to the official residence of the *munshi* or 'Malay Writer' in the Resident Councillor's Office Malacca, Inche Muhammad Jaafar, a taxi service which led to the Pawang Hajji Hassan's transmission of the *Ilmu Pawang Melombong (Esoteric Science of the Pawang Regarding Large Open-Cast Mining*) to the scribe-*munshi*.[336] The only surviving version of the *Ilmu Pawang Melombong*, a romanized Malay transcript produced by the *munshi* upon 16 August 1892 for the Resident Councillor, D. F. A. Hervey, commences with an aide memoire on how, on the one hand, the *ilmu* of the *pawang* transmogrified upon earth at the very moment that God 'scattered *rezki*'. On the other hand, God's articles of *rezki* comprised of the *ghaib* objects, gold and tin 'seed' or ore, which were 'lawfully' in the 'possession' of the 'slaves of God that were soft-bodied', *jinns*, *shetan* (armies of Iblis) and *hantu*s (demons). Dispelling the myth that gold and *bijeh* were merely material products, Pawang Hajji Hassan furnished an elaborate genealogy of these *ghaib* objects, tracing the presence of alluvial deposits within earth to the 'livelihood' that descended from heaven through the body of the reptilian guard of heaven's gate that was 'hurled violently' into earth with the prophet Adam for being 'tricked' into allowing Iblis a passage into heaven, a passage which culminated into Adam being 'tricked' by Iblis into 'rebelliously' consuming the 'fruit of Eden'.[337] The Malay text proceeds to elaborate upon the necessity of the *pawang*'s '*ilmu* and powers' upon stanniferous and auriferous frontiers, the *pawang*'s miraculous expertise of prospecting, excavating, dressing and smelting heavenly *ghaib* objects such

[336] WL Malay 2G. *Malay folklore connected with mining &c.* Muhammad Jaafar, *Ilmu Pawang Melombong.* See Muhammad Jaafar, '*yang di hormat tuan* …', Malacca (8 August 1892); Muhammad Jaafar, '*Hm:Re. Mata2 Mat S. Udang* …', Malacca (3 August 1892); Muhammad Jaafar, '*sudah menulis kepada Mata2 Mat S. Udang*', Malacca (29 July 1892).
[337] WL Malay 2G. *Malay folklore connected with mining &c.* Muhammad Jaafar, *Ilmu Pawang Melombong.*

gold and tin 'seed', and the *pawang*'s absolute 'governance' of *lombong*s (large open-cast, predominantly Chinese excavations) in Malaya.



Mining Frontiers in 20th century Malaya (Source: *The Development of the Tin Mining Industry in Malaya)*

According to a series of Malay notes attached to the *Ilmu Pawang Melombong*, this transcription was produced in response to Hervey's request for a *surat fasal adat* (*epistolary chapter concerning customary religion*) to be transmitted by a *pawang* in proximity of Panchor, Malacca, following his observations of mine worlds that associated curious religious customs with the 'expulsion of damage to the [tin] seed' and the success of open-cast

excavation.[338] These notes that circulated between the *munshi* and the Resident-Councillor also contain snippets of information regarding, firstly, Malayan mine worlds which were hallowed by customs and religion and dominated by *pawang*s who were indispensable intermediaries of the supernatural articles, tin ore and gold. Secondly, the religious sensibilities of miners at a Panchor mine who included both the Malay Muslim owner, Raja Mahmud, and the laborers who were in all probability Chinese immigrants mobilized upon the western Malayan frontier by Chinese mine leasees and who, by 1892, formed more than 97 per cent of the total Malayan mining labor force. Thirdly, economic factors that sustained the careers of *pawang*s such as Hajji Hassan who, together with his associates including the aforementioned policeman, capitalized upon a customary system of extracting *kepenatan* (a monetary compensation for 'fatigue'), for the transmission of *ilmu*.[339] Moreover, an 8 August 1892 memo of Muhammad Jaafar mentions that the peripatetic mining *pawang*, Hajji Hassan of Selangor, 'expeditiously traveled to Muar' upon transmitting the *Ilmu Pawang Melombong*, and was too professionally occupied in Malayan mine worlds to be concerned with the process of producing texts in Malacca for the Resident Councillor's Office.[340] Due to the lack of further data on the Selangor *pawang*, Hajji Hassan, it is only possible to conjecture that his 'busy schedule' was determined by a list of geological and economic factors including the discovery and opening of tin mines in the upstream interior (*hulu)* of Selangor between 1886 and 1894, beyond the mining centers of Lukut and Ampang, in Serendah, Ponggor, Ulu Yam, Ulu Bernam and up to the frontier of Jelebu.[341]

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338 WL Malay 2G. *Malay folklore connected with mining &c.* Muhammad Jaafar, *Ilmu Pawang Melombong.* See D. F. A. Hervey, '*Munshi chobalah mendapat katarangan* …', Malacca (29 July 1892).

339 WL Malay 2G. *Malay folklore connected with mining &c.* Muhammad Jaafar, *Ilmu Pawang Melombong.* See Muhammad Jaafar, '*yang di hormat tuan* …'; Muhammad Jaafar, '*Hm:Re. Mata2 Mat S. Udang* …'; Muhammad Jaafar, '*sudah menulis kepada Mata2 Mat S. Udang*'; Hervey, '*Munshi chobalah mendapat katarangan*…'.

340 WL Malay 2G. *Malay folklore connected with mining &c.* Muhammad Jaafar, *Ilmu Pawang Melombong.* See Muhammad Jaafar, '*yang di hormat tuan* …'.

341 Wong, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914,* 104.

In the fashion of the aforementioned late Ottoman journal examined by Quataert and Duman, first hand Malay accounts transmitted by mining *pawang*s such as the *Ilmu Pawang Melombong* serve as unparalleled historical records of religious mine worlds and the religio-economic sensibilities of tin and gold miners, at least within Hajji Hassan's spheres of operation in Malacca, Muar and Selangor. Even as historians might find the *Ilmu Pawang Melombong*'s elaborate heavenly genealogy of tin ore and gold, and failure to mention material contexts, frustrating, it is a useful resource into socioeconomic stratums wherein actual labor on stanniferous and auriferous frontiers was directly associated with the supernatural due to tin 'seed' and gold being *ghaib* articles. In fact, Scrivenor's 1928 *A Sketch of Malayan Mining* and an 'old note book … [of] jottings of folk lore' produced by a Kinta residing 'Pa' [*pawang*] Senik', contain data suggesting that miners within Perak, in the vein of the mining audience of Hajji Hassan, were overwhelmingly persuaded by the logic that tin ore and gold were supernatural products of the 'breasts' and 'veins' of an erstwhile hyper-potent woman who transmogrified into Malaya.[342] Alternatively, a discussion in the *Ilmu Pawang Melombong* pertaining to the eventual merging of the *bijeh* and gold producing snake into the earth, upon its expulsion from heaven with Adam, seems to be illustrative of how Hajji Hassan's mining audience perceived the 'established', volume-wise 'meandering' geological distribution of alluvial deposits in Malaya as historically determined by the heavenly 'snake's walk' upon its fusion into earth. While Hajji Hassan's transmission fails to elaborate upon the geological logic of this reptilian theory, Scrivenor highlights that Malayan miners who were influenced by the aforementioned traditions of Malaya being a historical hyper-potent woman, 'had an idea of the two breasts [Perak and Selangor] with the heart [Negri Sembilan or Pahang] in between corresponding to the geographic distribution … [of the silica-rich granitic] tin-

342 W. G. Maxwell, 'Miscellaneous Notes', *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 49 (1907), 106; Scrivenor, *A Sketch of Malayan Mining*, 9.

bearing and [the hornblende-granitic, dioritic and volcanic] gold-bearing belts' in western and central Malaya respectively.[343] Furthermore, the Geologist speculates that Perak miners' spiritual traditions concerning a miraculous tree, based upon the Perak-Siam border, which bore gold-producing red blossoms within Siamese territory and tin-producing white blossoms in Perak, were subaltern methods of grappling with the sophisticated 'question[s] [of] whether … gold is of magmatic origin or laterally scattered' and the 'pneumatolytic genesis of tin'.

In the fashion of Scrivenor's documentation of indigenous, supernatural genealogies of tin and gold deposits and subaltern geological rationale, the observation notes of a range of European scholar-administrators and ethnologists are distinguishable from post-colonial historiography in terms of their rich descriptions of the religious sensibilities of alluvial miners in sections of 19th century Malacca, Negri Sembilan and Perak. For instance, the Assistant Resident-Councillor Penang, T. Braddell's 1853 'Notes of a Trip to the Interior from Malacca' comprises of a detailed discussion of 'superstitious' tin miners in Cassang, Malacca, who, firstly, approached Malayan tin ore as an article 'under the guardianship of demons' such as the Chinese king of demons, *Laotse*, that were to be 'propitiated by offerings' or animal sacrifices. Secondly, observed religious ceremonies prior to smelting alluvial ore that 'caused the ore to produce more [molten] tin'. Thirdly, devoutly adhered to ideas about the 'government of their mines', prohibiting specific articles that spirits were 'averse' to, in proximity of 'ore streams' and ore-bearing 'pits' due to supernatural ramifications.[344] Similarly, the Assistant Resident of Perak, W. E. Maxwell's 1876 journal of 'A Journey on Foot to the Patani Frontier' to capture the 'actual instigator of the murder' of the first British Resident of Perak, furnishes data on miners upon the stanniferous frontiers of northern Perak who were the

[343] Scrivenor, *A Sketch of Malayan Mining*, 9.
[344] T. Braddell, 'Notes of a Trip to the Interior from Malacca', *Journal of the Indian Archipelago* 7 (1853), 82.

'most superstitious of mortals', obsessed with spiritual 'rites and ceremonies' that were essential upon mine pioneering and 'would occupy pages in description', and undertaken under the auspices of the '*Pawang*, or wise man, whose professional familiarity with demons and spirits procured him the deepest respect … [and] a comfortable income'.[345]

The editor of the *Penang Gazette* and English ethnologist, J. R. Logan's 1847 notes on his 'walk' into the auriferous interior of Bukit Jelatang, Malacca, and 'across the flat which joins the Ayer Panas [Bemban, Malacca] plain at its angle', contain numerous references to the fact that miners, firstly, directly associated the success of pit excavations 'in search of gold' with the 'skill in the pawang … employed'.[346] Secondly, were overwhelmingly persuaded by the theory that ore was 'under the care and in the gift of a dewa or god' who held powers of hollowing cavities and even 'large black blocks of the common hard scoriform ironrock or hydrated peroxide of iron', and required 'conciliation' through 'prayers and offerings'. Thirdly, were subjected to a penalty-bearing prohibition upon 'any acknowledgement of the sovereignty of Allah' that resulted in the 'offended' *dewa*'s 'hiding [of] the gold' and rendering deposits invisible.[347] Moreover, Newbold's 1835 observation records of 'gold miners of Chimendras in Gominchi [Gemencheh]', Negri Sembilan, are illustrative of mine worlds wherein the excavation of 'gold … from solid rock' following forest clearing operations of laying 'the bed of Napal … bare' was secondary to the selection of 'the precise spot and minute' by 'diviners, Pawangs … skilled in discovering the hidden treasures of the earth … in the uninhabited forest'.[348] In fact, Gullick's article on 'The Negri Sembilan Economy of the 1890's' mentions that Newbold's descriptions of mining in Gemencheh mining as centered upon auriferous 'sites … selected by pawangs (medicine-men or wizards)' were applicable to

[345] W. E. Maxwell, 'A Journey on Foot to the Patani Frontier in 1876', 9-10, 56-57.
[346] Logan, 'Five Days in Naning', 279.
[347] Logan, 'Five Days in Naning', 279-280, 491.
[348] Newbold, *Political and Statistical Account of the British Settlements*, 139, 140-144.

'the situation of 60 years later [in 1895, due to] … no report of any development in techniques'.[349]

19th and early 20th century European records also serve as windows into socioeconomic circles in western Malaya wherein contemporary operations upon alluvial frontiers were directly associated with the lives of historical saints who, to paraphrase Eaton, 'served as metaphors for the expansion of both religion and mining'. Such a historical sensibility is apparent in Maxwell's 'A Journey on Foot to the Patani Frontier' which introduces readers to an overwhelming opinion in northern Perak, by 1875, of contemporary tin mining being a tradition inherited from Muslim suprahumans such as the son of 'the Chief of the [unspecified] northern district [-] Toh Lalang', 'Pawang Sering' (Pawang, the Frequently Appearing One) who was the pioneer of the tin mines of Intan, Perak, and Endah, Selangor.[350] Similarly, Maxwell's 1878 notes on a 'A Malay Kramat [that was situated…] half-way between the Larut Residency and the mining village of Kamunting', and Winstedt's 1924 article on '*Karamats*', contain discussions of the *karamat* (miracle working shrine) of an early 19th century Acehnese 'medicine-woman', Toh Bidan Susu Lanjut (the honourable midwife with elongated breasts to provide milk).[351] Whilst the *karamat* was 'discovered in the [Larut] forest' in the 1870s by laborers, the breast milk dispensing saint appears to have attained, by the early 20th century, a reputation of being both a 'mother of the ummat', and an icon of the expansion of mining frontiers through her 'breast feeding' of communities of Chinese miners. The supernatural milk from her right breast was fed to the 'ummat', and the milk from her left breast was reserved for supernaturally breast-feeding communities of Chinese miners in Larut who repaid their mother's favors through employing a 'Kling'

[349] Gullick, 'The Negri Sembilan Economy of the 1890s', 50.
[350] W. E. Maxwell, 'A Journey on Foot to the Patani Frontier in 1876', 22, 37. Also see E. W. Birch, 'My Visit to Klian', *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 54 (1909), 137.
[351] W. E. Maxwell, 'A Malay Kramat', *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 2 (1878), 236-238; R. O. Winstedt, '*Karamat*: Sacred Places and People in Malaya', 271.

(Tamil Muslim) caretaker for the *karamat*.[352] Winstedt's article also mentions that Kinta mine worlds, in between Tambun and Pulai in particular, were replete with traditions that connected prospecting and excavation with historical, technologically advanced *pawang*s or 'famous medicine-men' whose 'custom, [was] to fossick for tin' and were able to 'split rock easily with a twig (*puchok dedap*)'.[353] Furthermore, Skeat's 1897 *Malay Magic* contains references to the 'ridiculous' historical sensibilities of Chinese tin miners in Kajang, Selangor, who attributed a historical 'pawang of Sungei Jelok' the powers of commanding 'grains to crawl on her palm like live worms' and causing the 'failure of the Sungei Jelok mines' upon a 'breach of contract' by associated *towkay*s.[354]

Beyond documents pertaining to the historical sensibilities of tin miners in Perak and Selangor, the 19th and early 20th century writings of European missionaries and scholar-administrators who explored Mount Ophir (Gunung Ledang) in the interior of Malacca up to the border with Johor, make multiple references to how cosmopolitan miners and their Straits financers were predisposed to the geological logic that the abundant 'gold found at Mount Ophir' was purely the 'bounty' of a historical personage, the 'Queen-Goddess or Sorceress', the *Perempuan Sakti* (Woman of Miraculous Power) and *Bidadari* (Houri), the *Putri* (Princess-Nymph) of Gunung Ledang.[355] On the one hand, Lister's 1891 article on 'The Putri of Mount Ophir' records a historical tradition transmitted by the Dato of Johol, Negri Sembilan that was in vogue within the gold-bearing belts of Johol and Gemencheh, related to a tiger-accompanied, trans-historical *Putri* who traveled beyond her mountainous abode to miraculously materialize the *ghaib*

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352 Winstedt, '*Karamat*: Sacred Places and People in Malaya', 271; Muhammad A. Ridhwan, *Riwayat Hidup Keramat Toh Bidan Susu Lanjut* (Unpublished: Printed by Ridhwan in Larut [Perak], no date). Accessed in December 2009.

353 Winstedt, '*Karamat*: Sacred Places and People in Malaya', 269.

354 Skeat, *Malay Magic*, 262-3.

355 See for instance, M. E. Staley, 'Mount Ophir Legends', *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 62 (1912), 24-25; M. Lister, 'Occasional Notes: The Putri of Mount Ophir', *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 24, (1891), 165-166; R. J. Wilkinson, 'The Putri Gunung Ledang (Fairy Princess of Mt. Ophir)', *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 32 (1899), 213-214; Braddell, 'Notes of a Trip to the Interior from Malacca', 85, 88-89, 102.

article, gold, in the hands of her subaltern 'worshippers'.[356] On the other hand, Braddell's 1853 'Notes' and the Anglican missionary, M. E. Staley's 1912 article on 'Mount Ophir Legends' are informative about how successful ascent to the *Putri*'s 'bounty' upon this 'sacred [and 'risky'] mountain' populated by aerial spirits, 'Hantus, jins, and malevolent demons' was dependent upon the 'spells', 'omens' and 'rituals' of the 'village Pawang' or 'Religio'.[357]

The Cosmopolitan Networks of the Prospector-Pawang

It was within the aforementioned 19th century religious mine worlds that peripatetic *pawang*s such as Hajji Hassan established seemingly lucrative careers. Indeed, the aforementioned Malay notes attached to the *Ilmu Pawang Melombong* that circulated amongst Muhammad Jaafar and Hervey between 29 July and 9 August 1892, refer to two *pawang*s, Hajji Hassan and 'Mat [Muhammad] Asip [whose] guardianship included Batu Panggong', as technologically advanced miracle workers who were professionally integrated into western Malayan mine worlds due to their intricate, esoteric science of the actual operations of 'excavating gold' and 'excavating or laboring in the tin ore *lombong*'.[358] The *pawang*, Mat Asip, is briefly described as a professional 'divinatory' who was taxied by the 'Constable Mat' to transmit a '*Cherita Pawang Bijeh*' (*Narrative of the Tin Ore Pawang*) which was in turn, transcribed by Muhammad Jaafar in the form of a Malay document currently housed at the Wellcome Library, the *Pawang Melumbung Timah (The Pawang in Large Open-Cast Mining*).[359] The *munshi*'s notes are palpably more informative about Hajji

356 Lister, 'Occasional Notes: The Putri of Mount Ophir', 165-6; Wilkinson, 'The Putri Gunung Ledang', 213-214.
357 Staley, 'Mount Ophir Legends', 24-5; Braddell, 'Notes of a Trip to the Interior from Malacca', 85, 88-89, 102.
358 WL Malay 2G. *Malay folklore connected with mining &c.* Muhammad Jaafar, *Ilmu Pawang Melombong*. See Muhammad Jaafar, '*Hm:Re. Mata2 Mat S. Udang* …'; Muhammad Jaafar, '*sudah menulis kepada Mata2 Mat S. Udang*'.
359 WL Malay 3 Muhammad Jaafar, *Pawang Melumbung Timah* [transmitted by Mat Asip]. Transcribed by Muhammad Jafaar.

Hassan who is described as the prototypical mining *pawang* who enjoyed a 'busily scheduled' career in Malacca, Muar and Selangor in comparison to Mat Asip whose services were displaced with by 3 August 1892.[360] Nevertheless, Muhammad Jaafar's transcriptions and memos which function as appendixes to the *Ilmu Pawang Melombong* and the *Pawang Melumbung Timah*, contain valuable snippets of information regarding transcultural saintly networks or webs of patronage within and beyond the frontiers of large open-cast mines that sustained the careers of archetypal mining *pawang*s.

Such saintly networks are apparent, for example, in the *munshi*'s notes pertaining to political connections between mining *pawang*s and indigenous dignitaries such as, firstly, the policeman Mat of Sungei Udang who regularly taxied mining *pawang*s to the Resident Councillor's Office in August 1892. Secondly, a prominent courtier and mine owner, Raja Mahmud, who by July 1892, associated the success of mining and smelting operations in Panchur with the performance of religious customs by *pawang*s.[361] Whilst Muhammad Jaafar's descriptions of Hajji Hassan and Mat Asip's political networks suffer from brevity, Hale's 1885 pamphlet on Kinta mine worlds is illustrative of how an economy of Muslim miracle workers comprising of the 'principal *pawang* of the Larut district, PA' [Pawang] ITAM DAM', thrived upon customary payments or 'dues' of 1 slab of tin (or the monetary equivalent of $6.25) for every sluice box in operation by mine owners who were in all probability, rajas or *anak raja*s (children of chiefs) to the *pawang*.[362] Hale's pamphlet is also informative about intimate relationships between mining *pawang*s and courtiers in Kinta that enabled these miracle workers to temporally and supernaturally *hukum* (govern) the open-cast mine, and extract 'half the amount of

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[360] WL Malay 2G. *Malay folklore connected with mining &c.* Muhammad Jaafar, *Ilmu Pawang Melombong* See '*Hm:Re. Mata2 Mat S. Udang* …'; Muhammad Jaafar, '*sudah menulis kepada Mata2 Mat S. Udang*'.

[361] *Malay folklore connected with mining &c.* Muhammad Jaafar, *Ilmu Pawang Melombong.* Hervey. See '*Munshi chobalah mendapat katarangan*'; Muhammad Jaafar, '*yang di hormat tuan* …', Malacca (8 August 1892); Muhammad Jaafar, '*Hm:Re. Mata2 Mat S. Udang* …'; Muhammad Jaafar, '*sudah menulis kepada Mata2 Mat S. Udang*'.

[362] Hale, 'On Mines and Miners in Kinta, Perak', 307.

the fine' that 'a chief could impose on a *ra'iyat* for minor offences' in the event of religious transgressions by laborers and *towkay*s.[363] The introductory chapter has suggested that post-colonial historians' neglect of the spiritual character of the Malayan mining frontier can be attributed to portrayals of western Malayan mine worlds as 'reputedly immoral' ones plagued by economically disruptive Muslim courtiers who perpetrated civil wars over the monopoly of imposts on tin passing down rivers and were in the need of British Residencies' discipline. However, both Muhammad Jaafar's and Hale's notes appear to confirm late 19th century European observers' suspicions that rajas and their coteries who had been recruiting Cantonese and Hakka miners to expand the Peninsula's gold and tin mining frontiers since the 18th century, 'cunningly' ensured that their 'fratricidal struggles' made little impact upon the 'continuous growth of the tin trade', and invested in both partisan Chinese mining enterprises and the religious customs of the *pawang* that were perceived to be pivotal throughout mining operations from prospecting to smelting.[364]

Beyond indigenous, courtier webs of patronage that sustained the careers of mining *pawang*s, Muslim possessors of 'wonderful 'noses' for tin' were plugged into mutually profitable relationships with 'always superstitiously disposed' Chinese mining entrepreneurs. The 19th and early 20th century European materials that this chapter has consulted, comprise of multiple mentions of mountain-climbing and jungle-penetrating western Malayan prospector *pawang*s and *karamat*s (miracle working saints) whose supernatural careers were perpetuated by customary payments, 'royalties', and monetary and architectural donations, from, primarily, the 'favored votaries … pious Chinese' *towkay lombong*s, and secondarily, the 'most profuse votaries … the wealthy Chinese

[363] Hale, 'On Mines and Miners in Kinta, Perak', 309.
[364] Winstedt and Wilkinson, *A History of Perak*, I, 2-3, 118; Wong, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, 23, 31; Reid, 'Chinese on the Mining Frontier in Southeast Asia' 33

merchants' of the Straits Settlements.[365] In a similar vein, Malay materials such as the *Ilmu Pawang Melombong* serve as valuable windows into cosmopolitan mining circles wherein mining *pawang*s capitalized upon Chinese mining enterprises' refusal to 'prospect scientifically' for alluvial tin ore in the western Malay states through an expensive system of test-boring, even after the Residencies' offers of test-boring for a 'certain fee', and preference for the 'despised', 'crude', 'ridiculous' and 'primitive methods' of prospecting performed by the *pawang*.[366]

Whilst the *Ilmu Pawang Melombong* does not contain any reference to Hajji Hassan being plugged into interweaving webs of patronage with Chinese mine leasees or advancers who were integral to more than 90 per cent of Malayan open-cast mine stratums by 1892, such connections are perhaps deducible from a concluding section of the Malay text, '*lapisan tanah*' (layers of the land) wherein the prospector-*pawang* communicates his 'intuitive science' of alluvial, stanniferous and auriferous terrain through, according to Hale's 1885 pamphlet, distinctly 'Chinese expressions'.[367] In this section, the prospector-*pawang* esoterically distinguished the *karang* (a Chinese expression for the coveted tin 'seed' or gold constituting layer above the bedrock) that appeared to the 'outer eye' as rough sand and multicolored gravel, from five other layers. These included the uppermost layer or 'padi land', the multicolored 'edible earth', the minimal *bijeh* or gold constituting 'hanging *karang*', the 'gloomy' layer, and the dry land and oil comprising 'paving stone' or *kong* (a Chinese expression for the sub-stratum of earth or clay below the ore-bearing *karang* layer). Furthermore, it is highly plausible that the 'busily scheduled' careers of prospector-*pawang*s such as Hajji Hassan were sustained by the nature of typical late 19th century Chinese mining enterprises that were characterized

[365] Logan, 'Five Days in Naning', 402-3.
[366] Wong, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, 58-9.
[367] WL Malay 2G. *Malay folklore connected with mining &c.* Muhammad Jaafar, *Ilmu Pawang Melombong. See* '*lapisan tanah*'. In terming these 'Chinese expressions', I am relying here upon Hale's 1885 glossary, 'On Mines and Miners in Kinta'.

by 'small-scale', 'simplicity in equipment', the lack of permanent or semi-permanent 'machinery of any sort', 'flexibility' and absolute reliance upon approximately 70 itinerant laborers (as statistics produced by mid and late 19th century European observers, suggest).[368] Such 'simplicity' and 'flexibility' appears to have provided prospector-*pawang*s multiple opportunities to locate ore-sufficient sites due to the fact that the 'whole plant and equipment of a Chinese mine could be loaded into a few bullock-carts … [with] relatively little trouble and expense' upon *pawang*s' 'guesses' being 'proved incorrect'.

It is unfortunate that there is little evidence in the aforementioned 19th and early 20th century European records to suggest that mining *pawang*s were involved in sophisticated networks that encompassed Indian capitalists or moneylenders who, by 1897, played a 'prominent part' in advancing capital for Chinese mining enterprises in Malaya.[369] Nevertheless, Newbold's 1835 discussion of 'gold miners of Chimendras' is particularly illustrative of mutually lucrative, Indian Ocean networks that connected itinerant prospector-*pawang*s who penetrated the auriferous frontiers of Gemencheh to 'Chuliah' or 'Kling' (Tamil Muslim) assayers. These Tamil assayers determined the 'purity of any specimen of [the professional *pawang*'s prospected] gold-dust' through a peculiar Indian 'Batu uji, or touchstone', and sustained the 'shrine of some favoured saint, or wali, generally that of Miran Sahib [Shah al-Hamid], in Nagore' whose *durgah*s (shrines) in both Nagore and western Malaya were common complexes of peripatetic *pawang*s, through 'half of the [amalgamated] gold'.[370] Beyond Asian political and mercantile networks that perpetuated the supernatural careers of mining *pawang*s, there is evidence from the late 19th century to imply that the nascent British Residencies (established in 1874) operated

368 Yip, *The Development of the Tin Mining Industry of Malaya*, 102; Scrivenor, *A Sketch of Malayan Mining*, 9-14; J. B. Scrivenor, *The Geology of Malayan Ore-Deposits, (London: Macmillan, 1928),* 86; Wong, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, 40, fn130. In his observation of mine worlds in Padang, Johor, Munshi Ibrahim suggested that the typical open-cast Chinese mine involved approximately 110 laborers, see Munshi Muhammad Ibrahim, *Kisah Pelayaran Muhammad Ibrahim Munsyi,* 17, 104.
369 Wong, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, 64.
370 Newbold, *Political and Statistical Account of the British Settlements*, 145-7.

in the service of Muslim miracle-workers. On the one hand, the series of Malay notes exchanged between Muhammad Jaafar and Hervey, are telling of a transcultural scholarly network that led to the production and circulation of Malay texts such as the *Ilmu Pawang Melombong* and *Pawang Melumbung Timah* that celebrated the indispensability of the *pawang* in open-cast mines. In fact, a reader may be surprised by the European scholar-administrator's enthusiasm to recruit the services of the policeman Mat and Raja Mahmud to taxi *pawang*s to the Resident-Councillor Office, and brazen willingness to dispense funds of the Residency as *kepenatan* for transmitter-*pawang*s and their associates for the production of such *pawang*-centered texts.

Alternatively, Lister's *Mining Laws and Customs* introduces readers to the juridical reality in Perak and Selangor, by 1889, that, firstly, 'ridiculous … mining superstitions … [were] brought to the notice of a Magistrate in new districts' and it was 'absurd [but] … often wise to inflict a small fine in Court where local prejudices are interfered with'.[371] Secondly, the 'Government' was preoccupied with the task of 'fixing … a small royalty' for the 'pawang or fetish man' who 'originally proved alluvial lands to be stanniferous or auriferous', expelled 'evil spirits and ensured good results for the mine'.[372] Similarly, Hale's 1885 pamphlet is illustrative of 'legal complaints' that pressed the nascent Assistant Resident Office, Perak, to perform judicially in the service of customary religion and mining *pawang*s. For instance, Hale elaborates upon complaints registered by, on the one hand, a prominent 'Chinese *towkay*' in the early 1880s, who pushed the Office to punish the 'very grave offence' of a rival *kongsi* that had disregarded the 'governance of the *pawang*', and 'brought [*pawang*-banned] limes [into the plaintiff's mine] and squeezed the juice into his head race … [and] rubbed their bodies with the juice mixed with water out of its head race'.[373] Alternatively, the aforementioned Pawang Itam Dam who in

[371] Lister, *Mining Laws and Customs in the Malay Peninsula*, 16.
[372] Lister, *Mining Laws and Customs in the Malay Peninsula*, 10.
[373] Hale, 'On Mines and Miners in Kinta, Perak', 305.

1878, attempted to bully the Office to emulate courtiers such as the erstwhile discoverer of the Larut mines, Che Long Jaffar, and as such, financially 'esteem' the *pawang*'s career which involved 'visit[ing] all mines from time to time', conducting religious ceremonies such as the '*miraculous devotions purported to restore so as to prevent the decrease in tin ore content*' and '*major miraculous devotions*', and the actual 'governing' of open-cast mine worlds in Kinta.[374]

The *Pawang*'s 'Wonderful Nose for Tin': *Ilmu* in the Service of Open-Cast Mining

Prospector-Pawangs and the Excavation of Heavenly Ore

> *gold [and tin] seed and similar deposits [have been] identified as ghaib objects [-] the possessions of the slaves of God that are soft-bodied [-] the jinns-shetan-hantus … [in prospecting for deposits] necessarily fundamental [and] primordial is the procedure of befriending [the jinn-shetan-hantu] … whenever these [spirits] have been diakuinya [converted into 'akuan'] thereupon is labor permitted.*
>
> *– Ilmu Pawang Melombong.*[375]

The 1892 *Ilmu Pawang Melombong* is, in all probability, the most detailed record of mine stratums in Malaya wherein the intermediation of simultaneously supernatural and geological frontiers was dependent upon miraculous methods of colonization and sophisticated spiritual negotiations. The text transmitted by Hajji Hassan which commences with the aforementioned genealogy tracing the earthly manifestation of tin ore and gold to Adam's original sin, proceeds to narrate an aide memoire on how specific economic activities including the prospecting for the '*ghaib* objects' and the organization of mining operations or labor, was pivoted upon, firstly, the '*ilmu* [and] *penguasaan* [powers of the] *pawang*' which was the agency central to intermediating *jinns*, *hantus* and *shetan* that possessed the *ghaib* tin 'seed' and gold and were 'faces' of geological frontiers.

[374] These are my translations of '*puja handak di-pulih balik supaya jangan mengorang biji*' and '*puja besar*', see Hale, 'On Mines and Miners in Kinta, Perak', 307.
[375] WL Malay 2G. *Malay folklore connected with mining &c.* Muhammad Jaafar, *Ilmu Pawang Melombong.*

Secondly, the *pawang*'s 'necessarily fundamental and primordial' specialized rituals of communication that converted the 'soft-bodied slaves of God' into *akuan* (spirit friends) of the *pawang* and his accompanying frontiersmen. Whilst the *Ilmu Pawang Melombong* fails to elaborate upon the socioeconomic implications of the term *akuan*, an early 20th century pamphlet produced by the reformist scholar Zainal Abidin bin Ahmad clarifies that professional *pawang*s, 'much sought after personages' in Negri Sembilan, were credited with the powers or miraculous expertise of converting spirits into 'the spirit-friends [which were] good and serviceable auxiliaries' for actual mining and agricultural operations.[376] The previous section focused upon western Malayan frontiers whereupon the socioeconomic and geological stratums and activities of alluvial miners were intimately connected with the supernatural, and mining *pawangs* who were plugged into transcultural networks served as indispensable authorities due to their technological or supernatural expertise. This section shifts the focus of the chapter from religious mine worlds to the powers or miraculous expertise of *pawangs* such as Hajji Hassan and the transmitter of the *Pawang Melumbung Timah*, Mat Asip, whose supernatural careers revolved around their intermediation and 'governance' of simultaneously geological and supernatural frontiers.

Malay texts such as the *Ilmu Pawang Melombong* and the *Pawang Melumbung Timah* fail to mention specific contexts of stanniferous and to a lesser extent, auriferous open-cast mines. Nevertheless, the autobiographical nature of these texts, in terms of their first-hand transmissions by 'much sought after personages' who were physically present in the prototypical western Malayan *lombong*, make these records particularly useful resources into understanding the 'social conditions' of more than 90 per cent of Malayan mine worlds that were constituted by large open-cast excavations, by 1892.[377] For

[376] Abidin, 'The *Akuan* or Spirit Friends', 378-384.
[377] Yip, *The Development of the Tin Mining Industry of Malaya*, 83.

instance, the *Ilmu Pawang Melombong* serves as an illustration of socioeconomic settings in Malacca, Muar and Selangor wherein the '*ilmu* and powers' of itinerant *pawang*s such as Hajji Hassan was, on the one hand, the agency central to 'determining the pedological condition of land and its underlying mineralogical content', and 'attaining the customary [supernatural] right to proceed' with colonization and open-cast excavation.[378] Alternatively, the key organizing principle of the open-cast excavation due to the reality that the primary procedure of prospecting for 'mineralogical content' was solely dependent upon the *pawang*'s specialized ritual of communication with three *hantu*s, in the course of a benzoin-burning ceremony upon a 'profitable' night. These *hantu*s that served as the '*kepala* [key, authoritative] possessors' of all *ghaib* tin ore and gold, were *Chanang Plembang* (the male Gong of Palembang, Sumatra), *Chanang Penambang* (the female Gong of Miners) and the childlike, *Si Kemang*. It is possible that Hajji Hassan's reference to a cosmopolitan spirit, *Chanang Plembang*, was either an allusion to his own or mine-owning audience's Sumatran descent or lineage, or a method to display his miraculous intercession of demons that plagued the alluvial tin economies of both Malaya and the Sumatran island of Banka which was historically subject to the Palembang Sultanate and a 'metalogenetic province with similar deposits' to western Malaya.[379] The *pawang*'s 1892 reference to the *Si Kemang*, alternatively, appears to confirm Newbold's 1835 suspicions that western Malayan miners such as those he encountered in Sungei Ujong were 'particularly careful not to provoke by word or deed' the 'wrath' of the 'spirit (Kummang [*Kemang*]), who watched over the mines' and had gained notoriety for its potential to haunt mines and sow tares in tin ore.[380]

As a text preoccupied with the socioeconomic nature of the *pawang*'s '*ilmu* and powers', the *Ilmu Pawang Melombong* elaborates upon the direct connections between

[378] WL Malay 2G. *Malay folklore connected with mining &c.* Muhammad Jaafar, *Ilmu Pawang Melombong.*
[379] Heidhues, 'Poor Little Rich Islands', 62, 65; Alex L. Tere Braake, Mining in the Netherlands East Indies (New York: Arno Press, 1977), 36-37.
[380] Newbold, *Political and Statistical Account of the British Settlements*, 97.

mining operations ranging from prospecting and colonization to the establishment of the open-cast excavation, and the *pawang*'s expert intermediation of the aforementioned 'key authoritative possessors' of *ghaib* deposits. These supernatural negotiations are described in the Malay text as 'peculiarly esoteric conversations' that the *pawang* was, exclusively, proficient to undertake with the three *hantus* (who are identifiably non-Muslim or semi-Islamized through the polite formula of *hai* instead of *assalamualaikum*) upon stanniferous and auriferous frontiers, wherein the miraculous expert converted the *hantus* into *akuan* or 'good and serviceable auxiliaries' that reported upon 'the mineralogical content of a prospected site or its barrenness or the possibility of [supernaturally] correcting [a barren site] into a profitable [mining] enterprise'. Rituals of communication with the *hantu*s were not simply confined to the 'conscious states' in which *pawang*s such as Hajji Hassan were penetrating the forested interior in search of granitic alluvial remains by the late 19th century, and were conducted in 'sleep states'. Herein, the prototypical *pawang* who was soporifically positioned upon the prospective site in the *hulu*, firstly, 'meditated upon the projected mining enterprise or labor' in the course of transition from a conscious to sleep state, awaiting the arrival of *Chanang Plembang*, *Chanang Penambang* and *Si Kemang*. Secondly, welcomed the 'inevitable' appearances of his 'spirit friends' in dreams that produced detailed data regarding 'the state of condition' of the prospective site, the mineralogical content or barrenness of the site, the feasibility or impracticality of mining enterprise and labor, and the *hantu*s' specific requirements of *makan* (the meal) or 'friendly compensations' for their economic collaboration.

According to Hajji Hassan's self-avowedly 'accurate record' of western Malayan religious mine worlds, the actual appropriation of sites for colonization was contingent upon the prototypical *pawang*'s interpretation and 'meticulous translation' of dream visions into geological operations, in the midst of negotiation of 'the meal' with the

*hantu*s on behalf of accompanying frontiersmen-clients.[381] The trope of associating successful mining operations with the propitiation of spirits through 'the meal' was not one peculiar to the mine worlds Hajji Hassan operated within, and we find in Winstedt's 1924 '*Karamat*', a reference to a 19th century Muslim *karamat* at Sungai Baharu, Malacca, who 'demanded seven women, *primae gravidae*' from a Chinese *towkay* via a dream vision, and spread epidemics and mobilized predatory tigers upon a nascent gold mine upon the event of being left hungry.[382] Possibly cognizant of such precedents, the transmitter of the *Ilmu Pawang Melombong* counsels his audience of the brutal economic reality that the failure to propitiate the aforementioned *hantu*s through the *makan* would result in forthcoming mining enterprises being doomed to 'bankruptcy' due to both the prospector-*pawang*'s 'destruction' at the hands of his erstwhile 'spirit friends', and the *hantu*s' 'vile refusal' of economic collaboration due to the 'divorce of the friendship'.

Ultimately, the *Ilmu Pawang Melombong* is preoccupied with portraying the mining operations of prospecting, colonization and excavation as distinctly supernatural procedures, and this is particularly evident in a section, '*kelakuan memberi makan hantu itu*' (practices related to offering the meal of the *hantus*). Herein, readers are provided, on the one hand, intricate details regarding the Islamic slaughter of a sacrificial animal and arrangement of its body parts and blood in an *anchak* (sacrificial tray) 'upon the face' of the *pawang*-determined spot for mining enterprise.[383] On the other hand, a strong reminder concerning the fact that the 'deeply spiritual' operations of colonization and excavation had to be exclusively commenced upon by the *pawang* who ensured a successful mining enterprise through the rudimentary techniques of 'hitting the *changkul* and whatever appropriate tools' in the *lombong*. Whilst serving as an 'accurate record' of *pawang*-presided mine worlds and *pawang*s such as Hajji Hassan, the *Ilmu Pawang*

[381] For example, Hale mentions the prototypical Perak *pawang*'s negotiation for a cheaper '*kepala nasi*' (head of rice) vis-à-vis a sacrificial animal, 'On Mines and Miners in Kinta, Perak', 306.
[382] Winstedt, '*Karamat*: Sacred Places and People in Malaya', 267.
[383] Also refer to Hale, 'On Mines and Miners in Kinta, Perak', 310-311.

Melombong fails to contain any significant description of the 'others' who followed the *pawang*'s rudimentary excavation, 'partook in labor until [open-cast excavation] reached completion', and who were in all probability, approximately 70 Chinese laborers. Nevertheless, it is tempting to assume that Hajji Hassan's discussion of the conversion of non-Muslim or semi-Islamized *hantu*s into the *pawang*'s 'spirit-friends' was also an indication of a simultaneously spiritual transformation of the *pawang*'s non-Muslim laboring, and even mine leasing, audience into the '*anak* [dependents of the] *pawang*', a concept that finds more mention in Mat Asip's *Pawang Melumbung Timah*.

The 1892 *Pawang Melumbung Timah* appears to surpass the longer record, *Ilmu Pawang Melombong* in terms of its emphasis upon the bodily presence of the *pawang* in the open-cast mine, and the materiality of miraculous expertise and its indispensability to prospecting and vertical excavation. Indeed, the *Pawang Melumbung Timah* appears to be an accurate reflection of mine worlds in Batu Panggong that were under the simultaneously economic and spiritual 'guardianship' of Mat Asip whose career, like that of his contemporary Hajji Hassan, revolved around being a physically present authority upon the stanniferous frontier from the juncture 'when the site to be converted into a large open-cast excavation had been selected' by the *pawang* within the western Malayan interior. For instance, prospecting for alluvial granitic deposits in the interior is described by Mat Asip as a process involving the *pawang*'s intricate, esoteric inspections of horticultural features surrounding a prospective site which served as 'signs' of 'buried' tin ore, and sophisticated negotiations with a plethora of supernatural beings who 'guarded' the stanniferous terrain and 'buried [tin] seed'. With particular emphasis placed upon the bodily presence of the benzoin-burning *pawang* upon the stanniferous frontier, Mat Asip specifies that prospecting was solely dependent upon the western Malayan *pawang*'s esoteric rituals of communication with, firstly, the Muslim agent of colonization of Malaccan and Selangor mine and rice worlds and 'guardian of the land', Nabi Tap, who

was invoked for 'permission' to proceed with open-cast excavation and to refrain from 'spite', 'tyranny', 'damage and destruction'. Secondly, the *jinns* that 'guarded' and 'reared' tin ore, the *Jinn Hitam* (Black *Jinn*) that had a 'black mien and Negroid-hair' and the *Jinn Jala Bumi* (*Jinn* with Earth in its Casting-Net), both of which are informed about the *pawang*'s and accompanying frontiersmen's 'ambitions for [tin] seed latent in the site' and called upon to 'reveal and furnish signs' of deposits or report 'barrenness' to the *pawang*.

In the fashion of the *Ilmu Pawang Melombong*, the *Pawang Melumbung Timah* comprises of a detailed discussion of the esoteric communications undertaken by *pawang*s to 'locate' alluvial tin deposits for frontiersmen-clients in states of consciousness and sleep. These supernatural communications that were aimed towards the establishment of the '*fikiran* [consciousness of the] *pawang*', the agency pivotal to locating the *karang* and distinguishing it from other non-stanniferous layers of the terrain, were conducted through 'meditations upon both [incumbent mining] enterprises … [and] the *hantu*s [oft-confused in the text with '*jinn*s'] of [tin] seed within the inner heart'. Whilst mentioning that the failure of the *pawang* to attain visions of the aforementioned *jinns/hantus* in the 'sleep state' upon multiple 'meditations' was in itself a 'sign' of the terrain's barrenness, the *Pawang Melumbung Timah* elaborates upon the economic value of dream visions of *jinns/hantus* that were 'authentic guarantees' of the stanniferous nature of the terrain. Such profitable dream visions, the happy results of the *pawang*'s conversations with 'guardians of *bijeh*', are illustrated as constituting, firstly, the arrival of 'profitable language' speaking 'blackish guardians' that reported upon the location of tin ore deposits and 'authenticated' the feasibility of a *lombong*. Secondly, apparitions whose intricacies were telling of the 'precise volume' of alluvial deposits 'buried' in the stanniferous terrain. Whilst Mat Asip's transmission is unclear about how these dream visions translated into the establishment of the agency central to excavating the *karang*, readers are introduced to the reality that this supernatural 'consciousness' manifested

itself in open-cast mines through the prototypical *pawang*'s conduct of benzoin-burning ceremonies, fumigation of mining tools and exclusive commencement upon excavation with the *changkul*. Hereupon, 'others' (laborers) were permitted to excavate the clearing vertically until the *karang*, typically 15 feet or more below the surface in Malaya, that was supernaturally and materially (in terms of its 'multi-colored stone' like appearance) distinguished by the *pawang* for accompanying frontiersmen. Upon 'reaching the *karang*', the prototypical *pawang* undertook another esoteric ritual of communication in the course of a benzoin-burning ceremony, invoking two female *jinn*s that 'guarded' and 'resided within' the *karang*, the '*Emak* [polite address for aged women] *Kemang*' and *Emak Kembang*, to 'rear' and 'nurture' the mining pioneer's 'properties' and the '*anak pawang*', 'tame the shrew' like deposits, 'return the departed' deposits, 'repair damaged' deposits, 'fill the emptied' *karang*, and refrain from 'spite' and 'tyranny'. The regular references to spirits as 'guardians' of stanniferous land, alluvial tin ore deposits and the tin-bearing *karang* in the *Pawang Melumbung Timah* appear to be insinuations that the prototypical western Malayan *pawang*'s expertise was one of penetrating the interior and transferring, via rituals of communication, spirits' 'guardianship' of geological frontiers to the Muslim 'guardianship' of *pawang*s such as Mat Asip.

The *Pawang Melumbung Timah* also serves as a particularly rich document of the prototypical western Malayan *pawang* being a physically present authority in the *lombong* who pioneered vertical excavation and dressing of the alluvial tin-bearing drift, *karang*. For instance, the text provides readers a window into mine worlds wherein the *pawang* pioneered or commenced upon the procedures of 'scraping up the *karang* that was interspaced with [tin] seed' with a *changkul*, and 'drawing out' the *karang* from the vertical excavation. Whilst portraying the *pawang* as an adept whose flesh and bones 'climbed out' of the *lombong* with an appropriate amount of *karang* that was in turn piled upon a *pawang*-determined 'pristine spot', the *Pawang Melumbung Timah* is at pains to emphasize the

centrality of miraculous expertise to vertical open-cast excavation. This is apparent in Mat Asip's descriptions of the excavated *karang* as a peculiar supernatural species that required the intermediation of the *pawang* in the form of fumigation and circumambulation ceremonies, and a *tangkal* (talisman) of 'three thorns' that dispelled the 'spite of [human and supernatural] beings upon the *karang* raked up'. In an 8 August 1892 note attached to the *Ilmu Pawang Melombong*, Muhammad Jaafar mentions that the policeman Mat had brought such talismanic 'thorns' which intermediated the *karang* to the *munshi*, whose Arabic inscriptions readers find untidily jotted in the scribe's note.[384]

Ultimately, as a text didactically driven towards 'accurately recording' the centrality of supernatural experts to western Malayan open-cast mines, the *Pawang Melumbung Timah*, in the fashion of the *Ilmu Pawang Melombong*, fails to elaborate upon 'the others' or laborers who emulated the *pawang*'s 'raking up' of the *karang* with a *changkul* and were permitted by the *pawang* to 'pile up' of extracts of the tin bearing layer until vertical excavation was complete. In fact, escaping a discussion of the labors of 'the others', Mat Asip's transmission elaborates upon the *pawang*'s labors of dressing alluvial tin ore or demarcating the tin 'seed' from the remaining constituents of the *karang* via a sluice-box that was constructed by plank 'impromptu'. Here, the *Pawang Melumbung Timah* introduces readers to the fact that *pawangs* were adepts of dressing alluvial deposits in western Malayan mine worlds, through their technologically advanced and esoteric methods of, firstly, 'distinguishing the [tin] seed from earth and rocks' in the *karang* through the 'ferrying' of the tin-bearing layer to the sluice box via 'flat open baskets' and 'hydraulic gushing' of the *karang* to 'set it adrift'. Secondly, undertaking a sophisticated ritual of communication with the *Emak Kemang* and *Emak Kembang* in the course of a benzoin-burning ceremony wherein the spirits were requested to: 'deal with and dress the

[384] WL Malay 2G. *Malay folklore connected with mining &c.* Muhammad Jaafar, *Ilmu Pawang Melombong*. See '*yang di hormat tuan* …'.

[tin] seed [-] differentiate the seed from rocks and earth … be seated positioned upon the right side of the sluice box [-] waiting for *my* tin seed' (possibly, an allusion to the spirits' 'guardianship' of tin ore being transferred to the *pawang*), dispel the 'spite [and] tyranny' of 'beings', and protect the *pawang*'s accompanying frontiersmen from the hazardous 'Iblis, *hantu*s and *shetan*'. Thirdly, 'dragging the *changkul* two [or] three times' within the adrift, tin-bearing supernatural species in the sluice box, and in turn, spiritually permitting laborers ('the others') to proceed with the tasks of dressing the *karang* through 'vigorous hydraulic gushing' and 'partitioning' the settled tin 'seed' from the adrift, remaining constituents of the *karang*.

Whilst it might be tempting to dismiss Hajji Hassan's and Mat Asip's claims about socioeconomic stratums and mining operations in the western Malay states being particularly associated with the *pawang* as self-fulfilling exaggerations, the *pawang*s' transmissions appear to be particularly accurate portrayals of 'all Chinese *lombong* mining' which was 'without exception, labour-intensive and generally small-scale' and 'required no machinery which could not be constructed with timber on the spot'.[385] Indeed, the protagonist-*pawang* in both the *Ilmu Pawang Melombong* and *Pawang Melumbung Timah*, is one well-integrated into archetypal Chinese open-cast mine worlds wherein, on the one hand, the 'versatile kind of hoe' or *changkul*, a digging tool the Chinese miner has been 'credited with the introduction of' by historians of Malayan mining, was 'used as a pickax, a shovel, and an instrument to stir the mixture of ore and water in a sluice box'. On the other hand, 'Chinese dressing' had by 1892, 'abandoned ditches in favor of … [the aforementioned] wooden sluice box' that was introduced in the western Malay states in the 1850s and were on average, fitted with two riffles to 'catch the ores measuring 20-30 feet long, 2-3 feet broad and 1-2 feet deep'. On average, the 'sluice box' mentioned in the *Pawang Melumbung Timah* was worked by seven laborers ('the others'), three of whom

[385] Scrivenor, *The Geology of Malayan Ore-Deposits*, 86; Wong, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, 40.

emulated the *pawang*'s 'ferrying' of *karang* to the sluice box and removed the tin 'seed' accumulated at the tail of the sluice box, and four of whom, in the fashion of the 'pioneer' *pawang*, stirred the *karang* in the sluice box with *changkul*s.[386] Whilst the *Ilmu Pawang Melombong* fails to distinguish between methods of tin 'seed' and gold mining, the text appears to be an accurate illustration of late 19th century socioeconomic settings wherein, in Scrivenor's words, 'the primitive methods employed by Asiatics in mining gold and tin ore [were] much the same'.[387] Moreover, it is possible that the conspicuous silence in the *Ilmu Pawang Melombong* and the *Pawang Melumbung Timah* regarding flooding is a reflection of 'sufficiently dry' large open-cast excavations that involved 'Chinese' technologies of draining water from the vertical mine pit such as the *chin chia* (water-wheel or chain pump that was 'constructed with timber on the spot') and the 'level' (deep drain connecting the mine to a river).[388] Nevertheless, Hajji Hassan's and Mat Asip's failure to mention these 'Chinese' technologies were, in all probability, reflections of, firstly, a late 19th century economic consciousness that anti-flooding implements performed 'modestly', making open-cast mining ultimately 'dependent upon the weather and … water-table'. Secondly, the socioeconomic fact that mining was centered upon *pawang*-prospected foothills of the interior that contained the 'richest alluvial deposits' left by disintegrated granite, wherein natural drainage significantly reduced flooding.[389]

The Pawang's Smelting and Governance upon Hazardous Spiritual Frontiers

Beyond being informative about 'sufficiently dry' western Malayan *lombong*s wherein prospecting, excavation and dressing was particularly associated with *pawang*s, the 1892 transmissions of Hajji Hassan and Mat Asip contain detailed discussions of how

386 Wong, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, 50.
387 Scrivenor, *A Sketch of Malayan Mining*, 14-15.
388 Wong, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, 48.
389 Yip, *The Development of the Tin Mining Industry of Malaya*, 83, 85; Scrivenor, *The Geology of Malayan Ore-Deposits*, 85.

the miraculous expertise of *pawang*s was fundamental to smelting operations. In fact, Scrivenor's 1928 *A Sketch of Malayan Mining* mentioned that 'the *pawangs* had the monopoly of smelting the ore' prior to the inroads that the Straits Trading Company made into subaltern mine worlds in the early 20th century.[390] Similarly, Maxwell's 1876 'A Journey on Foot' to 'the mining village of Intan' (Perak) and Braddell's 1853 'Notes of a Trip' to the Cassang tin mines, contained descriptions of Chinese smelting houses wherein intricate operations were dependent upon the *pawang*'s 'proper incantations to propitiate evil spirits' and 'spirits who preside over smelting operations' whose 'pleasure' and 'displeasure' would inevitably 'cause the ore to produce more [molten] tin' and 'consequent loss to the miner' respectively.[391] Even in dismissing the 'practical importance' of mining 'superstitions', Lister's 1889 *Mining Laws and Customs* emphasized that the 'Chinese and Malay mind' bore 'extraordinary ideas with regard to [the] smelting of ore', directly associating it with the miraculous powers and 'certain arts' of *pawang*s who were inversely able to produce 'ingots of commerce' and transmogrify ore into 'wolfram or ferrugineous sand'.[392]

Whilst these European records suffer from brevity, the *Pawang Melumbung Timah* is an exceptionally rich document on late 19th century mine worlds wherein tin smelting was contingent upon the archetypal *pawang*'s pioneering of operations, and intercession of 'spirits who presided over smelting operations' and the simultaneously economic and supernatural products inserted into the *relau* (typical Chinese furnace).[393] For instance, a section on '*the seed that is required to be inserted into the fire to be crushed*' transmitted by Mat Asip, elaborates upon the indispensable authority of the *pawang* as, firstly, the pioneer smelter who inserted charcoal into the ablaze furnace together with the 'ladleful of

[390] Scrivenor, *A Sketch of Malayan Mining*, 6.
[391] Maxwell, 'A Journey on Foot to the Patani Frontier in 1876', 9-10, 22, 37, 56-57; Braddell, 'Notes of a Trip to the Interior from Malacca', 85, 88-89, 102.
[392] Lister, *Mining Laws and Customs in the Malay Peninsula*, 15-16.
[393] I am relying upon Hale's 1885 definition of the *relau* as the 'typical Chinese furnace', 'On Mines and Miners in Kinta, Perak', 318.

[dressed, *ghaib* tin] seed', and stipulated required heat and fuel volumes. Secondly, the intermediary of the 'warm' semi-Islamized spiritual auxiliaries of smelting, *Emak Kemang* and *Emak Kembang*, that were invoked in the course of the *pawang*'s 'exhalation' of a miraculous concoction over the furnace flame, to 'crush the inserted [tin] seed', 'physically wait at the gate of the fire', 'embolden the lesser blazed' portions of the flame, and 'heat up whatsoever was cold' in the furnace. Thirdly, the metallurgical expert who meticulously 'packed' the typical Chinese furnace with charcoal and dressed tin 'seed', supervised the course of smelting operations until the 'gradual trickling down' of 'a stream of [molten] tin' from an orifice in the *relau* into a 'well' at the base of the Chinese furnace, 'poured' the molten tin into wooden moulds that were 'readied [through impressions] upon sand' and 'cooled' until it solidified into an ingot form suitable for export to Straits ports, and permitted laborers ('the others') to 'pack' the furnace with the remaining, dressed tin 'seed'.[394] Furthermore, the *Pawang Melumbung Timah* comprises of a section on '*pantangnya*' (customary prohibitions) that cautions Mat Asip's audiences of the economic reality that a transgression of the spiritual norm of preserving the sphere of the Chinese furnace as one exclusively occupied by the *pawang* up to moment at which the tin 'seed is crushed and trickles', and wherefrom the *pawang* permitted laborers into the 'sphere of the *relau*', resulted in the 'damage' and 'blemish' of dressed tin deposits.[395]

Mat Asip's depiction of the prototypical Chinese smelting house as centered upon the simultaneously metallurgical and supernatural expertise of the *pawang*, while possibly exaggerated, is vindicated by references made by the aforementioned European observers and historians such as K. G. Treggoning, to the 'primitive', 'wasteful', 'unscientific', 'magical' and 'crude methods' of smelting that were preferred by Chinese

[394] Models of moulds are found illustrated in WL Malay 2G. *Malay folklore connected with mining &c.* Muhammad Jaafar, *Ilmu Pawang Melombong*. See '*yang di hormat tuan* …'; Newbold, *Political and Statistical Account of the British Settlements*, 100-101; Wong, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, 31.
[395] WL Malay 3. Muhammad Jaafar, *Pawang Melumbung Timah* [transmitted by Mat Asip]. Transcribed by Muhammad Jafaar. See '*pantangnya*'.

miners in the late 19th century western Malay states.[396] Beyond the *Pawang Melumbung Timah*, Muhammad Jaafar's compilation of the *Ilmu Pawang Melombong* contains a particularly rich document transmitted by Hajji Hassan pertaining to the 'primitive' methods of Chinese smelting houses under the 'monopoly' of the *pawang*, the *Pawang Menyemah Bijeh* (*Pawang Sacrificing Tin Seed*).[397] As a record preoccupied with illustrating the supernatural basis of 'sacrificing' or smelting dressed tin 'seed', the *Pawang Menyemah Bijeh* emphasizes that smelting operations at the 'arranged shed and typical Chinese furnace' were solely dependent upon the *pawang*'s propitiation of spiritual agents of smelting through, firstly, the Islamic slaughter of a goat and arrangement of its body parts and blood, together with varieties of rice, in an *anchak* 'upon the face of' or 'exactly opposite' the *pawang*-blessed 'mouth' of the furnace. Secondly, a sophisticated ceremony involving the *pawang*'s 'sprinkling' of a miraculous concoction of blood of the sacrificial goat, talismanic 'thorns' and fume of benzoin around the furnace. Moreover, the *Pawang Menyemah Bijeh* provides readers valuable insights into the 'crude methods' of late 19th century Chinese mining entrepreneurs who remunerated the *pawang* a fee of '10 ringgits' for his 'presence' throughout smelting operations. These operations included the 'rhythmic packing' of the Chinese furnace with charcoal and dressed tin 'seed', the gradual 'crushing' of the '*ghaib* object' and 'trickling down' of 'a stream of [molten] tin' from an orifice in the *relau* into a 'cavity' at the 'foot' of the Chinese furnace, the 'ladling up' of the 'product of the furnace', and the 'insertion' of the supernatural product into 'stiff moulds' that were 'readied on sand' and 'cooled' until the 'product' materialized into *timah* (the ingot form of tin suitable for export to Straits ports).

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396 For instance, see Tregonning, *Straits Tin: A Brief Account of the First Seventy-Five Years,* 9.

397 WL Malay 2G. *Malay folklore connected with mining & c.* Muhammad Jaafar, *Pawang Menyemah Bijeh* [transmitted by Pawang Hajji Hassan]. The *munshi*, for an unstated reason, in a 16 August 1892 note, declares this text as 'bearing lesser exactness' vis-à-vis the *Ilmu Pawang Melombong*, '*yang di hormat tuan … kurang betulnya …*'.

The value of a text such as the *Pawang Menyemah Bijeh* that emphasizes the supernatural dimensions of the archetypal late 19th century archetypal Chinese furnace and smelting operations, for writing a 'serious' socioeconomic history of Malaya is apparent in how late 19th century western Malayan mine worlds directly associated metallurgical operations with the supernatural. This is attested to in the observation notes of European scholar-administrators concerning prominent mine owners such as the aforementioned Raja Mahmud who connected successful smelting to religious customs of 'hanging the *anchak*' at the Chinese furnace.[398] Similarly, in Hale's 1885 study of religious mine worlds in Kinta, readers are reminded of the fact that the 'hanging of the *ancha*[*k*] in the smelting house' for the propitiation of spirits was attributed such socioeconomic prominence that a courtier no less than the '*Panglima* [Commander-in-Chief of] Klian' assumed the role of being the 'principal associate' of the *pawang*, drawing the '*ancha*' to its required position 'close under the attaps' of the *relau*.[399]

Both the *Pawang Melumbung Timah* and the *Ilmu Pawang Melombong* appear to place particular emphasis on describing the physical appearances and demeanor of the aforementioned supernatural beings that operated as 'faces' of the stanniferous and auriferous frontiers being penetrated by the *pawang* and accompanying frontiersmen. For example, the *Pawang Melumbung Timah* contains multiple references to the complexion and hair types of *jinn*s and *hantu*s such as the Black *Jinn*, *Emak Kemang* and *Emak Kembang*, all of whom are described as being in possession of a 'black mien' and 'Negroid hair'. In a similar vein, the *Ilmu Pawang Melombong* depicts the *Chanang Plembang*, *Chanang Penambang* and *Si Kemang* as 'visually appearing' in the archetypal *pawang*'s dream visions in the fashion of 'the *raayat*', a reference to 'black', 'Negroid' aboriginal horticulturalists. On the one hand, Mat Asip's and Hajji Hassan's physical descriptions could be a reflection of a

[398] WL Malay 2G. *Malay folklore connected with mining &c.* See '*Munshi chobalah mendapat katarangan* …'.
[399] Hale, 'On Mines and Miners in Kinta, Perak', 307.

trope employed by *pawang*s in late 19th and early 20th century Malaya, to distinguish the surface 'rice land' inhabited by *jembalang*s (gnomes) introduced in the preceding chapter, from the 'spirits of the [alluvial] earth' which were '*Jin hitam*' or 'black *jinns*'.[400] On the other hand, this elaboration upon spirits' 'blackness' could be a reflection of either the penetrated terrain being inhabited by aboriginal horticulturalists, the popular Malayan notion of the 'Habshis of Africa being residents of the *hulu*', or of the fact that forest clearers employed upon the stanniferous terrain comprised of aboriginal and/or Habshi slaves.[401]

Beyond furnishing valuable data on the supernatural 'categories and constructs' *pawang*s in the late 19th century western Malay states employed to make their geological frontiers, the descriptions of spirits' demeanor in the *Pawang Melumbung Timah* and *Ilmu Pawang Melombong* offer historians an avenue into the stratums of fearful audiences desperate for the supernatural adept's esoteric intercession. In fact, readers are offered a way into hearing the authentic voices of Hajji Hassan's and Mat Asip's clients in the *pawang*s' multiple 'humble requests' for permission to conduct mining operations from the potential 'spirit friends', the awe-inspiring *Emak Kemang* (or *Si Kemang*), *Emak Kembang*, *Chanang Plembang*, *Chanang Penambang* and Nabi Tap. These spirits are portrayed in the Malay texts as hovering over and conscious of intricate steps taken by frontiersmen, and as bearers of the hazardous potential to 'watch over', 'haunt', and 'doom to bankruptcy' mining enterprises, 'vilely refuse' economic collaboration, 'expel', 'damage' and 'sow tares' in alluvial tin deposits, 'empty' the *karang*, and expose the mining pioneer's 'properties' and the 'dependents of the *pawang*' to 'danger'. Furthermore, Mat Asip's and Hajji Hassan's references to the 'destructive', 'spiting', 'tyrannizing' and 'damaging' powers of the aforementioned spirits and the perilous

[400] W. B. Clarke, 'The Incantation and Sacrifice of the Pawang Ma'yang', *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 3:3 (1925), 106-107.
[401] R. A. W. Hamilton, 'The Boria', 142-143.

'hoverers', Iblis and accompanying *hantu*s and *shetan*, are in all probability, accurate reflections of late 19th century western Malayan mine worlds wherein, as post-colonial historians have deduced, 'life was hard and the death rate was high'.[402] Indeed, Reid's recent article on the Malayan mining frontier suggests that the spiritually hazardous Malayan 'frontier levied a terrible toll' upon Chinese miners, a 'substantial proportion' of whom were killed by malaria, cholera, dysentery and beriberi in the late 19th century. Epidemics such as beriberi which appear to have been associated by late 19th century Muslim and Chinese miners with specific hazardous spirits such as the *Jinn di Gunung Cina* (*jinn* residing upon the Chinese mountain) that 'sucked all nutrition' out of miners upon the western Malayan frontier, claimed the lives of approximately 100, 000 miners in the 1880s and 1890s.[403]

The portrayal of potentially 'friendly' or hazardous spirits as 'faces' of geological frontiers was not exclusive to the *Ilmu Pawang Melombong* and the *Pawang Melumbung Timah*, and we find evidence of such a theme in an untitled Anglo-Malay manuscript housed as *Malay 2B* in the Wellcome Collection which contains a header, '*Opening of Goldmine*'.[404] Unfortunately, *Malay 2B* appears to lack any mention of its provenance and transmitter-*pawang*, and one is left to assume from its handwriting that Hervey was its scribe and that its transcription occurred in Hervey's research area, late 19th century Negri Sembilan and in proximity of the gold mining frontier of Gemencheh. Divided into three sections pertaining to supernatural 'invocations' necessary for the colonization of the auriferous frontier, *Malay 2B* serves as a compendium of spirits that 'scrutinized', 'monitored' and 'listened' to every single step taken by pioneers to penetrate the auriferous frontier. On

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[402] Wong, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, 42, fn136.
[403] Reid, 'Chinese on the Mining Frontier in Southeast Asia', 33. The association of the late 19th century outbreak of beriberi with eclectic spirits upon the mining frontier is apparent in two oral traditions pertaining to the 'epidemic of the *hantu shetan*' that 'massacred the kafirs' who repudiated the *keramat*, transcribed in Ridhwan, *Riwayat Hidup Keramat Toh Bidan Susu Lanjut*.
[404] WL Malay 2B Unknown: *Opening of Goldmine*.

the one hand, the Malay record provides readers an avenue into hearing the authentic voices of late 19th century frontiersmen, possibly in Gemencheh, whose first step upon the alluvial terrain ('*before clearing and before burning benzoin*') involved an awe-inspiring encounter with seemingly Muslim, itinerant supernatural beings and forces that included the *Putri Kemala Chahaya* (Minangkabau Nymph of Light), and the 'grand viziers', 'chiefs of security', 'admirals', *keramat*s and '*berkat* [of the] whistling people' that inhabited the upstream interior, downstream estuary, 'dry land' and 'coastal lowland'. The powerful and potentially hazardous nature of these spirits or forces, and the auriferous frontiers they represent, is evident in the transmitter-*pawang*'s 'humble requests' for 'thousands of mercies', 'thousands of profits', the 'shrinkage of impetuously slipped out' deposits, the 'return of expelled' deposits, and the spirits' 'abstinence [from] destruction and damage'.

On the other hand, *Malay 2B* associates the prototypical frontiersman's second step ('*when burning benzoin and before clearing*') with the encounter with a spiritual community that comprised of the 'universe-circumambulating Raja Sak' who was 'transported to the terrain by God', supernatural 'Assistants to [prospecting] rajas' in the *hulu* and *hilir*, the 'personification of *ghaib* terrain' and the 'personification of [gold] flashing terrain [for] *anak rajas*'. It is possible that the aforementioned references to rajas and *anak rajas* serve as evidence that courtiers in late 19th century Negri Sembilan penetrated simultaneously supernatural and geological frontiers under the auspices of spiritual experts or *pawang*s. However, *Malay 2B* is preoccupied with elaborating upon the hazardous demeanor of the aforementioned spiritual community that had to be, firstly, 'humbly requested' to operate in the sphere of 'soaring hills', 'desolate forests', 'huge rocks' and 'large anthills' of the interior, and disengage itself from the miner's sphere that was constituted by 'the crowd of people' (laborers) and '*ghaib* orchards' of the *ghaib* object, gold. Secondly, 'humbly requested' to abstain from 'veiled intentions', the 'purposeful non-reportage of misfortune' and 'destruction and tyrannizing' of the '*raayat*

… our people' (laborers), an offence which was tantamount to *derhaka* (treason) against God. Thirdly, intermediated by the benzoin-burning and esoteric 'signs' interpreting *pawang* who had the miraculous powers to transport the 'four [cosmological] *pawang*s' to 'certify' the mineralogical condition of the prospective site and the feasibility of mining operations. Furthermore, *Malay 2B* associates colonization or the third step of the frontiersman (*'taking up new land'*) to an encounter with the awe-inspiring multicolored community of *jembalang*s (gnomes) that 'possessed the earth' and is 'humbly requested' for 'clumps of earth' containing alluvial deposits and 'abstinence from damage and destruction'. It is plausible that the Malay text's reference to the *jembalang*s was reflective of mining enterprises that centered upon shallow, easily accessible alluvial deposits upon foothills that required merely horizontal excavation and intermediation of the surface land inhabited by '*jembalang*s' rather than the 'black *jinns*' of vertical mining.

A series of late 19th and early 20th century European writings verify that the aforementioned Malay portrayals of geological frontiers as awe-inspiring, spectacular and supernatural ones were not simply self-fulfilling exaggerations or imaginations of transmitter-*pawang*s. Indeed, Hale's 1885 pamphlet, Scrivenor's 1928 *Sketch* and Maxwell's 1876 'A Journey on Foot', emphasize that tin mining operations in Perak were engulfed by fears of stanniferous frontiers being 'peopled' by both the '*genius loci*' that bore 'antipathy' to specific tangible articles, and alluvial tin 'seed' that was 'alive', able to 'move … of its own volition' and bore 'special likes—or perhaps affinities—for certain people and things and *vice-versa*'.[405] Readers find substantial evidence of the authentic fears of the unpredictably mobile and transmogrifying nature of alluvial deposits, and the '*genius loci*' of mines, that overwhelmed the socioeconomic worlds that Mat Asip and Hajji Hassan operated within, in the *Pawang Melumbung Timah* and the *Ilmu Pawang Melombong*. For

[405]Hale, 'On Mines and Miners in Kinta, Perak', 310; Scrivenor, *A Sketch of Malayan Mining*, 16-17; Maxwell, 'A Journey on Foot to the Patani Frontier', 9-10, 22, 37, 56-57.

instance, the *Pawang Melumbung Timah* is informative about the paranoid audience of Mat Asip that was petrified of the fact that alluvial deposits completely 'moved' and 'emptied themselves out' from large open-cast excavations upon contact with 'certain [averse] people and things' which included 'quarrelsome' or 'wild dependents [laborers] of the *lombong*', umbrellas, iron weapons, boots and women.[406] The 'customary prohibition' of women is further evidence that *pawang*s such as Mat Asip and Hajji Hassan were plugged into predominant western Malayan vertical open-cast excavations that exclusively employed Chinese male laborers in contrast to marginal, horizontal mining that was oft-conducted by Batak, Rawa, Mandiling and Korinchi women through a '*dulang* [pan] *washing*' technique of horizontally excavating 'naturally dressed' ore, and produced 5 per cent of the total western Malayan output by the early 20th century.[407]

It is, nevertheless, in a section on '*pantang ini bekerja lombong*' (*customary prohibitions in open-cast mining*) in the *Ilmu Pawang Melombong* that readers are provided a particularly detailed window into the spiritual frontiers that engulfed frightened mining audiences in late 19th century Malacca, Selangor and Muar.[408] Herein, Hajji Hassan communicated to the scribe-*munshi* his encounters with an audience that was threatened by the fact that, on the one hand, mining in the course of sun-showers, the 'precise [times of] midday' and 'upon the entrance of the sun', all of which constituted moments whereupon the 'steam of the *hantu*' visited the worksite, culminated into 'disease for the miner … [and] blemish to the mine'. On the other hand, the 'disorganization of tools' and phenomenon of 'quarrelsome [-] assaulting' or 'state of discord amongst' laborers, resulted in *hantu*s refusing economic collaboration in prospecting for the '*ghaib* objects', gold and *bijeh*, 'blemish[ing] the contents of the *karang*', and causing excavated tin ore to 'vanish' in the

406 WL Malay 3 Muhammad Jaafar, *Pawang Melumbung Timah* (transmitted by Mat Asip). Transcribed by Muhammad Jafaar. See '*pantangnya'*.
407 Lai Ah Eng, *Peasants, Proletarians, and Prostitutes: A Preliminary Investigation into the Work of Chinese Women in Colonial Malaya* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986), 61.
408 WL Malay 2G. *Malay folklore connected with mining &c.* See *pantang ini bekerja lombong*' in Muhammad Jaafar, *Ilmu Pawang Melombong.*

course of dressing. The *Ilmu Pawang Melombong* also furnishes a first-hand account of Hajji Hassan's prototypical audience that was terrified by the reality that the 'contents of the *karang*' and even prospectors would 'vanish', through 'prayers or the recitation of the name of God' in *lombong*s that would 'offend' the jealous '*genius loci*'; the use of 'coarse language' in the open-cast excavation; 'pompous celebrations' of the discovery of 'profitable [alluvial] heaps'; and the ferrying of 'loathed' articles such as boots, assayed gold, umbrellas and rifles into proximity of the mine.[409] Furthermore, the *Ilmu Pawang Melombong* is illustrative of the fact that Hajji Hassan's audience comprised of miners (possibly, mine owners, *towkay*s and laborers alike) who were vulnerable to the geological ramifications of the crimes, '*zinah*' (unlawful sexual conduct) and and bringing of the 'majorly prohibited' article, lime acid into contact with the open-cast excavation or *karang* layer. These religious crimes caused the inevitable 'blemishing [of the mine, transforming tin] seed into tungsten … [and converting] even perfected tin ore into impurities', the gradual 'exhausting' of the *karang*, 'scorching' of the layer up to 'utter depletion', and the '*karang* to flee … stealthily like sand' and alluvial and assayed 'gold to disappear'.

A generation of post-colonial historians has neglected the need for a comprehensive enquiry into mine worlds that were overwhelmed by fears of the supernatural and the aforementioned 'customary prohibitions' stipulated by the *pawang* to facilitate unimpeded open-cast excavation. Such an academic diregard is surprising in light of the fact that historians have, firstly, oft-referenced the writings of late 19th European scholar-administrators including Maxwell, Hale and Scrivenor that state that the 'customary prohibitions' of mining *pawang*s were not simply cultural practices adopted by Chinese and Malay miners but rather methods through which *pawang*s imposed their *hukum* (governance) upon open-cast mines throughout the Peninsula even

[409] For a record of a historical tradition from Kinta pertaining to prospector-*pawang*s 'vanishing' due to exclamations upon discovery of alluvial tin deposits, refer to Winstedt, '*Karamat*: Sacred Places and People in Malaya', 269.

beyond the establishment of the Residential system.[410] Secondly, recognized that 'semireligious' bodies such as *hun*s (Chinese secret societies) in the western Malay states, served mining enterprises in terms of their 'ability to organize' labor for *lombong*s through 'rigid laws', 'instruments of coercion' and an archetypal 'iron hand … rule' that 'enveloped' Chinese laborers from their moment of recruitment upon arrival at Straits ports.[411] Thirdly, acknowledged that archetypal 19th century Malay Muslim mine owners such as the discoverer of the Larut mines, Long Jaffar, employed an 'adequate apparatus of government' that involved *pawang*s such as the aforementioned Itam Dam, possibly to control an exponential, 'warring' Chinese labor population.[412] In fact, the success of Itam Dam's 'government' over Chinese laborers appears to have been attested to in the 1872 travelogue of the *munshi* to the Governor of the Straits Settlements, Muhammad Ibrahim, who visited Larut mine worlds that appeared to have lost the *pawang*'s 'governance'.[413] Herein, the successor of the 'extremely crafty and cunning' Long Jaffar is 'well-counseled' by the *munshi* to 'spy upon and be wary of' and 'on guard' against the 'exponentially powerful' and 'warring Chinaman' in Larut.

Tutino's aforementioned work on silver mining in 18th century Spanish America draws upon 'religious materials' to recount the history of an elite-funded Catholicism characterized by virgins, saints and healers within northern Bajio that 'pressed lives of danger on the laboring majority', 'aimed to reduce salaries and ore shares', and produced a disciplined labor force through its demands for 'penitential exhortations' and 'moral

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410 Scrivenor, *A Sketch of Malayan Mining*; Hale, 'On Mines and Miners in Kinta', 309; Maxwell, 'A Journey on Foot to the Patani Frontier in 1876', 9-10, 22, 37, 56-57.

411 For instance, refer to Wong, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, 41-2. S. A. Carstens has recently noted that historians of Malaya are yet to embark upon a substantive study of intimate connections between 'cultural beliefs and practices' propagated by 'semireligious' secret societies and the 'wider political economy' of the western Peninsula, see 'Chinese Culture and Polity in Nineteenth century Malaya: The Case of Yap Ah Loy' in *'Secret Societies' Reconsidered: Perspectives on the Social History of Early Modern South China and Southeast Asia* eds. D. Ownby and M. S. Heidhues (Armonk, N. Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1993), 120-152.

412 Sullivan, *Social Relations of Dependence in a Malay State*, 30, fn93, 35; Wong, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, 27.

413 Munshi Muhammad Ibrahim, *Kisah Pelayaran Muhammad Ibrahim Munsyi*, 98. Hale's pamphlet which contains Itam Dam's 'complaint' alludes to the fact the Larut mine worlds had been stripped of the *pawang*'s governance under Che Ngah Ibrahim, 'On Mines and Miners in Kinta, Perak', 307.

responsibility'.[414] Malay religious materials that have been neglected by post-colonial historians of Malayan mining such as the *Ilmu Pawang Melombong* are especially illustrative of how *pawang*s such as Hajji Hassan who circulated 'customary prohibitions' that demanded 'penitential exhortations' and 'moral responsibility', 'pressed lives of danger' upon a fearful, disciplined labor force for mine owners' exploitation. For example, the section on '*customary prohibitions in open-cast mining*' depicts the prototypical *pawang* as an unparalleled legal authority in open-cast excavations who employed 'rigid laws' or 'prohibitions' and instruments of coercion to petrify his audience and laborers into discipline. The *pawang*, firstly, extracted fines amounting to '13 dollars' ('half the amount of the fine' that 'a chief could impose on a *ra'iyat* for minor offences') for the crime of ferrying the aforementioned 'loathed' articles to open-cast excavations. Secondly, located epidemic-spreading and mine-emptying or blemishing *hantu*s in the excavation, and extracted fines amounting to '24 dollars' (or the equivalent of a *bahra* or 400 lbs of tin) for 'quarrelsome [-] assaulting' laborers and the 'state of discord'.[415] Thirdly, appears to have been the coercive agent who reminded laborers that disease through transgression of 'customary prohibitions', and in particular venereal disease 'from their own fault' via *zinah*, failed to excuse them from exploitative labor and in all probability, the aforementioned debt contracts wherein wages or recoverable cash advances for passage to Straits ports were not fixed. Indeed, historians such as Wong have noted that laborers' 'debts' were aggravated by monthly loans for the purchase of provisions from the open market and specific articles such as opium and tobacco from mine advancers, and that such incremental debts resulted in miners 'laboring excessively, at possibly overtime

[414] Tutino, *Making a New World*, 226-227.
[415] WL Malay 2G. *Malay folklore connected with mining &c.* See '*adat hukuman*' in Muhammad Jaafar, *Ilmu Pawang Melombong.*

rates, to gain credit' upon the inexcusable contraction of venereal disease ('from their own fault').[416]

Whilst Hajji Hassan's transmission fails to specify how laborers were 'penitentially exhorted' and 'morally responsible' to repay their debts, a concise 'profit assuring' Jawi '*tangkal* of Ali' attached to *Malay 2B* that operated as the '*shariat* of God' and was transmitted by the prophet Muhammad via his 'Companions' to 'pious kinsman', comprises of strict reminders for 'penitent' and 'moral' laborers that, on the one hand, 'theft and *zinah* even on one accord' or 'lust beyond entrusted women' was religiously prohibited. On the other hand, the talisman's promise of 'eradicating' fever, 'all difficulties and malice' suffered by male laborers, 'death', 'sorcery', and assurance of 'entry into heaven' without 'torment [of hell and] calculation' of deeds, was inaccessible to laborers who 'failed to commit to the repayment of acquired debt' through labor that 'was completely bereft of grievance'.[417] In a similar vein, the stipulations of a 19th century Jawi '*Perak Code* … copied from a manuscript formerly belonging to Sultan JAFAR [Muazzam Shah (d. 1865)]' and reproduced in Maxwell's 1884 'Laws and Customs of the Malays', are illustrative of Malayan mine worlds wherein laborers were ethically accountable to 'labor with complete enthusiasm in the open-cast tin mines of the creditor' and 'penitentially pressed' to 'repeal their freeman stature and labor in the fashion of the slave' upon the 'failure to recompense accumulated debt' or 'gain credit' due to 'their own fault'.[418]

It is unfortunate that texts such as the *Ilmu Pawang Melombong* and the *Pawang Melumbung Timah* fail to elaborate upon the specific character of the prototypical *pawang*'s coercive or legal authority in western Malayan mine worlds. Nevertheless, Hajji Hassan's transmission portrays the *pawang* as the agency empowered to penalize laborers for

416 Wong, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, 72.
417 WL Malay 2B. Unknown: *Opening of Goldmine*. See Jawi *tangkal*
418 Refer to Jawi extracts of the *Perak Code* in W. E. Maxwell, 'The Law and Customs of the Malays', 285-286.

'quarrels', 'assaults', 'discord' and other generic 'disturbances' that were not brought to the attention of the police. Of particular significance is the fact that the *Ilmu Pawang Melombong* depicts the *pawang*, or at least its protagonist-*pawang* as, firstly, the sole coercive authority 'responsible for workers' conduct', in place of the '*towkay*' whom post-colonial historians have approached as the agency regulating laborers on behalf of the mine owner and advancer, and intimately associated with police functionaries of the British Residency such as the aforementioned policeman Mat.[419] Secondly, the personage who exclusively dressed in royal garb and disciplined even the Chinese mine leasee through prohibitions of 'loathed' rifles, umbrellas, boots and assayed gold, possibly on behalf of Malay Muslim mine owners, and enjoyed the powers of the prototypical raja in the open-cast mine through imposing fines that were equivalent to those extracted by the royal purse.[420] Thirdly, the simultaneously judicial, geological and supernatural expert who 'corrected legal transgressions' that had resulted in the departure of the '*genius loci*', *ghaib* alluvial deposits and *semangat* (vital force) of the mine, through both semi-monetized extractions and elaborate ceremonies of animal sacrifice and obeisance that in turn, served as legal 'retribution' for the crimes of miners and 'enticements' for the return of departed spiritual 'relatives who had been converted into spirit-friends [*akuan*]'.

Conclusions on the Religious Mining Frontier

In this chapter, I have explored a range of materials that were produced in late 19th and early 20th century Perak, Selangor, Malacca and Negri Sembilan, and suggested that these sources which include transmissions of mining *pawang*s, demonologies, talismans and observation notes, are unparalleled historical records of socioeconomic stratums and trends upon the Malayan mining frontier. These historical records are

[419] For example, refer to Wong, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, 62.
[420] Scrivenor, *A Sketch of Malayan Mining*; Hale, 'On Mines and Miners in Kinta, Perak', 309.

illustrative of socioeconomic settings wherein open-cast mining of tin and gold deposits had attained a distinct spiritual meaning by the late 19th century, miners employed spiritual terms to understand alluvial terrain and ore, and the expansion of mining frontiers was centered upon *pawang*s who possessed miraculous powers of prospecting, excavating, dressing and smelting alluvial ore. In undertaking this study of spiritual mine worlds and miracle-workers, this chapter departs from the work of post-colonial historians of Malayan mining who have neglected a comprehensive historical exploration of the peculiar spiritual character of the mining frontier in western Malaya, the sensibilities of alluvial who deserve to be 'rescued from obscurity' through a scholarly focus upon the supernatural terms they employed to understand their geological settings, and the centrality of *pawangs* and their miraculous expertise to the penetration of geological and spiritual frontiers.

Whilst the first section of this chapter focused upon the peculiar religio-economic character of 19th century western Malayan mine worlds, the subsequent section has comprised of a detailed analysis of 'truly extraordinary and rare Malay historical documents' that emerged from, and were revelatory, of such socioeconomic stratums. In using this genre of sources, my work is distinctive from post-colonial scholarship on alluvial mining in Malaya that has largely relied on extant records of formal governmental agencies, at the expense of documentation of religious mine worlds and simultaneously geological and supernatural expertise in unpublished manuscripts. Moreover, whilst Hale's 1885 pamphlet on Kinta mine worlds referred to the 'whole profession' of the *pawang* and the *pawang*'s 'powers of divination' as shrouded 'in more or less of mystery', this chapter has been an exercise of demystification in terms of its focus upon the materiality and physicality of the prototypical western Malayan *pawang*. Malay sources such as the *Ilmu Pawang Melombong*, *Pawang Melumbung Timah*, *Pawang Menyemah Bijeh* and *Malay 2B* have been employed as unparalleled records of the socioeconomic history of

western Malayan mine worlds and *pawang*s who were physically present technological authorities in open-cast mines throughout operations of prospecting, vertical excavation, dressing and smelting, penetrators or intermediaries of dangerous stanniferous and auriferous frontiers, commanders of frightened frontiersmen, and pivots of transcultural networks or webs of patronage within and beyond the frontiers of large open-cast mines.[421]

This chapter now draws certain conclusions about the Asian nature of the mining frontier in late 19th century western Malaya. The preceding sections have drawn attention to how a corpus of Malay materials produced in the late 19th century Peninsula are illustrative of mine worlds that connected the fates of cosmopolitan and peripatetic actors such as Muslim *pawang*s, Malay Muslim tin mine owners, Chinese tin mine leasees, Chinese tin mining laborers and Tamil gold assayers. Nevertheless, beyond the transcultural scholarly networks that led to the transcription of texts produced by Hajji Hassan, Mat Asip and Muhammad Jaafar, the Malay sources I have employed in this chapter appear almost mute about the impact of the British Residencies and Resident-Councillor Offices, upon socioeconomic contexts in Malacca, Selangor and Negri Sembilan. This conspicuous silence on the 'colonial administration' is striking since post-colonial historiography of the late 19th century *Malayan Tin Industry* has often premised upon admiring 'the *pax Britannica*' and 'bless[ing] work of British protection in bringing' the tin-producing western Malay states 'out of centuries of great tribulation', and Residencies' 'establishment of peace, law, and order, and transformation of the institutional framework' and expansion of imperial dominion into Malay and Chinese mines in the interior of the 'Western tin states'.[422] According to historians such as Wong and Yip, such an 'expansion of imperial dominion' was manifest in the 'codification of

[421] Hale, 'On Mines and Miners in Kinta, Perak', 303-305.
[422] Post-colonial historians have largely relied on the portrayal of 'fratricidal' Malay states in Winstedt and Wilkinson, *A History of Perak*, I, 2-3, 118. See for instance, Wong, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, 55.

the mutual rights and obligations of the state and the miners' in 'sections on mining land in the General Land Code of 1879', and the Residencies' and Crown's gradual expansion of this 'codification' into the 'Mining Code of 1895' which imposed the 'scope of governmental control' over the 'economic working and the proper and effectual control of all mining lands and minerals … [and] the conduct of all persons occupying [stanniferous terrain] and mining'.[423]

The Malay manuscripts' silences about the Residencies' and Crown's penetration into mine worlds are reflections of, on the one hand, the reality that the expansion of the General Land Code of 1879 by 1892, had an 'infinitesimal' impact upon 'the liberty which had been granted to Chinese miners of choosing the ground for their work' via prospector-*pawang*s. On the other hand, the failure of vague 'regulations regarding the opening and abandoning of a mine' stipulated in both the General Land Code and Mining Code to penetrate the late 19th century forested interior that was inhabited by Asian frontiersmen in search of granitic alluvial remains.[424]According to the geologist, C. G. Warnford-Lock's 1907 survey of *Mining in Malaya for Gold and Tin*, the 'mining enactments' of the Residencies and subsequent Federated Malay States, allowed Chinese mining enterprises and mining *pawang*s to operate without any consciousness of the *pax Britannica* due to the fact that these enactments were 'practically non-enforceable' as a result of theoretical incoherence and 'amateur' Inspectors of Mines. Warnford-Lock referred to the 'General Land Code' and the 'Mining Code' as regulations 'produced on sporting principles, with the aid of scissors and paste—paragraphs clipped from Acts dealing with British coal mining, Victorian deep leads, Queensland quartz mining, and New South Wales shallow alluvial mining … jostling each other in hopeless confusion', and to 'Inspectors' as 'bankrupts' who lacked 'any mining education' and were 'drafted

[423] Wong, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, 55; Yip, *The Development of the Tin Mining Industry of Malaya*, 61.
[424] Patrick Doyle, *Tin Mining in Larut* (London, 1879), 9.

from among such totally untrained persons … [and] untechnical branches of the public service'.[425]

The very silences of these materials from Malacca, Selangor and Negri Sembilan, as such, serve as reminders of non-European and Asian pasts for historians of the Malay Peninsula who have often 'contrived a relationship of reciprocity' between *hulu* and *hilir* areas that was ruptured by the first generation of European colonizers in the western Malay states, associated with the Residencies.[426] Indeed, the *Ilmu Pawang Melombong* and the *Pawang Melumbung Timah* allow us to draw the inference that late 19th century mine worlds were distinctly non-European settings wherein Chinese mine leasees who were dependent upon the technological and supernatural expertise of *pawang*s, reached mutually advantageous bargains with mine owners or Malay Muslim courtiers for access to stanniferous terrain and hydraulic facilities, and were 'barely challenged' by European enterprises.[427] This non-European complexion of western Malayan mine worlds was attested to in the earliest statistics of Perak tin production which specify that European owned and operated mines merely produced 20, 000 *pikul*s (1, 200 tons) out of a total alluvial tin output of approximately 220, 000 *pikul*s (approximately 13, 000 tons) in 1887.[428] Moreover, in the 1890 *Annual Report, Perak* and the 1893 *About Perak*, the Resident of Perak, Swettenham, stated that European mining enterprises made an 'infinitesimal' impact upon western Malayan tin-producing stratums due to the fact that 'misfitted' European miners were 'bankrupted' by an expensive system of boring that was merely necessary for Cornish lode deposits in comparison to Chinese miners who 'made several large fortunes out of working' with the 'primitive' and 'despised methods'

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425 C. G. Warnford-Lock, *Mining in Malaya for Gold and Tin* (London: Crowther and Goodman, 1907), 6-7, 11.
426 Cited from T. N. Harper, 'The Politics of the Forest in Colonial Malaya' 2; Grove, Damodaran and Sangwan, *Nature and the Orient.*
427 Yip, *The Development of the Tin Mining Industry of Malaya*, 97; R. Parry, *Report on Tin-Mining in the Protected Malay States of Perak and Selangor* (Rangoon, 1898), 25-6. Swettenham, *About Perak*, 34.
428 Yip, *The Development of the Tin Mining Industry of Malaya*, 97, fn2.

performed by prospector-*pawang*s which were efficient for shallow Malayan alluvial deposits that were 'easily and cheaply tested'.[429] It is perhaps fitting to conclude with an anecdote compiled in a recent hagiography of the 19th century breastmilk-dispensing miracle-worker (*keramat*) 'Toh Bidan Susu Lanjut' buried in Larut. This anecdote captures the Asian character of the Malayan mining frontier that was replete with the miracle-worker's Muslim ummat and Chinese mine-leasing children who collaborated as 'milk kin' to:

> *cut through the primeval forest wherever the keramat led them to [-] digging out ghaib ore wherever the keramat led them to … untouched were the milk kin even by the sound of the Englishman.*[430]

[429] Swettenham, *About Perak*, 34. Swettenham, *Annual Report on the State of Perak,* 1890, 22-23; Yip, *The Development of the Tin Mining Industry of Malaya*, 100, 104.
[430] Muhammad A. Ridhwan, *Riwayat Hidup Keramat Toh Bidan Susu Lanjut* (Unpublished: Printed by Ridhwan in Larut [Perak], no date). Accessed in December 2009.

4 Rama's Hunt and Muhammad's Gun: Elephant-Trapping and Kafir-Shooting upon the Malay Frontier

This chapter undertakes a historical investigation of violent Malayan stratums wherein elephant trapping and gun bearing had attained religious meanings by the late 19th century, and the religious mentalities of trappers and rifle bearers who were associated with mantra and instruction-imparting elephant *bomor*s and 'gun gurus'. Particular attention is paid to 19th century 'frontiers of fear' whereupon, on the one hand, *bomor*s who were, or associated with, peripatetic hunters were pivotal to extensive religious operations of trapping and domesticating elephants in the northern Malayan interior on behalf of transcultural clients. On the other hand, itinerant *faqir*s or gurus were central to the religious and technological domestication of American rifles and the teaching of Islamic shooting, and plugged into a clandestine traffic of firearms across the Straits of Malacca.

This chapter is divided into two sections, '*Rama's Hunt: Elephant Bomors and Miraculous Traps in Perak*' and '*Muhammad's Gun: Shooting Kafirs upon the Malay Frontier*'. The opening section draws attention to Malayan socioeconomic worlds, and the interior of Perak in particular, wherein elephant trapping was intimately associated with the supernatural, and peripatetic *bomor*s or *pawang*s by the 19th century. These *bomor*s served as indispensable experts of trapping and domesticating wild elephants through their technological expertise, and as miraculous intermediaries of beasts that were in essence supernatural entities and diverse spiritual beings such as the elephant hunter, Sri Rama. I base these arguments largely upon the data provided by three compendiums of the *Mantra Gajah* (*Mantras for the Elephant*). These Malay records are valuable windows into religious economies in the forested interior of northern Perak wherein the supernatural negotiations, miracles, fatwas and exorcisms of *bomor*s were pivotal to establishing elephant enclosures, trapping and ensnaring wild herds or isolated beasts, and the brutal domestication and exploitation of elephants. These Malay sources also provide snippets of information regarding the patronage patterns, and courtly and transcultural networks, that sustained the careers of elephant-trapping *bomor*s or *pawang*s in Malayan forests and enclosures, and contributed to the production of texts pertaining to miracle-workers. The subsequent section of this chapter shifts the focus from elephant economies that pivoted upon the violent religious trapping and domestication of beasts, to armed Malay frontiers wherein itinerant gurus were central to the domestication of American rifles and the propagation of gun expertise. These gurus served as indispensable intermediaries of hand-held firearms such as the 'Henry rifle' that were technologically and religiously domesticated upon the Malay frontier through elaborate Islamic genealogies. I base these arguments largely upon the data provided by two late 19th century Malay manuscripts that comprise of the transmissions of gun gurus who appear to have circulated between the Peninsula and Sumatra. These Malay records are exceptionally informative about religiously militant frontiers wherein the miraculous expertise, charms and supernatural negotiations of gurus were pivotal to the spiritual domestication of hand-held firearms, bullets and components of rifles, and the teaching of the esoteric arts of bullet production, weapon craftsmanship and Islamic shooting and ambushing. These Malay sources also appear to be informative about 'dynamic circuits' and gun markets in Malaya and Sumatra that in all probability, connected the fates of Muslim gun gurus to

cosmopolitan smugglers, American and European gun-makers, and Acehnese revolutionaries.

Rama's Hunt: Elephant *Bomor*s and Miraculous Traps in Perak

The introductory chapter has highlighted that no single historical monograph has been produced on elephant trapping upon the Malayan frontier, and the experts and *shikari*s (hunters) of beasts, *pawang*s and *bomor*s who possessed the *ilmu gajah* (esoteric science of the elephant). Indeed, there are 'yet no specific histories' of elephants, trapping economies and game frontiers in Malaya, nor a historical monograph on Malaya of the nature of Simon Digby's *War Horse and Elephant in the Delhi Sultanate* that employed a range of political and religious documents to trace a history of extensive elephant hunting, expert 'trappers of elephants' and the 'breaking and training of elephants' in the south of the 16th century Gangetic plain.[431] Such a neglect of elephant trapping and trappers as a subject of historical inquiry is surprising in light of the fact that European records such the 1876 journal of 'A Journey on Foot to the Patani Frontier' of the Assistant Resident of Perak, W. E. Maxwell, and an 1881 'Account of the Mining Districts of Lower Perak' by the Mining Engineer, J. Errington de la Croix, have stated that extensive elephant hunting and 'breaking in' in the late 19th century northern Malayan interior was indispensable for a variety of socioeconomic and political operations. These operations included travel in the 'never-ending forests' of northern Malaya along Padang Pulo Sari, Bukit Naksa and the present boundary between Perak and Patani; the transportation of 'loads of rice' between Larut and Ijuk and the broader upstream interior; the ferrying of alluvial metal from 'great discoveries of rich and extensive ore deposits' in mining districts such as the granitic Gopeng valley to

[431] Simon Digby, *War-horse and Elephant in the Delhi Sultanate: A Study of Military Supplies* (Oxford: Orient Monographs, 1971).

Pengkalen Baru on Sungei Raya for shipping; and, the pioneer British intervention into the forested frontier of northern Perak from 1875 to 1876 following the pattern of Muslim courtiers who penetrated the frontier through stocked elephants.[432] W. E. Maxwell's 1876 journal also highlighted that the expansion of political dominion, the transportation of supplies and the 'tin boom' made the British Residency in Larut, Malay Muslim headmen and Chinese miners alike dependent upon a class of elephant-trappers such as the 'rogue … Sayyids of Chigar Gala' who were, in all probability, armed with the *ilmu gajah*.[433]

The conspicuous academic silence on elephant trapping and trappers in 19th century Malaya can be attributed to the 'blind spot' historians of agrarian Southeast Asia have borne for commodities such as Malayan elephants that were 'neither major exports nor staple foodstuffs' and have been relegated to a 'scholarly 'black hole".[434] This scholarly 'blind spot' for elephants is even apparent in B. W. Andaya's *Perak: An Abode of Grace* that comprises of the most detailed historical discussion, yet, of elephants in Malaya. Whilst acknowledging that Perak was 'never a great commercial emporium' in the nature of Malacca, Aceh and Johor, Andaya's discussion of the Perak elephant is one primarily pertaining to Sultan Muzaffar Shah's (d. 1752) political negotiations to ensure the continuity of the exchange of cloth and elephants between the Coromandel Coast and Perak. This Indian Ocean exchange was challenged by the East India Company's restrictions upon Tamil elephant traders who circulated between Perak and the Coromandel Coast, Bugis control of *hilir* Perak and impediments upon the transportation of beasts to coasts for sale, and the Sultan's 1746 treaty with the *Vereenigde Oost-Indische*

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[432] Maxwell, 'A Journey on Foot to the Patani Frontier in 1876', 12-13, 34-5; Delacroix, 'Some Account of The Mining Districts of Lower Perak', 6.
[433] Maxwell, 'A Journey on Foot to the Patani Frontier in 1876', 31.
[434] Clarence-Smith, 'Elephants, Horses, and the Coming of Islam to Northern Sumatra', 271; William G. Clarence-Smith, 'Horse Trading: the Economic Role of Arabs in the Lesser Sunda Islands, c. 1800 to c. 1940', in *Transcending Borders; Arabs, Politics, Trade and Islam in Southeast Asia* eds. Huub de Jonge and Nico Kaptein (Leiden: KITLV Press), 143-144; Bankoff and Boomgaard, 'Introduction', 2.

Compagnie that instituted a Dutch monopoly over Perak tin and 'severely damaged' the elephant trade through inhibiting Tamil elephant traders' access to lucrative tin economies.[435] For Andaya, a historical inquiry into elephants and religious economies or frontiers in late 18th and 19th century Perak appears to have been unnecessary as this was a period wherein the 'heyday of the elephant trade' had passed, and was characterized by negligible traffic of Perak elephants across the Bay of Bengal and desperate requests by Sultan Muazzam Shah (d. 1830) for 'Chuliah [Tamil Muslim] vessels' of elephant traders to visit Perak.[436] On the whole, in the fashion of Anthony Reid's *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce* which speculated that the 'breaking in of elephants died out altogether' in Sumatra due to failing exports and the use of firearms in Islamic courts, *Perak: An Abode of Grace* appears to imply that the decrease in commercial traffic translated into the displacement of elephant trapping in Perak.[437]

In a series of articles on horse breeding in the Lesser Sundas, north Sumatra and mainland Southeast Asia, Clarence-Smith has emphasized that historians of Southeast Asia are yet to undertake a serious historical inquiry into the 'more humdrum and less well documented economic roles' and religious economies of beasts and hunters in the 19th century, and 'rescue from obscurity' the 'real experts', hunters and breeders.[438] Indeed, D. K. Lahiri-Choudhury's recent *An Anthology of Writings on Elephants in the Raj* shows that post-colonial historians of both South and Southeast Asian environments are yet to substantially 'dig up' histories of the social worlds and methods of *shikari*s or elephant hunters throughout forested interiors of the 19th century Indian Ocean.[439] Even the most detailed discussion of elephants in Malaya so far, Andaya's *Perak: An Abode of*

435 B. W. Andaya, *Perak, The Abode of Grace*, 105-7, 112, 134-4, 188-190.
436 B. W. Andaya, *Perak, The Abode of Grace*, 84-5.
437 Clarence-Smith, 'Elephants, Horses, and the Coming of Islam to Northern Sumatra', 272-273; Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450-1680* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 122.
438 Clarence-Smith, 'Elephants, Horses, and the Coming of Islam to Northern Sumatra', 271-272; William G. Clarence-Smith, 'Horse Breeding in Mainland Southeast Asia and its Borderlands' in Boomgaard and Henley, *Smallholders and Stockbreeders: Histories of Foodcrop and Livestock Farming in Southeast Asia*, 203.
439 D. K. Lahiri-Choudhury, *The Great Indian elephant book: An Anthology of Writings on Elephants in the Raj* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999), xxiv.

Grace has, unfortunately, 'obscured' the socioeconomic prominence of 'real experts' or elephant trappers, cosmopolitan possessors of the *ilmu gajah* (esoteric science of the elephant).[440] This 'obscurity' is apparent in Andaya's privileging of manuscripts such as the late 18th century *Misa Melayu* for its 'journalistic style' that 'eschews folklore' and 'magical ceremonies' over Jawi records that this chapter employs as key historical sources of 'real expertise' upon the frontiers of northern Perak. For instance, whilst drawing upon references within the late 18th century *Misa Melayu* pertaining to the 'custom of Malay kings to love trapping elephants', and the political expediency of elephant hunting expeditions into the Perak interior wherein the 'reality of the ruler was made splendidly manifest to people in remote districts', Andaya only refers to miracle-workers, the key actors of my research, in a brief appendix on 'The Art of Elephant Hunting'.[441] Herein, she concedes that the penetration of mountainous frontiers of upper Perak and the plains of Kinta for beasts was in all probability centered upon a specific class of personages who possessed the 'knowledge and power to trap elephants' and the *ilmu gajah*.[442]

It is also regrettable that a generation of historians since Andaya's 1979 work on the Perak interior have failed to seriously explore, firstly, 'less well documented' late 18th and early 19th century socioeconomic worlds in Perak wherein elephants were employed in mining districts such as Larut to transport alluvial tin from the head-waters of the Larut tributaries towards the estuary. Secondly, a regular pattern of Tamil Muslim circulation between ports of the Coromandel Coast and Malaya which actually peaked in the late 18th and 19th century, and translated into Tamil miracle-workers' penetration into

[440] B.W. Andaya, *Perak: The Abode of Grace*, 84-5.
[441] B. W. Andaya, *Perak: The Abode of Grace*, 196-197; for a mention of the use of elephants in the early modern Acehnese 'theatre state', see Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450-1680*, 183-185, 187.
[442] 'Appendix C: The Art of Elephant Hunting' in B. W. Andaya, *Perak: The Abode of Grace*, 675-676.

Malayan forests for elephant trapping.[443] This is apparent in the case of *lebbai pawangs* mentioned in the 1892 letter of Abdullah Al-Aydarus discussed in the Introduction, who were 'kept busy shuttling between the bosoms of wives' in Malaya and in Nagore and 'looting the silly Malays and squeezing a hundred or two hundred dollars' out of elephant-owning Malay courtiers through their claim to be 'gods' of frontiers populated by elephants. Furthermore, Susan Bayly's discussion of late 18th and 19th century biographical traditions of Tamil Muslim miracle-workers in the Coromandel Coast appears to be evidential of the regular circulation and penetration of Malay forests by cosmopolitan elephant tamers armed with the *ilmu gajah*.[444] The *tazkira* of the *Kattyanaiwali* (the *wali* of the forest elephant), for instance, portrays him as the archetypal trapper of the Malay elephant who travels from Ramnad (in the present state of Tamil Nadu, India) to the Straits of Malacca and thereon into the Sumatran interior, to display his miraculous *ilmu* in the course of a bloody episode of domesticating a wild elephant.

In writing a comprehensive history of elephant *bomor*s or *pawang*s and the religious game frontier in Malaya, this chapter is influenced by the available academic literature on supernatural beasts, 'frontiers of fear' and religious hunting in early modern and 19th century Bengal, 19th century Java and 20th century Hadhramaut. For example, the only post-colonial monograph on the supernatural nature of frontiers that were populated by supernatural beasts is Boomgaard's *Frontiers of Fear: Tigers and People in the Malay World*. Herein, Boomgaard writes a history of forested frontiers through focusing upon 19th and early 20th century European records related to tigers that were feared as embodiments of 'invisible powers', 'ancestor spirits' and 'were-tigers', and to a lesser

[443] Bhaswati Bhattacharya, 'The Dutch East India Company and the Trade of the Chulias in the Bay of Bengal in the Late Eighteenth Century' in *Mariners, Merchants and Oceans: Studies in Maritime History* ed. K. S. Matthew (Delhi: Manohar, 1995), 347-363; Torsten Tschacher, 'Circulating Islam: Understanding Convergence and Divergence in the Islamic Traditions of Ma'bar and Nusantara' in *Islamic Connections: Muslim Societies in South and Southeast Asia* eds. R. Michael Feener and Terenjit Sevea (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies), 49-53; Sunil S. Amrith, 'Tamil Diasporas across the Bay of Bengal', *American Historical Review* 114:3 (2009), 547-549.

[444] Bayly, 'Islam and State Power in Pre-Colonial South India', 155.

extent, miracle-workers who possessed 'specialist ritual knowledge' to penetrate frontiers.[445] It is, nevertheless, unfortunate that Boomgaard's seminal work suffers from an approach of associating Malay fears with 'pagan', 'animistic' and 'shamanistic' pasts, fails to substantially elaborate upon the probable socioeconomic bases of oral traditions concerning supernatural beasts, and neglects a corpus of late 19th and early 20th century Jawi and romanized Malay manuscripts pertaining to 'frontiers of fear' and supernatural beasts that are scrutinized in this chapter.

Beyond Boomgaard's recent work, historians of 'frontiers of fear' in South Asia such as Eaton have emphasized that early modern Sufi biographical traditions and 19th century European records comprised of a familiar trope of *pir*s such as the 'mytho-historical' Badi Ghazi Khan penetrating tracts of the Sundarbans forests of the Bengal delta that were infested with supernatural tigers. These Muslim colonizer-saints stripped beasts of their 'natural ferocity' and drew them into 'symbiotic relationships', and spectacularly displayed their expertise of trapping and 'breaking in' tigers and even tiger gods of the Bengal delta.[446] Moreover, R. B. Serjeant's work on ibex-hunting in 20th century Hadhramaut remains one of the most persuasive scholarly illustrations of Muslim game frontiers whereupon trapping was, on the one hand, attributed a 'strong religious color' and 'associated with the worship of Allah in Mecca' and the 'sixth Pillar of Islam'. On the other hand, accompanied by invocations to God and Muhammad and 'conventional '*dhikr Allah*", and involved miraculous articles and spiritual exercises such as observations of a 'lofty moral code' and trappers' 'purification and ritual chastity of heart'.[447] This chapter proceeds to explore a range of Jawi and Romanized Malay materials that were produced 'very close to the action' on the northern Malayan game

[445] Boomgaard, *Frontiers of Fear: Tigers and People in the Malay World*; also see Boomgaard, 'Sacred Trees and Haunted Forests in Indonesia'.
[446] Eaton, 'Three Overlapping Frontiers in Early Modern Bengal', 65-67; Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier*, 209.
[447] Serjeant, *South Arabian Hunt*, 14, 41, 61, 84

frontier that was replete with supernatural elephants and exclusively penetrated by the miraculous expertise of the *bomor*, and whereupon elephant trapping and domesticating were considered to be religious operations involving sophisticated spiritual exercises. This historical inquiry into miracle-workers and religious hunting endeavors to place the Malayan frontier, the religious sensibilites of elephant trappers and miraculous expertise upon the map of scholarship that is now beginning to realize the 'importance of nonhuman histories' and the 'most significance of historical relationships: that between humans and other animals'.[448]

Supernatural Beasts and Frontiers of Fear in Malaya

> *Elephant [-] I am knowledgeable of your origin and genealogy and becoming from Marika-bulia-kum … if you fail to adhere to my instructions [- receive] the death executed by Sri Rama [-] if you adhere to my instructions [-] enjoy the longevity gifted by the Maha Rishi.*
>
> - *Teyib Mantra Gajah*, 1879.[449]

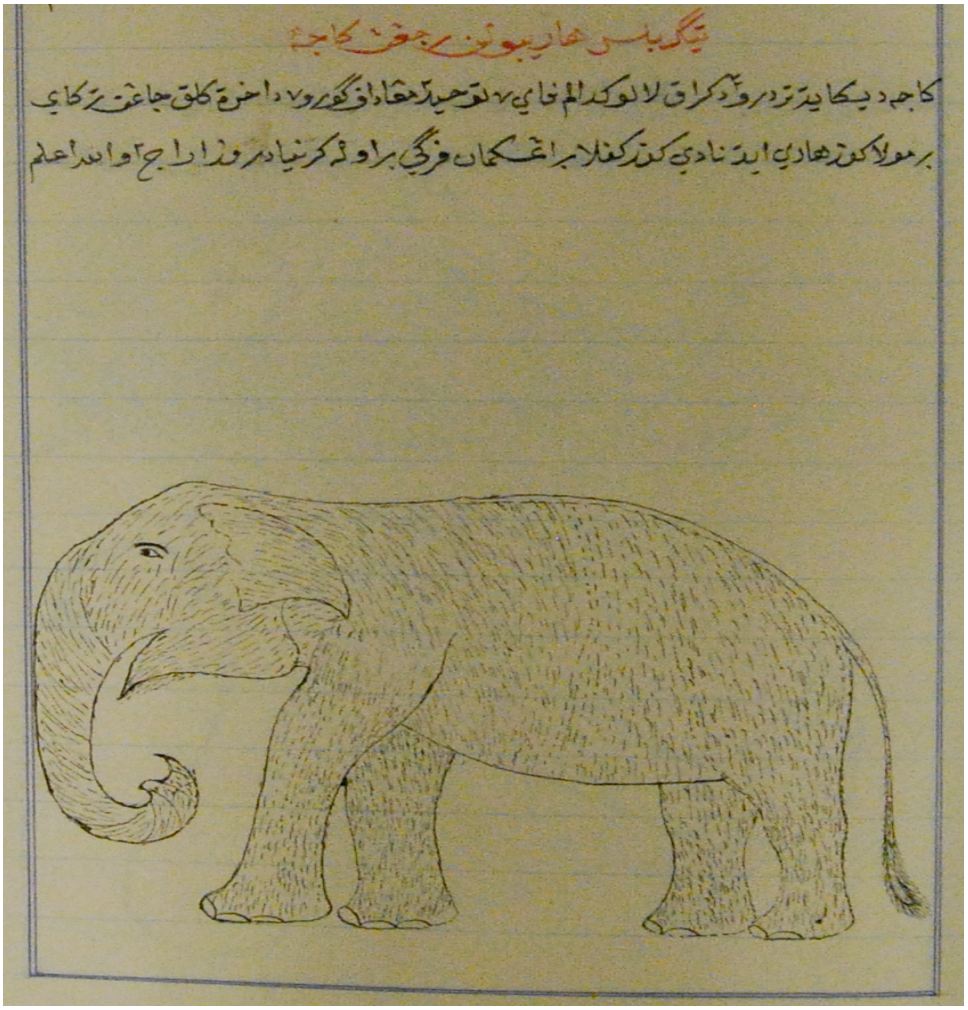
The 1879 Jawi volume, *Kitab Perintah Pawang* or *Book of the Pawang's Command* that was transcribed by Hajji Raja Yahya and employed as a valuable historical record of 19th century rice words in Chapter 2, comprises of a *Teyib Mantra Gajah* that was 'completed upon 14 Shaaban 1296 [3 August 1879] at Kampung Belanja Kanan' in the interior of Perak. The *Teyib Mantra Gajah* or *Manual of Elephant Mantras* contains Hajji Raja Yahya's transcriptions of orally-transmitted *bab*s (books), *fasal*s (sections), *kataan* (recitations) and *petua*s (fatwas) pertaining to the prototypical miracle-worker's 'command' over the establishment of enclosures, elephant trapping, the brutal domestication and exploitation of beasts, the selection of profitable elephants, and the healing of elephants. The 'command' of *pawang*s and *bomor*s over game animals through esoteric knowledge and

[448] For instance, refer to Alan Mikhail, 'Unleashing the Beast: Animals, Energy, and the Economy of Labor in Ottoman Egypt', *The American Historical Review*, 118:2, 317-348.
[449] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Teyib Mantra Gajah* attached to *Kitab Perintah Pawang*. See '*book that [serves to] drive the elephant to the enclosure*'. I am grateful to Juliana Wijayah, Daud Ali and Ulrike Niklas for their valuable discussions over the spiritual name, Marikabuliakum.

exploitative supernatural negotiations is a prominent theme of the *Teyib Mantra Gajah*, and this is evident in the '*book that [serves to] drive the elephant to the enclosure*' of the *Manual.* Herein, the driving of beasts into enclosures in the forested interior of Perak is directly associated with, on the one hand, the archetypal miracle-worker's esoteric knowledge of the beast's supernatural 'origin and genealogy and becoming' from Marika-bulia (Marika [Marica] the noble) who was stripped of his nobility and brutally hunted by Sri Rama in the *Hikayat Sri Rama.* Alternatively, the *bomor*'s supernatural negotiations with the elephant wherein the miracle-worker convinced the elephant to remain subservient to being driven into enclosures through threats that the beast's decision determined either death or longevity that was to be administered by the historical hunter, Sri Rama, and the Maha Rishi respectively, upon the Malayan frontier.

The '*book that [serves to] drive the elephant to the enclosure*' in the unpublished *Teyib Mantra Gajah*, is found almost replicated within both a Jawi compendium, *Surat Mantra Gajah*' (*Epistle of Mantras for the Elephant*) that was transcribed by Toh Sharif Aman in the course of Rajab 1296 (July 1879), and a Jawi collection of orally-transmitted '*Mantra Gajah*' that were romanized and published by the Acting Resident of Perak, W. G. Maxwell in 1907.[450] Whilst Hajji Raja Yahya, Toh Sharif Aman and the original Jawi scribe of the 1907 '*Mantra Gajah*' provide no data regarding the transmitters of the elephant manuals, and the connections of their transcriptions to specific game worlds or miracle-workers in Perak, the transmitters of these texts appear particularly familiar with the actual socioeconomic trend of employing supernaturally and technologically adept *bomor*s to select, hunt, ensnare, enclose, domesticate, exploit and negotiate with elephants in the forested interior of northern Perak.

[450] RAS Maxwell 107. *Surat Mantra Gajah*. See '*book that [serves to] drive the elephant to the enclosure*'; '*book that [serves to] drive the elephant to the enclosure*' in W. G. Maxwell, '*Mantra Gajah*' in *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 49 (1907), 76; also see W. G. Maxwell, '*Mantra Gajah*' in *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 45 (1906), 11, 17.



Rejang calendar, divination from day of the month symbolized by the elephant (Source: *Maxwell 15*, Royal Asiatic Society)

The employment of elephant *bomor*s in the interior of Perak appears to be evident in a caption attached to the *Teyib Mantra Gajah* wherein Hajji Raja Yahya mentions that his transcription was indeed a reproduction of an original manuscript in the collection of Sultan Ali al-Mukammal Inayat Shah (d. 1871) who in all probability, patronized miracle-working elephant trappers for provincial stocks. The intimate connections of *bomor*s to courtiers is more apparent in W. G. Maxwell's notes that are attached to his 1906 publication of a translated version of Toh Sharif Aman's 1879 *Surat Mantra Gajah*. These notes specify that the mantras that were orally-transmitted by miracle-workers and compiled in the *Epistle* had been, on the one hand, 'in the possession of' a series of principal chiefs of the district lying in the upper reaches of the Perak river on the

northern boundary between the Malay states under Siamese protection and Perak, the 'Datohs Sri Adika Raja' such as Tunku Mantri Ibrahim bin Jaffar who 'in the days of his greatness', prior to his expulsion to Seychelles following the assassination of first British Resident of Perak, 'owned a large number of elephants'.[451] On the other hand, were familiar to contemporary Datohs Sri Adika Raja such as Maxwell's native intermediary, Wan Muhammad Salleh, who seem to have been plugged into sophisticated networks that sustained the careers of mantra-transmitting elephant *homor*s. In a similar vein, in the 1907 collection of '*Mantra Gajah*', Maxwell mentions that these mantras were copied from a 'book of charms' in the possession of the Assistant Penghulu (Headman) of Kuala Plas and grandson of the erstwhile Datoh Sri Adika Raja, Mat Jawi.[452]

The aforementioned notes related to the 1879 *Surat Mantra Gajah* and the 1907 '*Mantra Gajah*' published by W. G. Maxwell, are further revelatory of the historical value of the collections of *Mantras for the Elephant* and their data on actual trapping expertise. Herein, Maxwell highlighted that 'all the elephant owners and elephant drivers' he consulted in late 19th and early 20th century Perak were conscious of the indispensability of the *elmu gajah* (esoteric science of the elephant) to trapping; 'knew more or less of the *elmu gajah*'; were 'familiar with the words of the mantras and the medicines prescribed' by coveted miracle-workers; and, admitted their 'entire ignorance of the meaning' of the mantras and the *asal elmu* (origin of the esoteric science) possibly due to the fact that these were exclusive faculties of pious ancestors and contemporary miracle-workers.[453] Alternatively, the Acting Resident argued that the 'ransacking' of the frontiers of Perak by cosmopolitan elephant hunters throughout the late 17th to 19th century was dependent upon the employment of the *Mantra Gajah*. Drawing upon the 1695 observation notes of the Italian traveler, Gemelli Careri, on Malayan elephants being conveyed to the

451 W. G. Maxwell, '*Mantra Gajah*' (1906), 1-10.
452 W. G. Maxwell, '*Mantra Gajah*' (1907), 71-72.
453 W. G. Maxwell, '*Mantra Gajah*', (1906), 3-4, 6.

Coromandel Coast, and India Office statistics on Malayan elephants that were shipped from Tenasserim to Masulipatam (Machilipatnam) between 1680 and 1684, Maxwell suggested that an accurate history of elephant hunting in northern Perak could be written through a focus upon the regular circulation of miraculous mantras in the Bay of Bengal from the late 17th to 19th century, to ensure the supply for a regular demand for beasts.[454]

Whilst Maxwell's hypodissertation on the regular circulation of mantras across the Indian Ocean across three centuries is difficult to substantiate, the historical relevance of the 1879 *Surat Mantra Gajah* and the 1907 '*Mantra Gajah*' is evident in the texts' associations with the elephant owning 'Datohs Sri Adika Raja', and Maxwell's aforementioned notes on a sensibility prevailing amongst 'all elephant owners and elephant drivers' of the penetration of frontiers being directly associated with esoteric science. Nevertheless, these documents have been ignored by even the few historians of Malaya such as Andaya who have dedicated footnotes to Maxwell's 1906 English translation of Toh Sharif Aman's *Surat Mantra Gajah*.[455] It is also unfortunate that late 19th century 'magical' manuscripts such as the *Surat Mantra Gajah* and the *Kitab Perintah Pawang* on the whole, fail to yet find the attention of historians who have called for a writing of new, 'truly convincing' socioeconomic histories of the Malay world based upon the 'impact of … belief systems' and Islam upon attitudes towards animal breeds and stocks.[456] This is apparent in the aforementioned works produced by Clarence-Smith on animals in early modern northern Sumatra and the 19th century Lesser Sundas which contain mere speculations on 'Islamic attitudes' in the early modern and modern Malay world being religiously receptive towards the breeding of the 'Arab' and 'Prophetic'

[454] W. G. Maxwell, '*Mantra Gajah*', (1907), 72-73.
[455] For instance, see B. W. Andaya, *Perak: The Abode of Grace*, 675-676.
[456] Clarence-Smith, 'Elephants, Horses, and the Coming of Islam to Northern Sumatra', 271-272, 280-281.

horse as opposed to the 'Indian', 'Hindu' elephant.[457] These articles fail to make any mention of a significant discussion in the 17th century chronicle, *Hikayat Aceh* concerning the esoteric science or *ilmu* of the Muslim suprahuman, Sultan Iskandar Muda (d. 1636), to trap, domesticate and command elephants through miraculous postures, spiritual exercises and invocations of God, Muhammad and eclectic supernatural beings.[458]

Before elaborating upon the content of Hajji Raja Yahya's *Teyib Mantra Gajah*, Toh Sharif Aman's *Surat Mantra Gajah* and the 1907 '*Mantra Gajah*', it is worth highlighting that evidence of religious game worlds in northern and western Malaya and sensibilities of cosmopolitan elephant owners who relied upon *ilmu*-bearing trappers is available in published Malay materials such as the *Sejarah Melayu* and the *Hikayat Abdullah*. Even Andaya, in the aforementioned appendix to *Perak: An Abode of Grace*, has acknowledged that Malay texts including the *Sejarah Melayu* and the *Hikayat Abdullah* are revelatory of the prominence of the *ilmu gajah* and miracle-workers within Malayan game worlds. In fact, multiple '*Alqisah*s' of the *Sejarah Melayu* comprise of chronicles of technologically and supernaturally proficient intermediaries of elephants who were associated with the Malaccan Islamic court including, firstly, the late 15th century arrack-drinking and miracle-working Tamil *kshatriya* who held the office of Sri Rama ('Master of the Sultan's Elephants', an office named after the historical elephant hunter, Rama). Secondly, the late 15th century subjugated ruler of Pahang who instructed Malaccan courtiers in the *ilmu gajah* and possessed the credentials of capturing elephants for the Sultan's stock through manipulating 'spells'. Thirdly, a darling of Sultan Mahmud Shah (d. 1511) and aspirant to the office of Sri Rama, Sriwa Raja, who oft-bullied the Sultan, embarrassed visiting Pathan horsemen with his miraculous command over beasts and

[457] Clarence-Smith, 'Elephants, Horses, and the Coming of Islam to Northern Sumatra', 272; Clarence-Smith, 'Horse Trading: the Economic Role of Arabs in the Lesser Sunda Islands, c. 1800 to c. 1940', 146, 154.
[458] Teuku Iskandar, *Hikayat Aceh* (Kuala Lumpur: Yayasan Karyawan, 2001), 126-143.

livestock, and possessed supernatural powers over elephants and mahouts throughout the Peninsula's interior.[459]

The 1849 autobiography of the *munshi*, Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir, alternatively, is informative about the prominent role *pawang gajah*s (elephant *pawang*s) played in penetrating the forested interior of the early 19th century Peninsula for elephants on behalf of both Asian and European clients.[460] Indeed, Abdullah's '*chronicle of Colonel Farquhar and his command to trap an elephant*' is a detailed record of a peripatetic 'elephant *pawang* … of Kedah extraction' from Trengganu who was celebrated in Malacca for 'esoteric knowledge of miraculous charms … [and] the forested interior' and was employed by the British Residency at some point between 1813 to 1818 for a hunting expedition, for a 'fee of 100 dollars per beast captured'. Whilst the *munshi* does not specify how the 'reality of the Residency was made splendidly manifest to people in remote districts' through the elephant *pawang*'s expedition that 'struck awe' into the masses, Abdullah appears particularly impressed by the technological acumen of the miracle-worker who spearheaded and instructed the capture of elephants in the Malaccan interior, the establishment of an enclosure at Sebatu, the violent driving of 62 beasts into the enclosure, and the 'ruthless' domestication, noosing and chaining of elephants in the enclosure. The reformist *munshi* also elaborates, albeit sardonically, upon a sensibility prevailing among Malay, Chinese and Tamil elephant enthusiasts, by the early 19th century, of forested frontiers and hunting operations being intimately associated with both the supernatural and the miraculous expertise of elephant *pawang*s. For the 'harebrained' majority, according to Abdullah, the *pawang*'s hunts were pivoted upon controlling *jinn*s and 'striking terror' into beasts of the interior through 'magic', 'sorcery', charms, incantations and talismans rather than actual technological acumen.

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459 '*Alqisah [9]*', '*Alqisah [15]*' and '*Alqisah [19]*', Text of *Raffles Ms. No. 18*, in 'Sejarah Melayu – The Malay Annals.

460 Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir, '*Kolonel Farquhar telah menyuruh orang menangkap gajah*' in *Hikayat Abdullah*, ed. Hamzah Hamdani (Selangor: PTS Publications, 2007), 54-59.

The *munshi* Abdullah's eye-witness account of the 19th century *pawang gajah* is illustrative of game frontiers whereupon the technological and 'magical' instructions of the miracle-worker, detailed in the 1879 *Teyib Mantra Gajah*, the 1879 *Surat Mantra Gajah* and the 1907 '*Mantra Gajah*', were not simply transmitted from afar but indeed executed by the elephant *pawang* or *bomor* who was physically engaged in trapping operations. Beyond the *Sejarah Melayu* and the *Hikayat Abdullah*, a corpus of published Anglo-Malay and English materials are particularly informative about the 19th and early 20th century game frontiers whereupon the traditions and texts compiled in the compendiums of *Mantra Gajah* were transmitted, circulated and recorded. Such historical records include the 1896 observation notes of the English ethnographer Skeat, the early 20th century pamphlets of the reformist scholar Zainal Abidin bin Ahmad, the 1933 observation notes of the Danish speculator Anker Rentse, and the 1899 memos of the general manager of the United Singapore Rubber Estates, A. D. Machado. These sources are particularly informative about a 'general belief' held by Malay, Chinese and Tamil frontiersmen and aboriginal horticulturalists in Perak, Negri Sembilan, Selangor, Pahang and Kelantan, that Malayan forests comprised of 'magical settlements' of supernatural beasts. These beasts were perceived, firstly, as embodiments of 'invisible powers' or spirits such as Marika. Secondly, as possessors of powers of metamorphosis at peculiar junctures of the supernatural frontier and powers of massacring frontiersmen through 'epidemics of measles'. Thirdly, as saintly or invulnerable, requiring 'fifty or sixty rifle-bullets' for 'downing', and producing depressions in the European coffee market in the event of death. Fourthly, as exclusively intermediated and trapped by specific supernaturally proficient *pawang*s and *bomor*s.[461] Indeed, the Resident of Pahang, H. C. Clifford,

[461] Skeat, *Malay Magic*, 153, 158-160; Zainal Abidin, 'Dato Paroi, Were-Tiger' *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 3:1 (1925), 74-77; Zainal Abidin, 'The Tiger-breed families' *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 85 (1922), 38-39; Anker Rentse, 'Notes on Malay Beliefs', *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 11:2 (1933), 245-253; A. D. Machado, 'Short Notes' *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 39 (1903), 208-209; also see Swettenham, *Malay Sketches*, 200-1.

remarked in his 1897 *In Court and Kampung* that the overwhelmingly popular theory of Malayan frontiers being populated by supernatural beasts with 'magical powers' was even defended by 'sober-minded men' he encountered, in a manner that 'in a Court of Justice would bring conviction to the mind of the most obstinate jurymen'.[462]

Such persuasion of the supernatural nature of 'frontiers of fear' and beasts was, however, not peculiar to Malayan frontiersmen. In fact, the late 19th century writings of the European elephant hunters, G. P. Sanderson, J. E. Tennent and Colonel A. Bloomfield, introduce readers to spiritual game worlds in Mysore, Ceylon and Madhya Pradesh. Herein, on the one hand, the Sholagas of the Billiga-rungun Hills, Kurrabas of Kakankote, natives of the Anarajapoora forests, Kandyan chiefs, and European hunters, were convinced that the forested interior constituted elephants that bore mystical qualities and a 'universal sepulchre'. On the other hand, both indigenous and European hunters were dependent upon the miraculous expertise of holy men to 'read the jungles and signs thereof', exorcise 'devils', demarcate supernatural boundaries upon the frontier, and invoke spiritual beings in an encounter with 'murderous rogue' elephants.[463]

Whilst Hajji Raja Yahya's *Teyib Mantra Gajah*, Toh Sharif Aman's *Surat Mantra Gajah* and the 1907 '*Mantra Gajah*' are exceptionally informative historical documents of the prototypical miracle-worker's 'symbiotic relationships' with supernatural elephants, a plethora of published and unpublished Anglo-Malay records contain valuable data on such relationships between *pawang*s and beasts on actual Malayan frontiers that revolved around the archetypal miracle-worker's domestication of the 'natural ferocity' of beasts, and monopoly of violence. Descriptions of the miraculous expertise of Tamil, Arab and Malay *pawang*s to domesticate the 'natural ferocity' of beasts and monopolize violence in

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462 H. C. Clifford, *In Court and Kampong*, 65-66.

463 G. P. Sanderson, *Thirteen Years Among the Wild Beasts of India: Their Haunts and Habits from Personal Observations; with an Account of the Modes and Capturing and Taming Elephants* (London: W.H. Allen, 1879), 57-58; Colonel A. Bloomfield, *Plain Narrative of the Doings and Destruction of the Most Murderous Rogue: On a Rogue Elephant shot by the author in the Central Provinces, India, in 1871* (Saxmundham: H. B. Crisp, 1910), 11-12, 15-17, 22-26, 37; also see D. K. Lahiri-Choudhury, *The Great Indian Elephant Book*, xv, xix.

the interior of Malacca, Negri Sembilan, Perak and Selangor are available in the aforementioned pamphlets and observation notes of Zainal Abidin and Skeat, and C. O. Blagden's 1892 unpublished *Notes on Matters Connected with Malacca or the Malay Peninsula*, 1893 unpublished *Notes on Matters Connected with the Malay Peninsula* and 1893 unpublished *Notes on Matters Connected with the Malay Peninsula and Far East* which were discussed in Chapter 1. These sources are particularly informative about settings in the Malayan interior wherein *pawang*s were 'overpoweringly credited' the miraculous powers of, firstly, stripping supernatural beasts of their ferocity and reconstructing beasts into 'spirit-friends' that were 'good and serviceable auxiliaries' for economic operations and even rides into forests. Secondly, violently domesticating the 'invisible spirits' that beasts embodied through the aid of God, Muhammad and Batara Guru (Siva), and bullying supernatural beasts to heal the bodies of diseased frontiersmen through erotic 'lip-lap' licking sessions.[464] Thirdly, monopolized violence through converting 'naturally ferocious' elephants, tigers, crocodiles and snakes into docile yet 'jealous attendants' of architecturally eclectic shrines in late 19th century Bukit Nyalas, Durian Daun, Soluk, Melaka Pindah, Gunung Berembun, Penkalan Baharu, Kampung Sungei Akar, Sepang and Jugra, and employing these erstwile beasts as weapons to slay religious transgressors.[465]

Mantras for the Elephant: Ilmu in the Service of Elephant Trapping

> the hunting and trapping … *pawang* are not mere charlatans even to the eye of the materialist … they are expert[s] [-] the *shikari*.
>
> - Winstedt, *Malay Industries*, 1926.

[464] Abidin, 'The *Akuan* or Spirit Friends', 378-384; Skeat, 'Some Records of Malay Magic', 15-25; Skeat, *Malay Magic*, 155-156; also see H. N. Ridley, 'On the so-called Tiger's Milk 'Susu Rimau' of the Malays', *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 22, (1890), 341-344.

[465] SOAS MS 297483. C. O. Blagden, 'Page 1A' in *Notes on Matters Connected with Malacca and the Malay Peninsula*, Book I (1892); SOAS MS 297484. C. O. Blagden, 'Kramats in and near Alor Gajah, *Notes on Matters Connected with the Malay Peninsula*, Book II (1893); SOAS MS 297484. C. O. Blagden, 'Superstitions', in *Notes on Matters Connected with the Malay Peninsula and Far East*, Book III (1893).

Winstedt's 1926 pamphlet on *Malay Industries* comprises of a stark reminder for scholars of game worlds that the *shikaris* or experts of 'hunting and trapping' in the interior of 19th and early 20th century Perak were *pawang*s. According to Winstedt, extant Jawi manuscripts and circulating oral traditions were evidence of the expertise of 'hunting and trapping' *pawang*s in Perak who, on the one hand, were 'not mere charlatans'. On the other hand, were simultaneously pivotal to the transmission of a 'rigmarole of superstitious practice and belief … [and] shibboleth of magic and divination', the enforcement of 'practical maxims' of 'weather lore', 'woodcraft', ensnaring, and the construction of the 'trap … [and] enclosure for elephants' upon forested frontiers.[466] Whilst published English records suffer from brevity, Hajji Raja Yahya's *Teyib Mantra Gajah* and Toh Sharif Aman's *Surat Mantra Gajah* are exceptionally rich documents of the 'real expertise' of miracle-workers who shared 'symbiotic relationships' with elephants, and facilitated the penetration of the mountainous frontiers of upper Perak and the Kinta plains through sophisticated supernatural negotiations and mantras that were pivotal to the construction of enclosures, the ensnaring of beasts, the stripping of ferocity and the brutal domestication of elephants.

Chapter 2 emphasized that the 1879 Jawi volume, *Kitab Perintah Pawang* serves a window into the archetypal 19th century *pawang*'s miraculous expertise of establishing 'melodious', secure 'footholds' in the 'earth of beasts [preordained] for the dry clearing' or field of hill rice. In a similar vein, the *Teyib Mantra Gajah* in the *Kitab* and the 1879 *Surat Mantra Gajah* comprise of elaborate descriptions of *bomor*s' expertise of selecting precise spaces in forests populated by elephants, and facilitating charges of laborers to 'strip bare' forests in the 'earth of beasts [preordained] for the enclosure'. This trope of charges upon forests for the establishment of an elephant enclosure being spearheaded by miraculous expertise is evident in a series of *babs* in the *Teyib Mantra Gajah* such as the

466 Winstedt, 'Malay Industries: Part 1: Fishing, Hunting and Trapping', 7-8.

'*book that [supports the intention] to strip bare the forest*', the '*book that serves as the mantra to strip bare the forest and [supports the intention to establish] the enclosure*' and the '*book that serves as the mantra towards the kunyit trus [aingeber cassumunar] that is ejected from the mouth of the bomor in the direction of the earth [preordained] for the enclosure*'.[467] Data on the centrality of miracle-workers to the transformation of selected sites in forests populated by elephants into elephant enclosures is also apparent in the 1907 '*Mantra Gajah*' which comprises of the following *bab*s, the '*book that [supports] the intention to strip bare the forest*', the '*book that materializes into a charm and simultaneously [supports] the intention to invade the forest*', the '*book that [facilitates the establishment of] the enclosure in the forest*', and the '*book that [serves as] the head of all mantra … whilst [undertaking] the matter of any labor …* in the *earth of beasts [preordained] for the enclosure*'.[468]

Whilst emphasizing the indispensability of miraculous expertise and the *ilmu gajah* to the comprehensive operations of elephant trapping from the establishment of enclosures to the domestication of beasts, the Malay compendiums of *Mantra Gajah* do not contain enough data to allow us to draw conclusions about the precise physical involvement of *bomor*s in these operations. Toh Sharif Aman's *Surat Mantra Gajah,* nevertheless, appears to surpass the *Teyib Mantra Gajah* and the '*Mantra Gajah*' in terms of its emphasis upon the bodily presence of the *bomor* upon the mountainous frontiers of upper Perak, and the materiality and indispensability of miraculous expertise and mantras to the transmogrification of forested tracts into elephant enclosures. Indeed, Toh Sharif Aman's transcription commences with an aide memoire on how the 'knowledge of *bomor*s and the *petua*s of *bomor*s and their esoteric signs' were requisite to 'secure and beneficial … [elephant trapping] enterprise', and specific operations upon the frontier ranging from 'the selection of an appropriate site for the enclosure' and the 'construction

[467] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Teyib Mantra Gajah* attached to *Kitab Perintah Pawang*. See '*book […] strip bare the forest*', '*book […] strip bare the forest and […establish] the enclosure*', '*book […] mantra towards the kunyit trus*'.
[468] '*book … strip bare the forest*', '*book … invade the forest*', '*book … enclosure in the forest*', '*book …head of all mantra*' in W. G. Maxwell, '*Mantra Gajah'* (1907), 83-86.

of the enclosure wherein elephants were to be arrested' to the 'ensnarement of the elephant amidst confinement in the enclosure or its free presence in the primeval forest'.[469] As an accurate reflection of socioeconomic stratums wherein miracle-workers were intimately connected to courtiers such as the aforementioned Datohs Sri Adika Rajas and as such, enjoyed 'unimpeded access to forest land that had not been acquired for *huma* [dry, hill rice] cultivation', the *Surat Mantra Gajah* proceeds to elaborate upon the unparalleled and uninhibited authority of the *bomor* to project, investigate and select the site for the enclosure and precise 'spot for the gate of the enclosure' through the esoteric interpretation of ecological and cosmological signs.

Beyond its discussion on the esoteric 'selection' of forested tracts, Toh Sharif Aman's *Surat Mantra Gajah* is a compelling depiction of game frontiers wherein miraculous expertise was indispensable to actual operations of colonization and timberwork.[470] This is particularly evident in a series of *babs* and *fasal*s which include the '*book that [supports] the stripping bare of the virgin forest that had not been acquired [by forest pioneers, for…] the construction of the enclosure*', the '*section that [serves as] the mantra employed whilst charging at the forest*', and the '*book that [supports] the entrenchment of the posts of the gate of the enclosure*'. In these portions of the 1879 *Surat Mantra Gajah*, the operations of 'stripping bare' and 'charging at' forests and the 'entrenchment' of the gate of the elephant enclosure that are performed by unnamed laborers, are portrayed as secondary to and spearheaded by, firstly, the vital '*petua*s of *bomor*s' and the 'esoteric science of *bomor*s' who appear to have been assembled and audible upon the Malayan frontier with 'the command and intention of God'. Secondly, the miracle-worker's supernatural contract with spiritual 'headmen [*penghulu*s] who held authority over forests' who were contractually bound to the religious

469 RAS Maxwell 107. *Surat Mantra Gajah*. See '*ilmu bomor* […] *dan petua2 bomor*'; also see W. G. Maxwell, '*Mantra Gajah*' (1906), 18.
470 RAS Maxwell 107. *Surat Mantra Gajah*. See '*bab […] construction of the enclosure*', '*fasal […] charging at the forest*', '*bab […] gate of the enclosure*', '*bab that [serves as] the designation of the mantra that is the forest goal*'; also see W. G. Maxwell, '*Mantra Gajah*' (1906), 11-13.

responsibility of averting 'transgressions' and 'epidemics' from the *bomor*'s clients and laborers, their food supplies, and the to-be-entrapped beasts. Thirdly, the miracle-worker's petitions for 'companionship and continual love' from the 'Muslim' supernatural beings, Batara Guru (Siva) and Batara Kala (Siva the Destroyer), who are addressed as 'fellow siblings and slaves of God', and invoked upon the Perak frontier to perform a range of tasks. These include the responsibilities of 'intimidating [and] putting to order the communities of *jinn*, *bhuta* [goblins], Iblis, *jembalang*s [gnomes], *pilak*s [misfortunes], *bahdi* [malignant influences] and *hantu shetan* [armies of Iblis]', and averting 'transgressions' and 'epidemics' from the *bomor*'s clients, laborers and the to-be-entrapped beasts.

Toh Sharif Aman's *Surat Mantra Gajah* further comprises of *bab*s pertaining specifically to the '*construction of the major enclosure*' and '*the petua [of the] bomor [that determined the] minor enclosure*' which are informative about how the archetypal miracle-worker was central to determining the layout of actual enclosures. These enclosures were characterized by, on the one hand, the 'major enclosure' that incorporated miles of forested land that was littered with regular erections of 'branches and palm trees'. On the other hand, the main catchment area that had timber foundations which were possibly strengthened by earthwork, and was marked by its 'minor enclosure' (gate) wherein elephants were driven into past a path of 'long wings of fallen logs' and arrested by a mechanical 'great suspended door' that fell upon the beasts' passing.[471] In fact, the aforementioned *bab*s specify that the expertise of the archetypal *bomor* determined the plan of the enclosure, procedures of intricate timberwork and the cardinal directions of the 'minor enclosure'. This expertise is in turn, described as the esoteric knowledge of architecture, possession of *nur Allah* (the luminosity of God), miraculous *petuas*, and

[471] For layout of the prototypical Perak enclosure, refer to 'Appendix: The Malay system of Elephant Catching and Training' in W. G. Maxwell, '*Mantra Gajah*' (1906).

'command' over the esoteric 'signs'-revealing *Sri Chahaya* (the Luminous spirit), all of which ensured 'autonomy from hazards' and the 'expedient entry' of elephants into the gate of the enclosure.[472]

Whilst providing a reader an insight into forested frontiers of Perak that were miraculously transmogrified into elephant enclosures, Hajji Raja Yahya's *Teyib Mantra Gajah* and Toh Sharif Aman's *Surat Mantra Gajah* are exceptionally informative about the fact that the miraculous expertise of *bomor*s was indispensable to 'entering', 'encountering', 'chasing', 'arresting', 'terrorizing', 'dragging' and 'ensnaring' wild herds and isolated beasts. This is evident in a series of *bab*s that are found in both the *Teyib Mantra Gajah* and the *Surat Mantra Gajah* pertaining to the *bomor*'s miraculous methods and formulae for '*harboring the intention to ensnare the elephant*', '*entering the herd [of elephants] or the isolated*' beast, '*brandishing weapons for terrorizing the isolated*' beast, '*arresting the herd of elephants and terminating [their] mobility*', '*undertaking the chase for the isolated*' beast, '*ensnaring the isolated*' beast, '*dragging the isolated [elephant] which refuses to follow*', '*driving the elephant towards within the enclosure*', and '*absolute power over the elephant*'.[473] Toh Sharif Aman's *Surat Mantra Gajah* further comprises of multiple *babs* and *fasal*s related to the miracle-worker's methods of '*arresting the [herd of] elephants and preventing their mobility*', '*forcefully arresting the malignant elephant*', '*forcing upon the isolated wild elephant and the herd of wild elephants arrest in a spot*', '*commencing upon the ensnarement of the huge elephant*', '*preparing the noose*', '*trapping the elephant in the noose*', '*mobilizing the isolated wild elephant*' to the enclosure, facilitating the '*entrance of the elephants into both the major and the minor enclosure*', and '*harboring intentions of*

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472 For further discussion of elephant *bomor*'s interpretations and 'command' of esoteric signs, refer to: Richard. O. Winstedt, 'More Notes on Malay Magic', *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 5, (1927) 342-347; Winstedt, *The Malay Magician*, 30-31, 35.

473 Also see '*book … driving the isolated [beast]*', '*book if resistance posed by the isolated*', '*bab if we intend to ensnare elephant in forest or within the enclosure*', '*book that serves as the mantra of subordinate bomors*', '*bab for waving weapon [at] the isolated*', '*book to arrest … circumambalate thrice*', '*charm for elephant refusing to enter noose*', '*book that serves as mantra to [fill] noose*', '*book if ensnaring large elephant', 'book if elephant ensnared in enclosure*', '*this mantra is called the king of elephants*' in Maxwell, '*Mantra Gajah*' (1907).

placing the elephant in stocks'.[474] These *bab*s and *fasals* in Hajji Raja Yahya's *Teyib Mantra Gajah* and Toh Sharif Aman's *Surat Mantra Gajah* are documents of how the miraculous expertise of the prototypical *bomor* was pivotal to the 'intentions' and actual enterprises of hunting elephants upon the mountainous frontiers of upper Perak; 'terrorizing' and 'arresting' the mobility of herds or isolated beasts that were 'encountered' through weapons such as fires and gunshots that were administered by laborers; 'chasing' isolated elephants; driving or 'dragging' beasts into the 'minor enclosure'; arranging nooses; ensnaring in forests and enclosures; and, exercising 'absolute control' through placing beasts into stocks.[475]

The *Teyib Mantra Gajah* and the *Surat Mantra Gajah* also make multiple references to the fact that intricate operations of trapping wild elephants upon the Perak frontier were premised upon sophisticated supernatural negotiations. For instance, the procedures of arresting wild herds or isolated beasts within demarcated sections of the Perak frontier, and driving elephants into enclosures, are described as being operationalized through a specialized ritual of communication that the *bomor* undertook directly or indirectly, via the client, with the elephant. Herein, the miracle-worker repeatedly boasted his esoteric knowledge of the beast's genesis from Marika, and esoteric powers of facilitating the life or death of the elephant through inviting the hunter-executer, Sri Rama, and life-giver, Maha Rishi, to the Malayan frontier. Moreover, these late 19th century texts are revelatory of socioeconomic settings wherein the miracle-worker's sophisticated relationships with supernatural beings spearheaded the intricate operations of ensnaring elephants and placing trapped beasts into stocks, ranging from the preparation and arrangement of nooses upon junctures of the frontier and the

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474 RAS Maxwell 107. *Surat Mantra Gajah*. See '*arresting the elephants*', '*forcefully arresting the malignant*', '*forcing upon the isolated*', '*commencing upon the ensnarement*', '*preparing the noose*', '*trapping the elephant*', '*mobilizing the isolated*', '*entrance of the elephants*', '*placing the elephant in stocks*'; also see W. G. Maxwell, '*Mantra Gajah*' (1906), 16-20, 22, 26.

475 For an eyewitness account of 'terrorizing' enclosures presided upon by *bomors*, see 'Appendix: The Malay system of Elephant Catching and Training' in W. G. Maxwell, '*Mantra Gajah*' (1906), 40.

tedious setting of nooses upon elephants' forelegs to the organization of stocks. These supernatural beings include, on the one hand, anonymous malignant 'spirits residing upon the flooring of the stocks' that are invoked and in turn expelled by the *bomor*'s mantras, and on the other hand, the beneficial prophet Nuh who is 'the holder of horticulture [and] timber' and the icon of the Malayan hunt, Sri Rama. The prophet Nuh who is addressed in parts of the *Kitab Perintah Pawang* as the 'pioneer of *ladang* production and husbandry involving irontools', is depicted in the collections of *mantras for the elephant* as an accomplice of the trapping *bomor* who negotiated with the prophet Suleiman, on behalf of the miracle-worker's client, for absolute control over the 'servant' of Suleiman, the elephant. The historical hunter, Sri Rama, is portrayed as the natural support of the archetypal elephant trapper and the force that was fired by the *bomor*'s powers into the consciousness of the elephant trapped in the noose, making it utterly 'brainless' and forcefully draining it of any bestial 'intelligence' to unlock the slip-knots of nooses through tusks.

W. G. Maxwell's 1906 *'Mantra Gajah'* contains an appendix stating that the predominant 'Malay system of elephant catching' was one which involved the ensnarement of wild, isolated male elephants through 'female influence'.[476] Whilst Hajji Raja Yahya's and Toh Sharif Aman's transcriptions of the miraculous expertise of *bomor*s on the Perak frontier are informative of game worlds wherein herds of wild elephants were driven into enclosures, the *Teyib Mantra Gajah* and the *Surat Mantra Gajah* are exceptionally detailed historical records of how the aforementioned 'Malay system of elephant catching' was facilitated by miraculous expertise. Indeed, data on such a system of entrapping isolated wild male elephants through the employment of tame cow elephants that were 'let loose' to seduce and caress the isolated beast into nooses with

[476] Cited from 'Appendix: The Malay system of Elephant Catching and Training' in W. G. Maxwell, '*Mantra Gajah*' (1906), 40-41.

running knots that were attached to weights until fastened nooses had been slipped on all the legs of the sexually aroused beast, emerges in various sections of the late 19th century Jawi texts. These are sections related to the operations of '*alluring the isolated wild [male] elephant towards [-] within the noose through drawing it into the trail of tame elephants in our possession*', '*laying the trap within a herd of tame elephants in the forest … [for] the male wild elephant amongst them*', '*entering within the herd of tame elephants let loose … [to trap] the male wild elephant amongst them*', '*decoying the isolated wild*' beast, '*summoning forward the isolated wild elephant that refused to trail our decoy*' cows, '*erecting passion in the wild elephant for our tame female elephants*', preventing the '*mobility of the isolated wild elephant*', preventing the '*isolated wild elephant [that] has coupled with our decoy herd of female elephants … [from] escape*', and '*mounting upon the [wild male] elephant amongst the herd of tame elephants*'.[477]

The aforementioned sections of the Jawi documents are particularly illustrative of how the sensitive operations of alluring isolated wild elephants through decoy tame cows, summoning forward and 'exciting' beasts, ensnaring 'aroused' wild male elephants, and restraining the mobility of beasts to facilitate mounting and their driving into the enclosure, were directly associated with the miraculous expertise of the prototypical *bomor*. Herein, the success of the 'Malay system of elephant catching' is attributed to the miracle-worker's conduct of and instructions for the conduct of sedative ceremonies of circumambulation around the wild beast and tame cows, instructions for the application of mantra-fied articles upon the organs of the decoy elephants, administration of aphrodisiacs and *perabun* (consciousness-dimming) charms for the isolated beast, and

[477] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Teyib Mantra Gajah* attached to *Kitab Perintah Pawang*. See '*alluring the isolated*', '*laying the trap the male*', '*entering within the herd*', '*decoying the isolated wild*', '*summoning forward the isolated*', '*erecting passion*', '*mobility of the isolated wild*', '*isolated wild elephant has coupled*', and '*mounting upon the elephant*'; RAS Maxwell 107 *Surat Mantra Gajh*. See '*alluring the isolated*', '*laying the trap the male*', '*entering within the herd*', '*decoying the isolated wild*', '*summoning forward the isolated*', '*erecting passion*', '*mobility of the isolated wild*', '*isolated wild elephant has coupled*', and '*mounting upon the elephant*'. Also see 'book if we intend to enter the tame elephant' in W. G. Maxwell, '*Mantra Gajah*' (1907), 82; also see W. G. Maxwell, '*Mantra Gajah*' (1906), 25-27.

recitations of the 'speech of Sri Rama' that forcefully drained the elephant of any bestial 'intelligence' to resist seductions and erections.

The *Teyib Mantra Gajah* and the *Surat Mantra Gajah* are also exceptional reflections of 'less well documented' elephant hunting worlds wherein miracle-workers were active participants in the hazardous operations of elephant trapping on behalf of clients. Almost at pains to affirm that the archetypal *bomor* was not a mere agent of the circulation of mantras from afar, portions of these Jawi documents place particular emphasis upon the fact that the performances of the miracle-worker actually happened upon the dangerous frontiers of Perak. These performances included recitations to minerals and articles upon peculiar junctures of the interior that were in the proximity of beasts; the 'hurling', 'sputtering', 'sweeping' and 'sprinkling' of mantra-fied articles upon wild elephants in the course of direct encounters in forests and enclosures; and, sophisticated ceremonies that were performed upon encounters with wild herds or isolated beasts and in the course of ensnarement. Indeed, a number of *bab*s pertaining to the 'ensnarement of the elephant' and the 'the chief [-] the *bomor* in the enclosure' that appear in the *Teyib Mantra Gajah*, the *Surat Mantra Gajah* and the '*Mantra Gajah*', appear to accentuate the fact the miracle-worker actually ensnared the isolated wild elephant in the forest or wild herds that had been driven into the enclosure through facing beasts with a party of 'subordinate *bomor*s' who aided in the expulsion of 'adverse', 'malicious' and hazardous spirits that impeded noosing, and indulging in ecstatic mantra-screaming ceremonies in the enclosure amidst the beasts with his gang of subordinate *bomor*s, wherein the *bomor*s 'lost their conscious self'.[478] Furthermore, sections of these Malay historical documents serve as illustrations of game worlds wherein *bomor*s were coveted

[478] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Teyib Mantra Gajah* attached to *Kitab Perintah Pawang*. See '*book that serves as the mantra towards the kunyit trus ejected from the bomor's mouth*', '*book that serves as the mantra of subordinate bomors*', 'the feast of the *bomor*'; RAS Maxwell 107 *Surat Mantra Gajah*. See '*mantra […] elephants have entered either the major or the minor enclosure*', '*mantra […] subordinate bomors use when they intend to noose an elephant inside the enclosure*', '*charm […] placing the pannier upon a new elephant', 'when the chief [-] bomor holds a feast*', '*the chief [-] bomor or the subordinate bomors make a feast*'; also see W. G. Maxwell, '*Mantra Gajah*' (1906), 17-18, 20-21.

precisely for their intimate contact with beasts in forests and enclosures on behalf of their clients, and their miraculous potential to interpret the *laksana gajah* (esoteric signs of the elephant) through their inheritance of the powers of the '*homor*s of old', the 'great Bisnu' and the historical '*pawang* Sakti [Siva the Nourisher]'.[479] Herein, readers find comprehensive detail on the *ilmu* of the archetypal miracle-worker who was able to report on the 'profitable' or 'bankrupting' and 'health-bestowing' or 'disease-bearing' nature or castes of beasts encountered in forests and enclosures, through observations of shapes, strides, ears and lobes, foreheads, trunks, tails, flanks, skin, markings, head wagging, toes, under-lips, tongues, tusks, protuberances on heads, tails, ears and chins, cubit heights and testicles. These portions of the *Teyib Mantra Gajah*, the *Surat Mantra Gajah* and the '*Mantra Gajah*' appear to serve as Malay equivalents of the discussion of Mughal elephant signs in the late 16th century *Ain-i Akbari* wherein, in the fashion of the Malay manuals, the corporeal attributes of elephants were directly associated with supernatural castes of the *dewa*, 'Indra', 'angel', 'specter' and 'demon'.[480]

Beyond being historical documents of intimate encounters between miracle-workers and beasts upon the frontiers of Perak, Hajji Raja Yahya's *Teyib Mantra Gajah* and Toh Sharif Aman's *Surat Mantra Gajah* are informative about the actual events of enclosures wherein *homor*s spearheaded the tuition or religious domestication of wild elephants through 'barbarous cruelty'.[481] Evidence of these tuitions of wild elephants in Perak enclosures emerges in a series of *hab*s related to 'barbarous cruelty' imposed upon beasts from the moment when the beast that had ensnared in 'the stock for three days' was 'completely dehydrated' and 'submitted' to being handled, and was 'taken out for the

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[479] RAS Maxwell 107. *Surat Mantra Gajah*. See '*book that is expressing the laksana gajah […] petua of the homor*'; RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Teyib Mantra Gajah* attached to *Kitab Perintah Pawang*. See '*fasal that is expressing the laksana gajah*'.

[480] Refer to 'Appendix: Ain-i Akbari on Elephants' in G. N. Pant, *Horse and Elephant Armour* (New Delhi: Agam, 1997).

[481] Cited from 'Appendix: The Malay system of Elephant Catching and Training' in W. G. Maxwell, '*Mantra Gajah*' (1906), 40-41.

first time to water' through 'hobbles' that fixed it to another beast, to the climax-moment when the elephant had been completely 'stripped of its natural ferocity' and converted into a beast of burden.[482] For example, two *bab*s that we find transcribed in both the *Teyib Mantra Gajah* and the *Surat Mantra Gajah* concerning the '*intention to bring the goad to the elephant that has been taken out of the stocks*' for the first time for handling and washing, and the '*softening of the heart of the elephant … and forcing of docility upon it*', are particularly illustrative of how wild elephants were rigorously educated in the 'vocabulary of command' in stocks wherein they were restricted to stationary positions until their graduation from stocks.[483] These *bab*s are valuable windows into 19th century Malayan enclosures wherein the tuition of beasts was dependent upon, firstly, the *bomor*'s instructions for the feeding and application of mantra-fied articles to beasts that subjugated their 'natural ferocity', and directives for drawing obeisance through striking stocked elephants into 'kneeling positions' with goads that were to be 'tossed' after strikes to terrorize beasts. Secondly, the *bomor's* mantras that miraculously indoctrinated elephants with the 'vocabulary of command' and were recited in the course of 'clobbering elephants thrice with the goad' until the 'release of a scream' which marked the beast's 'end of rebellion' and commencement of obedience. Thirdly, the miracle-worker's specialized rituals of communication with beasts that were coerced to 'bow tamely' in obeisance under threats of the *bomor*'s potential to channel the homicidal 'curses' of Sri Rama to Malayan enclosures.

The *Teyib Mantra Gajah* and the *Surat Mantra Gajah* fail to mention precise settings of *bomor*s' 'barbarous cruelty' in the Perak interior. Nevertheless, the emphasis that these

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[482] Both Hajji Raja Yahya's *Teyib Mantra Gajah* (RAS Maxwell 106) and Toh Sharif Aman's *Surat Mantra Gajah* (RAS Maxwell Malay 107) comprise of sections concerning the: '*intention to bring the goad to the elephant that has been taken out of the stocks after three days that taken out for the first time and brought to water for drinking and bathing*', the '*mantra that works to expel malignant influences from the elephant when we drive it back to the stocks subsequent to bathing*', and the '*remedy that makes our elephant return on its own accord*'.

[483] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Teyib Mantra Gajah* attached to *Kitab Perintah Pawang*. See '*intention to bring the goad*', '*softening of the heart*'; RAS Maxwell 107. *Surat Mantra Gajah*. See '*intention to bring the goad*', '*softening of the heart*'.

Jawi texts place upon the centrality of miraculous expertise to the violent domestication of beasts appears to be an accurate reflection of socioeconomic worlds described by the aforementioned late 19th and early 20th century European administrators and reformist Muslim scholars. Indeed, Hajji Raja Yahya's *Teyib Mantra Gajah* and the volume, *Kitab Perintah Pawang* comprise of multiple sections that are didactically driven to expose the spectacular powers of miracle-workers to strip a variety of beasts including tigers and crocodiles in the Malayan interior of their natural ferocity. For instance, the '*book that [serves] to distance the tiger*', the '*talisman [for] the tiger*' and the '*origin and genealogy of the crocodile*' appear to record encounters between the prototypical miracle-worker and beasts that were in turn, domesticated through rituals of communication wherein the miracle-worker boasted, on the one hand, his esoteric knowledge of the embarrassing genesis of the tiger and crocodile from a 'drop of mud of the majesty [*baginda*] Ali' and a treacherous 'toy' of Siti Fatimah respectively. On the other hand, the possession of the 'edicts [*permans*]' of God, and the powers of Ali and Fatimah, to massacre with 'ferocious wrath', 'crush the life' of and 'hit nails into the jaws' of tigers and crocodile who were 'treasonous' against the miracle-worker's demand for obeisance.[484]

Evidence of the actual success of the archetypal miracle-worker's mantras for the domestication of beasts, however, is only available in the *bab*s related to the '*mantras for the mounting of the elephant*' and '*the charm for the pioneer placing of the pannier upon the elephant*' in Haji Raja Yahya's *Teyib Mantra Gajah* and Toh Sharif Aman's *Surat Mantra Gajah*.[485] In these *babs*, the aforementioned physically and supernaturally coercive methods employed to indoctrinate wild elephants with the 'vocabulary of command' are depicted as

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484 RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Teyib Mantra Gajah* attached to *Kitab Perintah Pawang*. And the *Kitab Perintah Pawang* '*this is the origin and genealogy of the crocodile*'; '*book that [serves] to distance the tiger*', '*talisman [for] the tiger*'.

485 RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Teyib Mantra Gajah* attached to *Kitab Perintah Pawang*. See '*book of mantras for the mounting of the elephant*', '*the charm for the pioneer placing of the pannier upon the elephant*'; RAS Maxwell 107 *Surat Mantra Gajah*. See '*mantra repeated for the mounting of the elephant*', '*charm for the pioneer placing of the pannier upon the elephant employed for its first time*'. Also see '*to soften the heart of an elephant*' and 'the book of mantras for mounting the elephant' in W. G. Maxwell, '*Mantra Gajah*' (1907), 73, 81; also see W. G. Maxwell, '*Mantra Gajah*' (1906), 25, 36-37.

guaranteed techniques that stripped beasts of ferocity, and made elephants docile enough for release from stocks and to allow 'placing of the pannier' upon their body and the mahout's 'mounting upon the pannier'. These *bab*s are also revelatory of how the gradual release of wild elephants from stocks, which in all probability involved a period of 40 to a 100 days and a procedure of binding beasts to fully domesticated elephants through gradually loosened rattan, and the intricate procedures of placing panniers and mounting upon newly released elephants, were directed throughout by the miraculous expertise of *bomor*s. Miracle-workers directed specific operations through producing *petua*s, 'sprinkling' and 'hurling' mantra-fied articles at tutee-beasts, and expelling supernatural 'influences' that prevented the transmogrification of the elephant into a beast of burden to 'the navel of [the whirlpool] *pauh Zanggi*', the cosmological abode for exorcized spirits.

Hajji Raja Yahya's *Teyib Mantra Gajah*, Toh Sharif Aman's *Surat Mantra Gajah* and the 1907 '*Mantra Gajah*' contain multiple *bab*s and *kataan* related to the prototypical *bomor*'s miraculous powers of expelling malignant supernatural 'influences'. It is in these portions of the Malay texts that we discover historical details on the authentic fears of frontiersmen who perceived the primeval forests of 19th century Perak as being densely populated by spirits and 'diseases' that 'heard', 'spied upon', 'transgressed' and 'plagued' every single step taken towards economic enterprise.[486] These malignant 'influences' impeded the aforementioned operations of converting the wild elephant into a beast of burden to be exploited by the *bomor*'s clients, and populated the Perak forests and enclosures in the form of spirits. These malignant spirits included the *genaling* ('vengeful influence' of hunted animals), the *hantu anak gajah* (the demon that plagues the young elephant), the *hantu rimba* (demon of the primeval forest), the *hantu hutan* (demon of the forest), the '*hantu* of the forest goat', the 'force [that caused the] crumbling' of economic

[486] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Kitab Perintah Pawang*. A description of the natures of spirits that 'heard', 'spied upon', 'transgressed' and 'plagued' frontiersmen is available in the '*book to distance the hantu shetan from the path*'.

enterprise, the *changrai* (the elephant plague), the *chemahang* (evil influences attendant on the elephant), and the 'aggressive *bahdi*' ('vengeful influence' of hunted deer).[487] The aforementioned 'vengeful influences' are described in three sections of the 1879 *Kitab Perintah Pawang*, as nefarious forces that infiltrated into the 'hair', 'skin', 'blood', 'bones', 'sinews', 'joints' and 'brains' of elephants and frontiersmen, and caused 'epidemics', 'droning', 'vertigo', 'trembling', 'swelling', 'suppuration', 'dehydration', 'lethargy' and 'stiffness'.[488]

The *Teyib Mantra Gajah*, the *Surat Mantra Gajah* and the '*Mantra Gajah*', alternatively, accentuate that these malignant 'influences' were simultaneously manifest upon the Perak frontier as 'diseases' that compelled elephants to be 'obstinate' and 'refuse tuition and indoctrination'; be 'intelligent' and 'free themselves of loads through shaking'; rebel against 'subservience towards the goad with zeal'; 'refuse kneeling upon command'; oppose 'swimming' and 'submerging in water'; develop 'cowardice'; rebel against 'becoming overweight' and 'force feeding'; become 'erroneous in the procedure' of work and lazy; become 'shrewd' and develop an 'intelligent', 'cunning' and 'suspicious' nature; develop 'hormonal surges [musth] that erected aggression'; 'fall into other's nooses'; and, 'groan' in despair amidst labor.[489] It is in these detailed discussions of

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[487] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Teyib Mantra Gajah* attached to *Kitab Perintah Pawang. See accompanying [recitation for] genaling*', '*accompanying [recitation for] chemorak*', '*book to expel the demon of the baby elephant*', '*book to throw off the demon of the forest*', '*bah to throw off the demon of renat*', '*book that is the perabun for the elephant*', '*mantra that can serve as a perabun*', '*book that is the perengab*'; '*book expressing the expelling of forest spirits*', '*concerning the demon of the forest*', '*mantra to expel the spirits*', '*expelling the forest demons that plague the baby elephant*', '*an individual … plagued by chemahang … changrai … potent bahdi'* in Toh Sharif Aman, *Surat Mantra Gajah*; '*book to throw off the demon of the primeval forest*', '*book for the genaling of the forest goat*', '*book that is the mantra for throwing off crumbling*', '*book to throw off the demon of the forest*', '*book that is the perabun … matters of malignant influence*', '*book that is one accompanying recitation*', '*remedy for individual plagued by chemahang*' in W. G. Maxwell, '*Mantra Gajah*' in (1907); also see W. G. Maxwell, '*Mantra Gajah*' (1906), 15-17, 23-24.

[488] RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Kitab Perintah Pawang.* See '*this is the recitation to expel genaling*', '*another such recitation to expel genaling*', the '*book of recitations to return genaling*'.

[489] RAS Maxwell 107. *Surat Mantra Gajah.* See '*perabun [for …] intelligent elephant*', '*perabun for cunningness*', '*perengab for a large elephant*' '*perengab for obstinacy*', '*mantra for extreme obstinacy*', '*to emancipate large elephant from all malignant influences*', '*mantra to expel all malignant influences from the large elephant*', '*the mantra referred to as the chief of the bomors*', '*remedy for an obstinate elephant that refuses tutoring*', '*remedy to soften the heart of the elephant*', '*remedy for […] elephant of the art of shaking free from load*', '*remedy for the prevention of [… lazy] swinging of the tail*', '*making the elephant subservient to the goad*', '*remedy for the elephant rebelling against kneeling upon the deliverance of command*', '*upon the occasion that the elephant refuses or displays cowardice against swimming*', '*remedy for the reputed disease kesar api*',

'diseases' in the 1879 *Teyib Mantra Gajah*, the 1879 *Surat Mantra Gajah* and the 1907 *'Mantra Gajah*' that we find data on the 'less well documented economic roles' of elephants in 19th century Perak. Indeed, 'overweight' and 'fearless' elephants are portrayed here as prized commodities that were vulnerable to 'others' nooses', and valued for their indispensability to travel through the forested interior and upstream tributaries of Perak; and, the transportation of loads which in all probability included alluvial tin ore from headwaters of the Larut tributaries, timber and supplies of rice.[490]

It is also possible that the aforementioned *bab*s and recitations on malignant 'influences' are illustrative of how the prolonged careers of miracle-workers, beyond elephant trapping and 'breaking in', were based upon their supernatural protection of elephants, elephant owning clients and mahouts. In fact, these discussions which emphasize that malevolent 'influences' exponentially plagued elephants that grew in size and were being exploited for economic roles, provide historians a window into the authentic fears of clients who placed their faith in miracle-workers who, firstly, held spectacular powers of 'clobbering' and 'ruthlessly dragging' malignant 'influences' out of beasts, and 'expelling' and 'chucking' these influences towards 'distant jungles [-] primeval forests [-] vast plains' and 'the navel of [the whirlpool] *pauh Zanggi*'. Secondly, protected elephant owners and mahouts (the '*anak* [children of] *Adam*') in their labors through drawing the 'sheltering force' of Adam, Siti Hawa (Eve), Muhammad and God to the Malayan frontier, and distancing malignant influences from clients through

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'*remedy for the elephant that rebels against over-eating*', '*remedy towards producing fatness in the elephant*'; '*section expressing all all remedies for disease of the elephant*', '*book that is the remedy for the elephant refusing to swim*', '*remedy for the elephant refusing to submerge*', '*book that is the remedy that is the softener of the heart*', '*book that is the remedy for the elephant committing errors*', '*remedy for aspirants of fat elephants*', '*book that is the remedy for elephant refusing eating*', '*book on subservience to the goad*', '*book that is the remedy to refusals to kneeling*', '*book that is the remedy of hormonal surges in the elephant*', '*book to cause elephant to groan rarely*', '*book that is remedy for elephant to develop fearlessness*' in W. G. Maxwell, '*Mantra Gajah*' (1907); RAS Maxwell Malay 106. *Teyib Mantra Gajah* attached to *Kitab Perintah Pawang*. See '*remedy to make elephant subservient to goad*', '*remedy to prevent elephant lazy tail swinging*', '*remedy that serves as the softener of the elephant's heart*', '*remedy for elephant erroneous […] in procedure*', '*remedy for the aim to fatten elephant*', '*remedy for making elephant kneel upon command*'; also see W. G. Maxwell, '*Mantra Gajah*' (1906), 21-24, 28-30.

490 Maxwell, 'A Journey on Foot to the Patani Frontier in 1876', 12-13, 34-5; Delacroix, 'Some Account of The Mining Districts of Lower Perak', 6.

warnings that 'treachery against the *bomor*' upon the Perak frontier was tantamount to 'treason [*derhaka*] against God the Fosterer'. Moreover, these Malay texts are revelatory of settings wherein the prototypical *bomor* guarded elephants, elephant owning-clients and mahouts against 'diseases' through elaborate instructions for the preparation and administration of medicine that that was produced from eclectic ingredients including cannon parts, beasts' navels, pigs' wallow, the 'powerful name of the *bomor*' and the disease-massacring 'curses [and] weapons of Sri Rama'.

Muhammad's Gun:
Shooting Kafirs on the Malay Frontier

The introductory chapter has highlighted that no single historical monograph has been produced on the religious and technological domestication of hand-held firearms upon the Malay frontier and Muslim intercessors of cosmopolitan guns. The scholarly neglect of hand-held firearms is surprising in light of the fact that, as Tagliacozzo highlights in *Secret Trades, Porous Borders* which comprises of the most detailed historical discussion yet of guns in Malaya, that frontiers of the Peninsula and Aceh were infested with gun bearers by the late 19th century. Tagliacozzo notes that a corpus of late 19th and early 20th century Dutch records are informative about heavily armed Malay worlds whereupon frontiersmen 'went around heavily armed, usually 3 or more arms on their person' and were armed with a range of American and European guns such as breach-loading muskets, Lafaucheux hunting rifles and revolvers, Winchester repeating rifles, Winchester Expresses, Martini-Henry rifles, Snider rifles, Enfield rifles, Beaumont rifles and Mauser rifles.[491] Another compelling portrayal of armed Malay frontiers emerges in the *Journals of J. W. W. Birch, First British Resident to Perak, 1874-1875* which warned European scholar-administrators about 'particularly striking' armed worlds of northern

[491] Tagliacozzo, *Secret Trades, Porous Borders*, 275, 292

Malaya, throughout the 'long valley of the Perak river'. Herein, according to Birch, 'everyone was armed to the teeth' with weapons including the 'rifle or fowling piece', it was an impending struggle for the nascent Residency to 'forbid the carrying of arms altogether, or impose a tax on them if carried', and the possession of hand-held firearms 'seemed to be the great characteristic of a Perak man' who displayed an 'extraordinary passion … for carrying arms'.[492]

In spite of the aforementioned evidence on 19th century Malay frontiers whereupon 'everyone was armed to the teeth', post-colonial scholarship on firearms in the Malay states has been limited to a section on the 'illegal weapons trade across the Anglo/Dutch Frontier' in Tagliacozzo's 2005 *Secret Trades, Porous Borders*, a section on 'innovations in firearms technology' within L. Y. Andaya's 1993 article on 'Interaction with the Outside World and Adaptation in Southeast Asian Society', and B. W. Andaya's 2011 article on 'Sounding Authority in Traditional Malay Society'.[493] Tagliacozzo's section on the 'illegal weapons trade' focuses upon the 'large commercial scale' of a clandestine arms trade, and in particular exchanges between the Malay Peninsula and Sumatra, that 'outfoxed the state' and 'imposing juridical edifice' in Singapore and Batavia.[494] It is regrettable that Tagliacozzo's seminal work fails to undertake a serious historical inquiry into, firstly, 19th century Malay manuscripts that he merely acknowledges as being extant and informative about 'how these commodities [small arms] were integrated into local societies' and peripatetic 'hajjis' and *faqir*s who were central to the technological and religious 'integration' of American rifles. Secondly, the actual expertise and socioeconomic prominence of Tamil and Arab hajjis and *faqir*s who capitalized upon the 'loopholes' in the British Residencies' enforcement of ordinances

[492] Birch, *The journals of J. W. W. Birch,* 69, 384.
[493] L. Y. Andaya, 'Interaction with the Outside World and Adaptation in Southeast Asian Society'; Tagliacozzo, *Secret Trades, Porous Borders*, 260-316; B. W. Andaya, 'Distant Drums and Thunderous Cannon: Sounding Authority in Traditional Malay Society', *International Journal of Asia Pacific Studies,* 7:2 (2011), 19-35.
[494] Tagliacozzo, *Secret Trades, Porous Borders*, 261-272.

and enactments concerning the seizure of firearms, which were only imposed in Perak as late as 1902. These hajjis and *faqir*s are haphazardly referred to in *Secret Trades, Porous Borders* as 'key protagonists' central to small-scale gunpowder production in northern Malaya and the circulation of small-scale guns such as Winchester-Henry rifles between the Peninsula and Aceh which were in all probability, coveted commodities in the course of the Aceh War (1873-1903).

L. Y. Andaya's section on 'innovations in firearms technology' comprises of a survey of European documents pertaining to cannons in 18th and 19th century Malay states that were characteristic of the 'inter-relationship between the material and spiritual spheres of life', 'repositories of powerful protector spirits' and 'spiritual potency', and were purchased as commodities for 'spiritual rather than physical combat'.[495] Alternatively, B. W. Andaya's article on 'Sounding Authority' is largely an exploration of European records concerning cannons in the 18th and 19th century 'core Malay cultural zone' (the Peninsula, eastern Sumatra and western Borneo) that served as exceptional mediums of controlling aurally-attuned, fearful subjects due to the Malay association of gunshots with 'spiritual potency', the 'sound of thunder' and the 'voice of heaven'.[496] Due to their focus upon an opulent Malay cultural preference for 'heavy guns' or canons, both L. Y. Andaya and B. W. Andaya whose *Perak: An Abode of Grace* contains mentions of small-arms circulation and gunpowder production in the late 18th century interior of Perak, fail to undertake a historical inquiry into socioeconomic settings in 19th century Malaya wherein the employment of hand-held firearms or rifles was a simultaneously 'material and spiritual' operation. In fact, in acknowledging that the 'stockade or *kubu* was an essential component of warfare' in Malaya wherein 'siege cannon and other heavy guns [were] of little value' vis-à-vis small arms, and appropriating sardonic comments of

[495] L. Y. Andaya, 'Interaction with the Outside World and Adaptation in Southeast Asian Society', 40-43, 48-50.
[496] B. W. Andaya, 'Distant Drums and Thunderous Cannon', 19-24.

19th century European scholar-administrators, L. Y. Andaya suggests that 'much lighter and more reliable hand-held firearm muskets' were simply 'admired' by Malays and 'complex machinery far beyond' their 'skill'.[497]

Even in their exploratory essays on the 'spiritual potency' of Malay guns, L. Y. Andaya and B. W. Andaya fail to pay attention to Jawi catalogues of 'folklore' and 'magical ceremonies' such as the 19th century Jawi and romanized Malay manuscripts which are employed in this chapter as key historical sources of armed Malay frontiers whereupon gun bearing had attained an Islamic meaning, and the actual gun expertise of cosmopolitan miracle-workers who were 'skilled cannoniers'. Indeed, in writing a history of Malay cannons that bore the 'voice of heaven', B. W. Andaya merely mentions the availability of Jawi texts that are replete with 'magical' histories of 'supernaturally-charged' guns, gun-gifting *jinns* and the miraculous expertise of Muslim suprahumans who were 'skilled cannoniers'.[498] Furthermore, in making a reference to C. O. Blagden's early 20th century pamphlet on 'A XVIIth Century Malay Cannon' with the 1653 seal of the 'Victorious Sultan Sulaiman Shah' of Kedah (d. 1625), she ignores Blagden's reproductions of eleven Arabic and Malay inscriptions that were, in all probability, transmitted by a 'gun guru' and engraved upon the cannon by a familiar of the guru from Singgora (Songhkla). These inscriptions are particularly informative about armed worlds in northern Malaya wherein gun gurus were pivotal to, firstly, the transmission of the '*Hazrat*' Muhammad's 'heirloom', the cannon, to future generations for the religious tasks of 'slaying kafirs accursed [by God]' in northern Malaya with the 'power and vengeance' of God, and 'assembling cruel kafirs and their idols in hell'. Secondly, delivering the 'bounties', 'mercies' and 'promise of heavenly paradise' of God to the Malay *ghazi* (warrior). Thirdly, securing the *ghazi* an 'escape [from kafirs'] gunshots'

[497] L. Y. Andaya, 'Interaction with the Outside World and Adaptation in Southeast Asian Society', 11; Crawfurd, *History of the Indian Archipelago,* 191.
[498] B. W. Andaya, 'Distant Drums and Thunderous Cannon', 29.

through banishing shots from hand-held firearms headed for the Muslim gun bearer 'in the flash of the eye'.

In a recent essay on the 'changing role played by firearms' in early modern 'Asian armies and polities', Subrahmanyam and Parker have called upon historians to focus upon the oft-neglected 'place of Muslim intermediaries' in the transmission and appropriation of both European and non-European guns upon Asian frontiers.[499] Subrahmanyam and Parker's recommendations that a history of armed Asian frontiers be centered upon Muslim intercessors such as 'gun-wielding "Turks" (or *rumes*)' and 'Ottoman military experts' who regularly circulated across the 16th century Indian Ocean, encourage scholars of 19th century Malaya to undertake a historical inquiry into peripatetic Muslim gurus, hajjis and *faqir*s who were central to the religious and technological domestication of American and European firearms in the Straits of Malacca.[500] In undertaking a historical investigation of gurus, hajjis and *faqir*s who religiously integrated American and European rifles upon the 19th century Malay frontier, this chapter is also influenced by R. D. Crew's recent article on the 19th century 'global arms trade' and Haroon's *Islam in the Indo-Afghan Borderland*. Crew's article proposes the clandestine international arms trade was conducted through 'dynamic circuits' of African, American, Asian and European manufacturers, merchants, smugglers and revolutionaries, and accentuates the role Muslim intermediaries played in the technological domestication of global firearms in 'villages and towns from the Caucasus to the Indus'.[501] Haroon's work draws attention to the religious domestication of locally manufactured and smuggled guns upon the late 19th and early 20th century Indo-Afghan frontier. This was spearheaded by Pakhtun *mulla*s or 'spiritual-religious instructors' who bestowed an Islamic meaning upon hand-held firearms through their maintenance of

[499] Subrahmanyam and Parker, 'Arms and the Asian', 22, 26-27
[500] Subrahmanyam and Parker, 'Arms and the Asian', 37.
[501] Crews, 'Trafficking in Evil? The Global Arms Trade and the Politics of Disorder' in *Global Islam in the Age of Steam and Print, 1850-1930*.

'large retinues of *murids*, *talibs* and *khalifas*' who were armed to implement the *mulla*'s 'religious directives among the Pakhtun tribes'.[502]

This chapter proceeds to scrutinize portions of two Jawi and romanized Malay manuscripts which serve as unparalleled historical records of armed Malay 'frontiers of faith' whereupon by the late 19th century, American and European firearms and operations of gun bearing had attained distinct Islamic meanings and were associated with itinerant Muslim gurus and *faqir*s who were in turn, central to the religious and technological domestication of hand-held firearms. These gurus and *faqir*s appear to have been plugged into 'dynamic circuits' that connected them to cosmopolitan actors who, in all probability, included European and Asian smugglers and merchants who ferried firearms to Malay frontiers, European and American manufacturers and industrial gun-makers, Acehnese revolutionaries and Asian slave-hunters.

Gun Gurus and the Armed Malay Frontier

> *Spoke Muhammad to the four Companions [-] it is proper that you adorn this gunshot in the course of protecting the religion of Mecca [-] appropriate the weapon against the enemies of Islam and kafirs accursed by God [- this weapon] the Putri Hernyn [the Nymph-Princess, the Henry rifle … was received by the four Companions and Caliphs [-] subsequently it was desired by the tuan Sheikh Shamsuddin [-] it was consequently desired by the tuan Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani [-] subsequently it reached the Hajji of the Minangkabau the tuan Hajji Muda … [thereupon] Jilani transmitted to the tuan Hajji Muda the gunshots of three matters [-] the gunshot of the covenant [-] the gunshot of the Firangi [Frank, and] the gunshot of the Englishman.*
>
> - *Faqir* Muhammad Ali, 1882.[503]

The untitled Jawi text, *Maxwell 24* comprises of *babs*, *fasals*, *kataan* and *chuchas* (silencing charms) that were transmitted by miracle-workers such as the '*faqir* [ascetic] with great affability and humility from all the slaves of God', Muhammad Ali bin

[502] Haroon, *Frontier of Faith: Islam in the Indo-Afghan Borderland*, 33, 62, 88, 203.
[503] RAS Maxwell Malay 24. ['O*n casting bullets, shooting, etc.*']. Transcribed by Auda Muhammad Hashim. Larut [Perak], 1882. See '*book and chapter towards expressing the narration of shooting*'.

Abdullah Jawi Minangkabau. These transmissions are related to the archetypal guru's expertise in the production of ammunition and the craftsmanship of guns or replicas of the American Henry rifle, sophisticated negotiations with spirits that resided upon guns, instructions for esoteric and exoteric religious shooting, and the historical and supernatural basis of the guru's miraculous expertise. A concluding note on the *Maxwell 24* specifies that it 'reached completion in Permatang Larut' in the upstream interior of Perak, 'upon the 6th of Ramdzan 1299' (22 July 1882), and that its scribe was 'the humble Auda Muhammad Hashim' who is in turn described as a '*faqir* [-] slave of God'. Whilst Muhammad Hashim provides no data regarding the transmitters of the Jawi record beyond *Faqir* Muhammad Ali, and the connections of his transcriptions to specific armed worlds or gun gurus in Permatang Larut or Perak on the whole, the transmitters of the text appear particularly familiar with the actual socioeconomic trend of cosmopolitan miracle-workers being pivotal to the religious and technological domestication and employment of 'American' rifles upon 19th century Malay frontiers.

The centrality of cosmopolitan gun gurus to the Muslim domestication of the American rifles upon Malay frontiers is apparent in the '*book and chapter towards expressing the narration of shooting*'. This *bab* of the *Maxwell 24* reminds the Minangkabau *faqir*'s audience of the historical setting wherein the nascent Islamic community had conducted 'burials [of martyrs] upon Mount Uhud' following the 'war of Amir Hamzah' wherein the uncle of the prophet Muhammad was martyred. Hereupon, the vengeance-hungry 'tiger of God', Ali, informed the 'headman [*penghulu*] of the atmosphere' and 'lover of God', Muhammad, about his intentions to 'establish a war in the path of God upon the plain of Karbala'. Following an exchange of messages between God and Jibrail, and Muhammad who was paranoid about Ali's pursuit of war without the appropriate weapon and the possibility of a 'recurrence of the events of [the battle at] Karbala' wherein Ali's son, Hussein was martyred, the archangel Jibrail is sent by God to the 'cave of heaven' that

was the residence of the gun, the Nymph-Princess, Henry.[504] In *Faqir* Muhammad Ali's transmissions, the 'nymph' Henry is confused as both a weapon for the earth preserved in heaven and the 'actual pole of the throne of God', and described as impregnated with the 'character [*sifat*] of reaching the target' and as the proper 'weapon against the enemies of Islam and kafirs accursed by God'. The Henry rifle is thereupon extracted from the 'cave of heaven' by Jibrail and transmitted to the prophet Muhammad who appropriates the gun as his heirloom and in turn, transmits it to his four 'Companions and Caliphs' (Abu Bakar, Umar, Usman and Ali), the *tuan* Sheikh Shamsuddin (d. 1630), the *tuan* Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (d. 1166), and the 'Hajji of the Minangkabau [-] the *tuan* Hajji Muda' respectively. Upon the *tuan* Hajji Muda's requests for the expertise of gunshots, Abdul Qadir Jilani transmits the 'gunshots of three matters' to the 'hajji of the Minangkabau' region. These gunshots included, firstly, the 'gunshot of the covenant' which appears to be a reference to a gunshot that was transmitted by Jibrail to Muhammad and paralleled the archangel's transmission of the covenant in the Qur'an. Secondly, the gunshot of the 'Frank' which could either be a reference to the Portuguese who, according to the 23rd '*Alqisah*' of the *Sejarah Melayu*, had overcome the Malaccan Sultanate in 1511 with guns that bore the 'noise of the thunder … [and] the flash of lightning from heaven', or to the Dutch who were plugged into the *Perang Kafir* (War of the Kafir) with the Acehnese Sultanate at the moment of *Faqir* Muhammad Ali's transmission.[505] Thirdly, the gunshot of the 'Englishman' whose armed presence in north western Malaya is depicted by Muhammad Hashim as manifest in the Residency that, by 1882, 'reputedly commanded Larut [-] its cities and coasts' as colonies.

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[504] I am indebted to the *bomor*s, Muhammad Hashim and Abas Ali Al-Aydarus for clarifying that the *Putri Hernyn* (the plural for Henry) was a peculiar esoteric Islamic name applied by *pawangs*, *bomor*s and gurus to refer to the generic Henry rifle, one of which the Sungei Siput *bomor*, Abas Ali, still claims to possess in his 'gun-room' as an 'inheritance'.

[505] '*Alqisah [23]*' in 'Sejarah Melayu – The Malay Annals'. Also see Luis Filipe F. R. Thomaz, 'The Malay Sultanate of Melaka' in Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Early Modern Era: Trade, Power, and Belief* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 69-90.

Faqir Muhammad Ali's elaborate genealogy fails to mention the actual transmission of American rifles to Perak, and appears to lack a coherent chronology. Indeed, the Minangkabau *faqir* produces a sophisticated chronology that suggests that the 'events of Karbala' occurred before the 'war of Amir Hamzah', privileges Sheikh Shamsuddin over Abdul Qadir Jilani, cosmologically, and emphasizes that the Henry rifle that was first produced as a .44 caliber rimfire model in 1860 had a classical Islamic origin. Nevertheless, the '*book and chapter towards expressing the narration of shooting*' is didactically driven towards exposing, on the one hand, the 'reality' that American guns such as the Henry rifle and European gunshots had a distinctly Islamic history as heavenly artifacts transmitted to Muhammad and from the prophet to his heirs that could be reclaimed upon contemporary Malay frontiers. On the other hand, the fact that Minangkabau *faqir*s or gurus were indispensable intercessors of Muhammad's heirloom, the Henry rifle. This is apparent in the chain of transmission of Muhammad's heirloom from the 'four Companions' to the '*tuan Hajji Muda*' whose identity remains unclear. This chain privileges the 16th and early 17th century Sumatran sheikh, Shamsuddin as the direct recipient of the gun to 'protect the religion of Mecca' from the 'four Companions' in Mecca and concludes with the Hajji of Minangkabau who in turn, appears to have preserved the heirloom as a reserve accessible to gun gurus such as Abdullah Jawi Minangkabau and his son, *Faqir* Muhammad Ali.

It might be tempting to dismiss *Faqir* Muhammad Ali's associations of hand-held firearms such as the Henry rifle with heirs of Muhammad as self-fulfilling exaggerations of the infrequent 'affirmation of links with an unseen world' in 19th century Perak.[506] W. G. Maxwell's 1907 sardonic notes on an 'old note book' of the 'Pa' [*Pawang*] Senik', however, are informative about 'ridiculous' armed worlds in 19th and early 20th century Perak wherein gun users were preoccupied with circulating traditions of the *asal snapang*

[506] Cited from Hill, *Rice in Malaya*, 43.

(pedigrees of the gun) that reconstructed rifles into reincarnations of the divorced son of the prophet Musa, and gun gurus such as Senik who appeared to be 'in demand' as intermediaries of supernatural guns.[507] The demand for *Faqir* Muhammad Ali's expertise in socioeconomic stratums in 19th century Perak appears to be attested to in the fact that the *faqir*-scribe of *Maxwell 24*, Muhammad Hashim, acknowledges in a concluding note to the 1882 Jawi document that the Minangkabau *faqir*'s traditions were circulated in aural circles and transcribed in an earlier 'manuscript [-] epistle in the possession of the [scribe of the *Teyib Mantra Gajah*] the [*T*]*engku* Hajji Raja Yahya'. It is unfortunate that *Faqir* Muhammad Ali's transmissions fail to provide sufficient detail that would serve a study of the interweaving histories of the demand, in 19th century Perak, for the expertise of Sumatran gun gurus, and iron from islands in central Sumatra for replicas of American and European firearms. Moreover, the demand for the circulating expertise of gun gurus such as *Faqir* Muhammad Ali in *mukims* in northern Malaya is evident in a Malay record of 'Hajji Hassan [of] Landang' in Bagan Serai, Perak, that 'reached completion upon 7 Jamadilawal'. Hajji Hassan's document comprises of *bab*s, *fasals* and *kataan* that were transmitted by miracle-workers, pertaining to the prototypical guru's esoteric expertise of 'locking' rifles, sophisticated supernatural negotiations that domesticated the components of firearms, and the historical basis of the guru's expertise.[508] A concluding note on the *MS 25030* suggests that Hajji Hassan's transcriptions were circulated in the aural circles of *mukim*s in northern Malaya and reproductions of an earlier manuscript of the *bilal* of Masjid Raya, Kelantan, the *tuan* Bilal Hajji Yusuf.

[507] W. G. Maxwell, 'Miscellaneous Notes', 106.
[508] SOAS MS 25030. ['*Kelantan charm-book*'].

Miracles of the Gun Guru: Kafir-Shooting upon the Malay Frontier

Muhammad Hashim's and Hajji Hassan's records of the oral transmissions of gun gurus such as *Faqir* Muhammad Ali serve as exceptional records of northern Malayan stratums wherein these 'real experts' of American firearms, or cannibalized versions of these, were pivotal to the religious domestication of guns, and teaching rifle-bearing '*ghazi*s' the esoteric arts of bullet production, weapon craftsmanship and Islamic shooting. Whilst these Jawi records fail to mention the identities of Muslim shooters and the kafir-targets, these texts are, in all probability, reflective of sophisticated rifle economies that connected Malay frontiers to broader Indian Ocean circuits, and itinerant gurus to cosmopolitan smugglers, gun carriers and dealers, and Acehnese revolutionaries. In fact, the transcriptions of Muhammad Hashim and Hajji Hassan appear to be particularly illustrative of thriving markets of gun gurus in northern Malaya that attracted peripatetic gurus such as the possessor of cosmopolitan learning, *Faqir* Muhammad Ali. Herein, like *bomor*s who were indispensable to the domestication of beasts, gurus were coveted personages due to their sophisticated techniques of domesticating the Henry rifle, its iron components and bullets which were peculiar supernatural articles that required spiritual, and not mere technological, domestication.

The religious domestication of the Henry rifle upon 19th century Malay frontiers is apparent in a series of *bab*s and *chuchas* (silencing charms) transmitted by *Faqir* Muhammad Ali, which are didactically driven to expose the reality that the guru's 'patriarchal' command over the Henry rifle was indispensable to the employment of the gun. In these *babs* and *chuchas* that are related to the '*names of messenger-spirits [malaikats] that are malevolent*' and the '*prevention of its release and explosion*', the Minangkabau *faqir*'s audience is cautioned about the fact that the American rifle, in spite of its heavenly and Islamic genealogy was plagued by three malignant messenger-spirits, Armat, Aremit and Anit that camped upon the base, cylinder and muzzle of the gun respectively, and had a

tendency to explode haphazardly.[509] This appears to be a reference to the fact that Henry rifles were distinguished as particularly dangerous guns that had hammers cocked or resting upon the edge of cartridges even when unemployed, and as such, regularly remained in firing positions and were capable of exploding chambered rounds upon impact to the rifle's base. Furthermore, Hajji Hassan's transcription of the '*chapter towards expressing [the narration] of iron*' serves as a reminder for aspiring Muslim shooters that the key component of the rifle, iron, was a hazardous supernatural article that was capable of 'consuming' or killing the gun bearer, and required domestication through supernatural expertise. Herein, the audience of the tradition originally recorded by *Bilal* Hajji Yusuf is 'enlightened' about, on the one hand, a historical setting wherein a jealous God created the 'luminosity [-] iron' to challenge the potent 'luminosity of Muhammad' and in turn, regretted his creation due to the fact that iron pursued a rampage of murder and monstrous 'consumption of beings in its path'. On the other hand, the reality that spiritually un-domesticated iron was naturally ferocious, 'monstrous' and the cause of rifle-related accidents and fatalities in centers of gun circulation in northern Malaya.[510]

Beyond exposing its audiences to the dangerous supernatural natures of the Henry rifle and iron, the records of Muhammad Hashim and Hajji Hassan are particularly informative about the archetypal guru's miraculous expertise of 'domesticating' guns and even bullets. For example, the transcriptions of Hajji Hassan comprise of multiple *babs* and *fasals* pertaining to the powers of the miracle-worker to domesticate guns through specialized rituals of communication and recitations that summoned Jibrail to the Malay frontier. The archangel was evoked to 'snatch' the volatile soul of the iron of guns and 'chuck' it into the cosmological abode for exorcized weapons, the navel of the *Bahar Rum* (Ocean of Constantinople), and protect the miracle-

[509] RAS Maxwell Malay 24. ['*On casting bullets, shooting, etc.*']. See '*book that is the chapter expressing the names of messenger-spirits [malaikats] that are malevolent*', '*prevention of its release and explosion*'.
[510] SOAS MS 25030. ['*Kelantan charm-book*']. See '*chapter towards expressing [the narration] of iron*'

worker's clients from the supernatural volatility of guns, or accidents and fatalities, through immersing their 'organs' and 'selves' into the 'luminosity of the Worshipped One'. Alternatively, the aforementioned *babs* and *chuchas* of *Faqir* Muhammad Ali related to the '*names of messenger-spirits that are malevolent*' and '*prevention of its release and explosion*', are illustrative of the miraculous powers of gun gurus to expel spirits from the Henry rifle and compel the gun to bow in austerities towards clients. Herein, the guru who possessed the 'esoteric path [*tariqat*] and science [*ilmu*] of shooting', firstly, undertook rituals of communication with the spirits, Armat, Aremit and Anit, threatening these *malaikat*s that their failure to 'retreat' from their camps upon the Henry rifle would be tantamount to 'treason' (*derhaka*) against God and Muhammad. Secondly, sprouted *doa*s and 'efficacious formulae' that operated as mechanical forces that infiltrated the base, cylinder and muzzle of the rifle, and violently expelled the aforementioned spirits from their camps upon the American gun. Thirdly, summoned a list of prophets and the four Caliphs to northern Malaya, to subjugate the Henry rifle through 'closing' its irreligious 'gluttony' (a reference to the rifle's propensity to accidents) and forcing it to bow towards 'Adam' or rather, the gun-bearing descendants of the prophet Adam.

Faqir Muhammad Ali's '*book and chapter towards expressing the narration of shooting*' that comprises of the aforementioned heavenly genealogy of the Henry rifle and its transmission from Muhammad to the Malay world, also contains an elaborate genealogy of the miraculous powers of gun gurus to domesticate the rifle and convey it to clients. Herein, the archetypal guru in the contemporary Straits of Malacca is portrayed as an heir of the 'transferrable power-grace [*berkat*] of shooting from heaven', the 'esoteric knowledge' of the American rifle, and the knowledge of the gun's esoteric Arabic name (*nur al-faqr*: the luminosity of asceticism) and the esoteric Malay names of the bullet (*gilang-gemilang*: the resplendent, and *petus*: thunderclap). This *berkat* and esoteric knowledge was first attained by the prophet Muhammad upon receipt of the Henry rifle

through meditational exercises of opening the inner 'breath', 'cry' and 'luminosity' that were instructed by God and Jibrail to the kafir-slayer, and in turn, transmitted down to Minangkabau through the same chains of transmissions of the rifle. The inheritance of this *berkat* and esoteric knowledge gifted the contemporary gun guru patriarchal command over the 'nymph' Henry rifle that was in essence volatile 'like a woman', and the guru in turn, appears to have conveyed the domesticated gun to clients in Malaya and Sumatra.

The trope of miracle-workers being central to the supernatural domestication of rifles on behalf of clients is not one peculiar to the Jawi transcriptions of Muhammad Hashim. For instance, I. F. Parinussa's 1927 *Hikayat Kapitan Joncor*, a hagiography of the late 17th century Moluccan captain 'Joncor' who was central to the *Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*'s campaigns in Ambon, Java, Celebes and Sailan, is a chronicle of the beer-guzzling 'Muslim' sepoy who miraculously survived battlefields through the talismans and charms of his spirit-wife who protected her client-husband through domesticating rifles employed by Joncor and his rivals, and 'making them fall at his feet'.[511] Similarly, the scholar-administrator A. E. Coope's 1933 pamphlet on the 'Black Art' contains notes on gun and bullet charms in Kelantan that miraculously protected criminal clients of gurus from the 'consumption' of firearms and bullets in the course of gun battles and ambushes, and compelled rivals to experience brutal organ failures and the sensation of 'death in the form of corpses in graves'.[512] Nevertheless, it is within a series of *babs* and *fasals* transcribed by Hajji Hassan that we find the most detailed discussion of how the prototypical miracle-worker supernaturally domesticated rifles and bullets of clients and their rivals upon actual battlefields. This is particularly evident in *Bilal* Hajji Yusuf's *babs*

[511] I. F. Parinussa, *Hikayat Kapitan Joncor* (Mamasa [Sulawesi], 1927). Whilst Joncor's 1927 hagiography depicts his shuttling between Islam and Christianity, he has been re-membered amongst his devotional circle in contemporary Jakarta as an unproblematic Muslim saint.
[512] A. E. Coope, 'The Black Art (Ilmu Jahat)', *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 11 (1933), 270-271.

concerning the esoteric science of 'preventing piercing' and 'preventing stabbing' wherein the guru is depicted as the agency that completely subjugated and diverted rifles and bullets away from his clients, the 'ummat of Muhammad'. The guru, firstly, instructed exercises on the battlefield that triggered the bursting out of a miraculous 'safety-net' over clients which had been buried in the inner hearts of the guru's clients by Jibrail when they were in their 'mothers' wombs'. Secondly, negotiated with rifles and bullets on the battlefield via transmitted mantras, warning these supernatural articles that 'rebellion' against the guru's desire for complete subjugation to his clients would result in their 'crushing' under the homicidal *berkat* of the miraculous formula, *lailahalilallah muhammadrasulallah*.[513] Moreover, Hajji Hassan's transcription of the '*chapter in the event of the intention to face the enemy*' contains a meticulous description of how the performance and recitation of specific numbers of *rakaats* (units of prayer), *salams* (salutations to God), *takbirs* (the exclamation of *Allahu Akbar*) and Qur'anic chapters, and the blowing of *doa*s upon clients' bodies, resulted in the *berkat* of God and prophets transforming into 'shield' over the very body hairs of clients, and the 'wrath of God' compelling rifles to fall in obeisance to the gurus' clients.[514]

Beyond providing readers insights into the domestication of rifles, the Malay materials I employ serve as key historical documents of armed worlds in northern Malaya wherein gun gurus were pivotal to the esoteric arts of bullet production, weapon craftsmanship, and Islamic ambushing and shooting. Whilst B. W. Andaya's *Perak: An Abode of Grace* and Tagliacozzo's *Secret Trade, Porous Borders* have acknowledged that the late 18th century and 19th century interior of Perak and northern Malaya, contained centers of gunpowder and ammunition production 'deep in the jungle', it is only in the

513 SOAS MS 25030. ['*Kelantan charm-book*']. See '*book towards expressing the esoteric science […] preventing individuals from piercing us*', '*book towards expressing individuals stabbing thoroughly*'.
514 SOAS MS 25030. ['*Kelantan charm-book*']. See '*chapter in the event of the intention to face the enemy*', '*fasal in jika kita hendak mengadap enemy*'.

Jawi records of Muhammad Hashim that we find detailed data on these 'yet inaccessible' centers of bullet production wherein operations were organized by gurus who probably circulated between north-western Malaya and Sumatra.[515] This is evident in the *bab* on the '*mark [isharat] of pouring smelted iron into moulds of the bullet*' that is related to materializing or producing the 'bullet of *berkat*' from heaven within the 'fortune-bearing' zone in the Malayan interior through the amalgamation of ingredients such as the earth from the *kubu* (stockade), 'all that is murderous' and 'all that is venomous', and the gradual insertion of these amalgamated ingredients into the bullet mould.[516] This procedure of inserting 'murderous' and 'venomous' ingredients into bullet moulds appears to be in line with the northern Malayan tradition of dipping *keris* blades into the poisonous brains, viscera and bodies of scorpions, snakes and sting rays.[517] Furthermore, a transcription of Muhammad Hashim, '*thus spoke the faqir with great affability*', is informative about bullet-producing zones in the interior of Perak wherein gurus such as *Faqir* Muhammad Ali were pivotal to operations of craftsmanship. Herein, the Minangkabau *faqir* instructed his clients to 'mix', 'cook' and 'smelt' lead with the 'blood of the heart of the [sacrificial] buffalo and blood of the *chemar*' (a reference to an 'untouchable' or slave sacrificed for the bullet) in a ironwok-like article, 'pour the smelted compound into moulds of the bullet', and engrave a talisman upon the finished bullet which is found illustrated by Muhammad Hashim in the *Maxwell 24*.[518]

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515 B. W. Andaya, *Perak: The Abode of Grace*, 223-4; Tagliacozzo, *Secret Trade, Porous Borders*, 302.
516 RAS Maxwell 24. ['*On casting bullets, shooting, etc.*']. See *book that is expressing the isharat of pouring smelted iron into moulds of the bullet*'.
517 G. B. Gardner, *Keris and Other Malay Weapons* (Singapore: Progressive Publishing Company, 1936), 11-12; Edward Frey, *The Kris: Mystic Weapon of the Malay World* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1986), 24, 87.
518 RAS Maxwell 24. ['*On casting bullets, shooting, etc.*']. See '*thus spoke the faqir with great affability and humility from all the slaves of God*'.

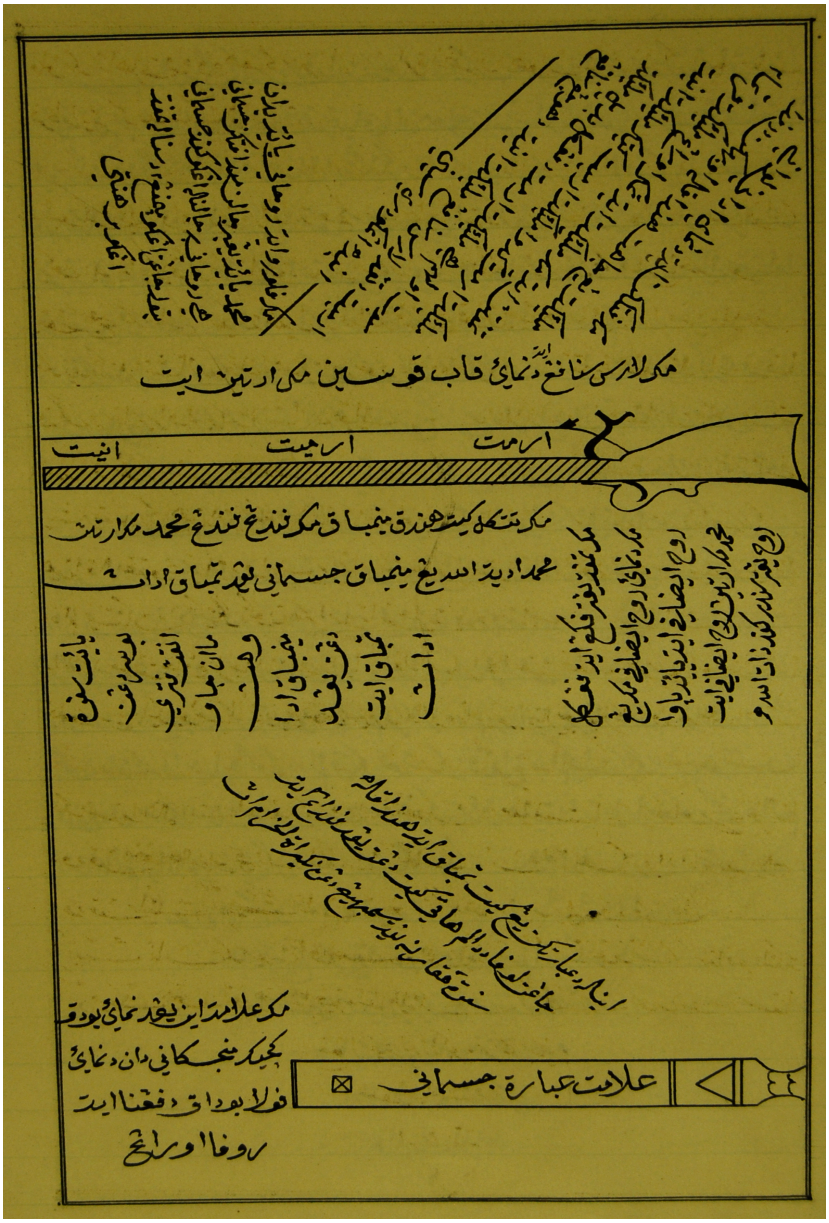


Illustration of malevolent spirits on the rifle (Source: *Maxwell 24*, Royal Asiatic Society)

Almost at pains to prevent its audience from neglecting the reality that 'bullets of *berkat*' were produced in the northern Malayan interior, Muhammad Hashim's transcription of the *bab* on the '*pouring smelted iron into moulds of the bullet*' is coupled with illustrations and meticulous descriptions of the 'names' and 'prices' of types of bullets that were produced by miracle-workers such as *Faqir* Muhammad Ali. The 'names' of these bullets include the 'shower of blood [that] arrived at the neck' of targets, 'the terrifying scale [that] arrived at the chest' of targets, and the 'scrap of the kafi[r] [that]

split the cranium [of the target] upon arrival'. The 'prices' of these 'bullets of *berkat'* range from 400 to 110,000 in an unspecified currency of exchange and include 'yet-to-be determined values', and appear to be revelatory of miracle-workers' lucrative careers in bullet economies upon Malay frontiers. In addition, a section recorded by Muhammad Hashim concerning the size of grips and muzzles, and positions of the sight devices and sockets for the bullet, is a reflection of zones in Perak wherein gurus were pivotal to transmitting the arts of weapon craftsmanship and the replication or cannibalization of American rifles. G. B Gardner's early 20th century pamphlet on the *Keris and Other Malay Weapons* has mentioned that the interior of Perak contained 'very ingenious' craft worlds wherein Euro-American rifles were replicated or cannibalized through constructing 'gun barrels by wielding bar iron around a mandrel' or 'boring out an iron bar', 'breech loading from old pipes', and employing nails and rubber bands for strikers and springs that were capable of shooting '12-bore cartridges', and '*pawang*s' enjoyed reputations as experts of crafting weapons such as supernatural daggers or *keris*es.[519] In the *Maxwell 24*, the prototypical guru appears to be portrayed as the agency that spearheaded the craftsmanship of Henry replicas in the Malayan interior through, on the one hand, transmitting the 'discourse of Muhammad' to craftsmen who were roused by the prophetic discourse to produce firearms for the purposes of 'vengeance', 'delivering [rivals] to the grave' and attaining the 'blessed sensation of vengeance'. On the other hand, mobilizing a list of *akuan* (spirit-friends) to report on appropriate sizes or positions of grips, muzzles, muzzle orifices, sights and bullet sockets, to craftsmen.

In her aforementioned study of religious militancy upon the late 19th century Indo-Afghan *Frontier of Faith*, Haroon suggested that Pakhtun 'spiritual-religious instructors' were pivotal to the employment of firearms that were either locally

[519] Gardner, *Keris and Other Malay Weapons*, 85-87.

manufactured or trafficked from the Persian Gulf.[520] A series of *babs* and *fasals* transcribed by Muhammad Hashim pertaining to the prototypical guru being indispensable to the acquisition of Islamic techniques of employing Henry rifles or their locally manufactured replicas, serve as unparalleled historical records of religious militancy upon the late 19th century Malay frontier. For instance, the *bab* concerning the '*chapter towards expressing the commencement of shooting*' is an aide memoire on how shooting was a peculiar esoteric operation that was dependent upon the guru's instructions, and how rifle-bearers only acquired the 'comportment [*shariat*] of shooting' through initiation by the guru. The prototypical guru's initiation is in turn, depicted as a force that gifted the guru's clients the esoteric art of shooting the 'nymph' Henry through channeling the *berkat* of *lailahalilallah muhammadrasulallah* and the garb of the 'patriarch' to the client, and drawing the archangels Jibrail, Mikhail, Israfil and Azrael to the bullet, to-be-fired shot, rifle and client's hand respectively, to ensure perfect shooting.[521] Furthermore, multiple *fasals* transcribed by Muhammad Hashim are didactically driven to expose the fact that gun gurus were essential to instructing clients in the techniques of religious shooting that delivered the *nadzar* or brightness of God onto the Malay frontier, and brought into being the 'body of Muhammad'. A complicated *fasal* that identifies the base of the rifle as the *ruh izafi* (the constructive spirit whereby God makes Himself objective) and the cylinder of the gun as the *qab-o qusain* (the internode between pre-existence and existence), elaborates upon how the guru's esoteric methods of shooting transmogrified the bullet that was *ruhani* (spiritual) in essence into the 'body of Muhammad' upon the Malayan frontier, to shoot kafirs.

The Jawi records of Muhammad Hashim fail to specify the Malayan or Sumatran settings within which the prototypical guru's instructions in esoteric shooting were

[520] Haroon, *Frontier of Faith: Islam in the Indo-Afghan Borderland*, 33, 88, 203.
[521] RAS Maxwell 24. ['*On casting bullets, shooting, etc.*']. See '*book that is the chapter towards expressing the commencement of shooting*', '*the isharat of the shot and shooting delivering the nadzar*', '*the isharat of delivering the nadzar*'.

circulated or employed to hunt 'kafirs' who were possibly, armed Dutch, British, aboriginal or Malay retinues. Nevertheless, the transmissions in the *Maxwell 24* are didactically driven to portray religious militancy in the 'Malay cultural zone', and ambushes upon kafirs herein, as being exclusively spearheaded and guided by the expertise and cosmopolitan learning of the guru. For instance, *Faqir* Muhammad Ali's '*book towards expressing [the instructions of] shooting from the state of Kamboja* [*Cambodia*]' emphasizes that the guru who was learned in cosmopolitan shooting traditions and held the miraculous powers of delivering the *berkat* of God to clients upon Malay frontiers, was central to determining the scale of an attack, and the precise moment upon which the Henry rifle was to be employed by clients.[522] This *bab* elaborates upon how the archetypal miracle-worker instructed clients in the scale of an offensive to be launched upon kafirs through intricate measurements of his clients' feet postures, aptitude against shock, clutches of the rifle and scale of mobility, and observations of the dimensions of rifles in terms of the length of crutches, the straightness of cylinders, the smoothness of muzzles and the roundness of bullets.

Faqir Muhammad Ali also cautions clients against faltering upon the 'tradition of obeisance' to the guru, reminding his audience that the militant guru, and not mere concentration upon the target by the gun bearer, determined the 'perfect moment' upon which the Henry rifle was to be employed upon targets and wherefrom the sadistic desire of the client was 'delivered fulfillment by God'. The transcriptions of Hajji Hassan, alternatively, comprise of a detailed discussion of how the miraculous expertise of gurus was indispensable to the 'essential component of warfare' in Malaya, the 'ambush, the unexpected raid, and the surprise dawn attack' upon *kubu*s (stockades) which were typically semi-permanent walled structures for manning hand-held firearms in the

[522] RAS Maxwell 24. ['*On casting bullets, shooting, etc.*']. See '*book towards expressing shooting from the state of Kamboja*'.

forested interior.[523] Herein, the success of the ambush or the rifle-bearer's penetration of the walls of the *kubu* is directly associated with the *doa* transmitted by the guru for 'locking the rifle' that was to be inserted into the rifle together with gunpowder. The guru's 'esoteric science of locking the rifle' is portrayed as a supernatural force that seeped into the *kubu*, 'locked' the rifles of his clients' rivals, prohibited their return of fire and abandonment of the stockade, and as such, allowed the homicidal client's painless 'access and victory'.

These Malay records also appear to be exceptional windows into 19th century Malay frontiers whereupon gurus served as harbingers of Islamic gun-raids and slave-hunts through transmitting the prophet Muhammad's 'discourse' on ambush, and endowing their clients with supernatural bounties.[524] In the Jawi records of Muhammad Hashim, for example, the iconic kafir-slayer Muhammad is further reconstructed from the pioneer transmitter of the Henry rifle and the force that took the form of a bullet to-be-delivered through religious shooting, into the 'voice' that guided the penetration of Malay frontiers to hunt kafirs that was transmitted by the guru. In fact, a *fasal* concerning the 'staging of the gun' emphasizes that the 'discourse of Muhammad' transmitted by the guru was directly associated with, firstly, the stealthy penetration of mountainous interiors and difficult upstream terrains, in proximity of the 'source of the spring', to hunt kafirs. Secondly, the launch of bloody ambushes upon the 'residences' of kafirs that was to be performed without leaving footprints that would be vulnerable to 'sorcery'. Thirdly, the employment of the rifle to 'bludgeon', 'whittle' and 'drag away' timber and bamboo stems that imprisoned the guru's clients upon tropical frontiers. Whilst Tagliacozzo's *Secret Trades, Porous Borders* mentions Arab sayyids who employed hand-held firearms from the Peninsula to hunt slaves in Upland Toraja in the late 19th century, it is

[523] L. Y. Andaya, 'Interaction with the Outside World and Adaptation in Southeast Asian Society', 44.
[524] RAS Maxwell 24. ['*On casting bullets, shooting, etc.*']. See '*book that is the chapter towards expressing the commencement of shooting*', '*the isharat of the shot and shooting delivering the nadzar*', '*the isharat of delivering the nadzar*'.

in this *fasal* of the *Maxwell 24* that we perhaps find detailed data on the actual conduct of hunts of prospective slaves upon upstream, mountainous frontiers of the Indonesian archipelago that were premised upon the guru's instructions and orchestrated through religiously domesticated Henry rifles.[525]

Muhammad Hashim's transcriptions of *bab*s and *fasals* pertaining to the 'knowledge of shots', the 'morality' of ambush, and the 'garb of the ummat of Muhammad', moreover, emphasize that the miraculous 'mark' (*isharat*) of the guru gifted rifle-bearers multiple bounties. These bounties included the perfect posture for staging and aiming the rifle, the ideal grasp of the flint and 'firing jerk', the complete physiological and meditational state required for 'tearing the environment' through ambush, the sensation of 'fulfilling the pillars [*rukn*] of religious comportment' through ambush, the 'wrath of God' that delivered 'vengeance' and 'destruction' upon kafir-targets, and the miraculous powers of curious talismans that 'calmed the waves of any water-body' upon the frontier for the penetration of the rifle-bearer. The *isharat* of the guru further dressed the bearers of the Henry rifle in the supernatural 'garb of the ummat [of] Muhammad'. This miraculous costume empowered the guru's clients to Islamize Malay frontiers through brutally 'dragging down the gates of the environment', shooting 'lightning bolts of unwavering faith from their hearts', and firing 'gunshots that delivered the Truth' into kafir-infested terrains.

Conclusions on Religious Frontiers of Trapping and Shooting

In this chapter, I have explored a range of materials that were produced in late 19th and early 20th century Perak, and suggested that these sources which include mantras, miraculous formulae, records of supernatural negotiations, fatwas and charms, are unparalleled historical records of hunting and gun bearing stratums and trends upon the

[525] Tagliacozzo, *Secret Trades, Porous Borders*, 265, 278.

Malay frontier. These historical records are illustrative of violent settings wherein elephant trapping and firearms bearing had attained a distinct religious meaning by the late 19th century, trappers and rifle bearers employed religious and supernatural terms to understand beasts and Euro-American guns, and multiple operations of trapping and firearms bearing were centered upon the miraculous expertise of *bomor*s, *pawang*s, gurus and *faqir*s. In undertaking this study of religious game and armed worlds and miracle-workers, this chapter has attempted to call upon historians of the Peninsula and Indian Ocean to focus upon yet neglected key historical topics such as the peculiar religious character of game and armed frontiers in the Malayan interior, the religious sensibilities of and terms employed by elephant trappers and rifle-bearers, and the role of elephant *bomor*s and gun gurus and their miraculous expertise in actual operations of hunting and firearms bearing.

This chapter's employment of Jawi and romanized Malay records as key historical sources distinguishes my work from the yet limited post-colonial scholarship on Malayan elephants and Malay firearms that has relied on records of European governmental agencies at the expense of documentation of religious traps and guns and supernatural expertise in unpublished manuscripts. Tagliacozzo's seminal *Secret Trades, Porous Borders* for instance, appears to be a history centered upon the 'colonial administration', and explores armed Malay frontiers and gun runners through the prism of European sources pertaining to the late 19th century 'imposing juridical edifice' of British Singapore and Dutch Batavia. On the contrary, this chapter has based its historical investigation upon a corpus of Malay materials that appear almost mute about the impact of the British Residencies and the administrations of the Straits Settlements and subsequent Crown Colonies upon game and armed Malay frontiers. In fact, the *munshi* Abdullah's early 19th century chronicle of the British Resident's utter dependence upon an elephant *pawang* and the data on bullet production and rifle craftsmanship upon the Perak frontier

available in *Maxwell 24*, are revelatory of specific Muslim frontiers that were exclusively penetrated and dominated by miracle-workers. Moreover, whilst *munshi* Abdullah's chronicle emphasized that the profession of the elephant *pawang* was one premised upon actual technological acumen and not mere 'magic', this chapter has been an exercise of demystification in terms of its focus upon the materiality of the prototypical miracle-worker upon the violent frontiers of the 19th century Peninsula. Malay sources such as the 1879 *Teyib Mantra Gajah*, the 1879 *Surat Mantra Gajah*, the 1907 '*Mantra Gajah*', the 1882 *Maxwell 24* and the late 19th century *MS 25030* have been employed as unparalleled records of the history of physically-engaged miracle-workers who were, on the one hand, central to establishing elephant enclosures, ensnaring beasts, brutally domesticating and exploiting elephants, spiritually domesticating hand-held firearms and components, and teaching bullet production, weapon craftsmanship, Islamic shooting and ambushing. On the other hand, pivots of cosmopolitan hunting networks and gun running circuits.

In conclusion, it is worth re-emphasizing the cosmopolitan nature of the game and armed frontiers along the 19th century Straits of Malacca. The preceding sections have highlighted that Malay and Anglo-Malay materials produced in 19th and early 20th century Malaya are illustrative of trapping and gun bearing worlds that appear to have connected the fates of cosmopolitan and peripatetic actors such as Malay and Tamil Muslim *bomors*, *pawang*s, gurus and *faqir*s; elephant-owning Muslim courtiers; elephant-owning European administrators and representatives of the British Residencies; Tamil Muslim elephant traders; European and Asian smugglers and merchants who ferried firearms to Malay frontiers; European and American manufacturers and industrial gun-makers; and, Acehnese revolutionaries. As such, beyond serving as illustrations of local subaltern spheres of operation, these materials allow historians to access the cosmopolitan social worlds of elephant trapping and gun running in the 19th century Bay of Bengal and Straits of Malacca. Herein, Malay frontiers appear to be configured as hubs

of itinerant elephant *bomor*s who circulated between the Coromandel Coast and the Straits of Malacca along the maritime routes of the *lebbai*s condemned in Abdullah Al-Aydarus's 1892 letter and the religious pattern of the late 16th century *Kattyanaiwali*, and Minangkabau gun gurus such as *Faqir* Muhammad Ali who circulated between Malaya and Sumatra, and probably 'rubbed shoulders' with cosmopolitan European and Asian smugglers, merchants and renegades.[526] Moreover, references in the Malay manuscripts employed in this chapter, to *Zanggi* and *Rum* cosmological abodes for spirits threatening elephant trapping and rifle bearing are possible acknowledgements of the employment of Habshi laborers or slaves and the prominence of *Rume* (Ottoman) experts of firearms, upon 19th century Malay frontiers. Indeed, this cosmopolitan nature of the frontier is apparent in a transcription of Muhammad Hashim pertaining to ambushes to be conducted by the 'ummat of Muhammad' upon the Malay frontier. The 'ummat' is celebrated herein as one that 'entrenched the pole of the throne of God' upon the Malay frontier, and as one that was apparently armed with the American Henry rifle, aware of the techniques of the Cambodian and *Rume* (Ottoman gun expert), paid obeisance to the Minangkabau guru, and marched to 'intersect Mecca' to the Malay frontier and gain the pleasures of 'leaning against the [Black] Stone of the Hajj'.

[526] Subrahmanyam and Parker, 'Arms and the Asian: Revisiting European Firearms and their Place', 22.

Conclusions: *Pawang*-ic Hubs in Cosmopolitan Woods

> *God willing [-] the fate of these pawangs will be in the navel of the pauh Zanggi … God willing [-] the ships [they set sail upon] dissolve in the ocean … now the silly see the value of their self-proclaimed berkat … the day is not far when the light of Islam will prevail here … in these forests that they penetrate like pests that fly … the day is not far when this land will be purged of these pawangs.*
>
> - Abdullah al-Aydarus, 1892.

The previous chapters have reconstructed a history of religious frontiers in 19th and early 20th century Malaya whereupon Muslim miracle-workers were key historical agents of agricultural colonization, forest clearing, rice production, alluvial tin and gold mining, elephant trapping and gun bearing. The history of the Malay frontier that this dissertation has been concerned with is one of Muslim miracle-workers being physically engaged in socioeconomic transformation, and socioeconomic stratums and trends, within various Malayan settings throughout the 19th and early 20th century. Based upon Jawi, romanized Malay and Anglo-Malay manuscripts that were produced 'very close to the action' and 'much closer to the actors' upon rice, mining, game and armed frontiers, *Pawangs on the Malay Frontier* has written a history of Malayan socioeconomic worlds wherein Muslim miracle-workers were indispensable authorities due to their predominance within subaltern communities as spectacular intercessors of historical prophets, saints and eclectic supernatural beings who populated the forested interior, and their intimate and professional relationships with a range of indigenous, cosmopolitan and peripatetic actors who were involved in the exploitation of natural resources.

In extrapolating data from 19th and early 20th century manuscripts that are in essence most explicit about local spheres of production, extraction, hunting and appropriating technologies, this dissertation has remained attentive to the information these texts contain on the cosmopolitan character of the Malayan interior. In doing so, it

is suggested that a study of Muslim miracle-workers and 'magical' texts bears the potential of leading historians into Malay frontiers that were identifiably cosmopolitan spaces engulfed by hubs of transcultural and peripatetic actors who were in turn, bound and mobilized by Asian and Muslim enterprises for rice agriculture, open-cast mining, elephant hunting and firearms craftsmanship. Furthermore, it is proposed that these manuscripts serve as valuable windows into sophisticated social worlds wherein *pawang*s, laborers and supernatural forces were not simply 'fixed' in their spheres of operation, but appear to have been plugged into broader networks connecting the Peninsula, the Malay archipelago, South Asia, China, south Yemen and Ethiopia. Indeed, the manuscripts employed in the preceding chapters, comprise of multiple references to *pawang*-ic hubs in the late 19th and early 20th century cosmopolitan woods of Malaya that were replete with a range of peripatetic agents of socioeconomic transformation. These historical actors included Malayan, Minangkabau, Tamil and Arab Muslim miracle-workers; Muslim courtiers who were of Malayan, Minangkabau and Tamil descent; husbandmen of Malayan, Minangkabau, Tamil, Chinese and *mualad* or Arab-Malay descent; Chinese mining entrepreneurs; Chinese mining laborers; Tamil gold assayers; Tamil elephant traders; Asian and European gun runners; European scholar-administrators; European Catholic priests; aboriginal laborers or slaves; and, Habshi laborers or slaves. Moreover, the previous chapters' endeavors to write both human and non-human histories of the Peninsula have highlighted that Malayan frontiers were abound with Muslim, non-Muslim or semi-Islamized supernatural beings and forces that were recognizably Indian, Arab, Sumatran, *Zanggi* (Habshi), *Rume* (Ottoman), Arab, Chinese and from Khorasan (Iran).

The cosmopolitan nature of Malayan frontiers that this dissertation has drawn attention to is also evident in Abdullah Al-Aydarus's aforementioned 1892 letter to his friend in Pontianak that comprises of his tirade against 'bastard', 'pest'-like *pawang*s. The

Malaccan imam concludes his letter by expressing his disgust with the fact that forests of the Peninsula were replete with hubs of cosmopolitan *pawang*s by the late 19th century, and yearning for the day when these miracle-workers would retreat into the cosmological abode of exorcized spirits, *pauh Zanggi* that is the spot *pawang*s discussed in the preceding chapters expelled exorcized spirits to. Moreover, the Hadhrami sayyid longed for the day when 'these *pawang*s' would fail to reach the shores of the Peninsula due to shipwrecks ('dissolution') in the Indian Ocean, lose their patronage networks that enabled them to 'fly' towards and penetrate Malayan forests, and in turn, lose their potential to be able to loot 'silly Malays', Muslim courtiers, European hunters, Chinese miners and Indian sepoys with their self-proclaimed *berkat* or power-grace. Appearing to detest the reality that the lucrative careers and predominance of peripatetic miracle-workers within cosmopolitan socioeconomic settings of the Malayan interior had prevented the triumph of the 'light of Islam' (*chahaya Islam*), he remained optimistic that the 'day that was not far' when Malay frontiers were 'purged of these *pawangs*'.

It is tempting to read Abdullah Al-Aydarus's letter as an expression of reformist Muslim critiques of *pawangs*, *bomor*s, *faqir*s and gurus, and even as a historical precedent of the 21st century diatribes of the reformist Malaysian Department of Islamic Development against *bomors*, *pawangs* and *keramats*. Indeed, the Malaccan imam's document was produced in an era that historians of Malaya such as Roff and Gullick have characterized as a historical juncture whereupon the Peninsula witnessed the articulation and enforcement of a program of '*institutional* Islamisation', one that launched virulent attacks upon the predominant praxis of Islam associated with the *pawang* and eclectic spiritual beings.[527] The period between the establishment of the British Residencies in 1874 and the passing of the 1904 Mohammedan Laws Enactment in the western Malay States has

[527] See W. R. Roff, 'Patterns of Islamization in Malaysia, 1890s-1990s: Exemplars, Institutions and Vectors', in his *Studies on Islam and Society in Southeast Asia* 97–99; Gullick, *Malay Society in the Late Nineteenth Century: The Beginnings of Change*, 282-283, 287, 290-296.

been understood by Roff and Gullick as one distinguished by projects by elite 'Malay interested parties' who were disempowered by the Residencies to 'extend the reach of *Sharia* prescription' and 'their own writ', and make an 'informal, if arbitrary, system' of policing Islam 'hardened into bureaucracy'. Nevertheless, the corpus of Jawi, romanized Malay and Anglo-Malay materials that this dissertation has employed as key historical sources appear almost mute about the impact of the enforcement of a reformist Islam and representatives of '*institutional* Islamisation' in religious and socioeconomic worlds dominated by *pawangs*. Instead, they indicate to historians that cosmopolitan miracle-workers were the key agents of Islamization upon the Malay frontier.

In a similar vein, Abdullah Al-Aydarus's 1892 letter that might appear at first glance to be a manifestation of '*institutional* Islamisation', serves a spirited testament of *pawang* dominated stratums that comprised of transcultural frontiersmen and supernatural beings or forces. In fact, the Malaccan imam's ideal for the Malay frontier as one whereupon the 'light of Islam' prevailed was not a *pawang*-less one, but rather one of an Islamic landscape purged only of self-proclaimed *pawang*s who claimed to possess the *berkat* of the true *pawang*s who legitimately dominated socioeconomic stratums and operations in late 19th century Malaya. These were the rightful, cosmopolitan *pawang*s that the Hadhrami sayyid wished would further penetrate Malayan forests, by foot, elephants or ships through the support of 'God the Fosterer' and ferry the 'light of Islam' into the dark Malay woods. Due to the concise nature of Abdullah Al-Aydarus's letter, it remains difficult to ascertain whether the self-proclaimed *pawang*s he denigrated constituted 'fake' and 'money-making' or excessively professional *pawang*s, non-*sayyid pawang*s, or simply petty religious figures such as Tamil *lebbai*s who circulated between the Bay of Bengal to seek lucrative careers in Malaya. The 1892 letter is also revelatory of the fact that the imam and his friend in Pontianak were products of similar cosmopolitan religious worlds that the transmitter-*pawang*s of the manuscripts explored in this dissertation belonged to,

in terms of how the Hadhrami sayyid subscribed to an Islamic cosmology that incorporated eclectic religious actors including God, Muhammad, historical *pawang*s, Batara Guru (Siva) and *Zanggi* or Habshi spirits. Furthermore, oral traditions transmitted by a custodian of the Singaporean shrine of a peripatetic Gujarati-Hadhrami miracle-worker, Siti Maryam Al-Aydarus (d. 1853), Muhammad Hashim, recount the history of the Malaccan imam, on the one hand, as a descendant of the female *pawang* and as a *berkat*-possessing *pawang* who was in vogue in early 20th century Malacca and Singapore and particularly associated with Indian sepoy regiments in the two Crown Colonies. Alternatively, as a miracle-worker plugged into a network of late 19th century Hadhrami *pawang*s who circulated in between the Indian Ocean, and penetrated the Malayan interior, spearheading forest clearing for settlements, expanding fishing frontiers, facilitating economically-beneficial climate, and trapping and domesticating supernatural tigers, crocodiles and snakes.[528]

The manuscripts investigated in this dissertation, like Abdullah Al-Aydarus's letter, serve as reminders of the fact that 19th and early 20th century Malayan forests were peculiar cosmopolitan spaces that deserve the serious attention of Indian Ocean scholars and world historians. Indeed, the recent articles of Ronit Ricci and Vladimir Braginsky have emphasized that eclectic 18th and 19th century Malay texts contain valuable data on language and literary networks, terminology, genre, cosmological and mystical analogies that connected Bombay, Colombo, Penang, Java and Singapore, and were revelatory of the fact that the Indian Ocean was a sophisticated literary 'cosmopolis'.[529] It is regrettable, however, that even *pawang*s who were central to Indian Ocean literary networks and the performance of Islamicate texts, genres and analogies that were

[528] Muhammad Hashim, Interview conducted by author (Kampung Kallang [Singapore], 2010).
[529] For instance, refer to Ronit Ricci, 'Citing as a Site: Translation and Circulation in Muslim South and Southeast Asia', *Modern Asian Studies* 46:2 (2012), 331-353; Ronit Ricci, *Islam Translated: Literature, Conversion, and the Arabic Cosmopolis of South and Southeast Asia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011); Vladimir Braginsky and Anna Suvorova, 'A New Wave of Indian Inspiration: Translations from Urdu in Malay Traditional Literature and Theatre', *Indonesia and the Malay World* 36:104, (2008), 115-153.

circulated between South Asia and the Straits of Malacca, continue to be relegated to footnotes even in articles pushing for the production of new histories of the Malay Peninsula as a literary space plugged into the broader Indian Ocean 'cosmopolis'.[530] *Pawangs on the Malay Frontier*, on the contrary, calls upon Indian Ocean scholars and world historians to focus upon cosmopolitan *pawang*-ic and spiritual hubs in the forested Malayan interior through an exploration of texts and traditions that were produced and transmitted upon, or in close proximity to, frontiers that were geographically remote from the multilingual publication houses in Penang and Singapore that have found the recent attention of scholars of Indian Ocean literary networks.[531] This dissertation also remains cognizant of the fact that there are further avenues for writing a world and Indian Ocean history of Malayan frontiers through focusing upon, firstly, the role of miraculous expertise and transcultural collaborations in the extraction of aromatic woods, resins and rattans from the Peninsula's interior for Indian Ocean exchange. Secondly, the role of *pawang*s in the cultivation of American and 'Columbian' food crops such as maize that was planted as a key supplement to rice by the *pawang*-led dry hill rice cultivators discussed in Chapter 2.[532]

Pawangs on the Malay Frontier has written a history of religious rice, mining, game and armed worlds, in the 19th and early 20th century Peninsula through a scrutiny of manuscripts and textual materials that were produced in this period. Nevertheless, this dissertation remains cognizant of the fact that, on the one hand, eclectic Muslim miracle-workers and spirits were regularly pivotal to socioeconomic settings and activities in the Peninsula from the 19th to the 21st century. On the other hand, oral traditions and

530 For example, see Braginsky and Suvorova, 'A New Wave of Indian Inspiration', 142-143, n51.
531 Torsten Tschacher, 'From Local Practice to Transnational Network: Saints, Shrines and Sufis among Tamil Muslims in Singapore', *Asian Journal of Social Science* 34:2 (2006), 225-242; Tschacher, 'Circulating Islam: Understanding Convergence and Divergence in the Islamic Traditions of Ma'bar and Nusantara', 48-67; Amrith, 'Tamil Diasporas across the Bay of Bengal', 547-72.
532 Bankoff and Boomgaard, 'Introduction', 6; Peter Boomgaard, 'From Rags to Riches' in *A History of Natural Resources in Asia: The Wealth of Nature*, 194; Ronald David Hill, 'Towards a Model of the History of 'Traditional' Agriculture in Southeast Asia', 36.

testimonies, chapbooks, pamphlets and cheaply printed hagiographies of miracle-workers that were produced and circulated in the past century serve as valuable sources of the continual presence of *pawang*-ic hubs and cosmopolitan Malay frontiers beyond the period that this dissertation has focused upon. Indeed, M. G. Peletz's anthropology of *Kinship, Property and Social History* in late 20th century Rembau, has mentioned that the successors of the Supreme Law Giver, Dato Sedia Raja Abdullah whose writings were discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, struggled to purge the religious 'syncretism' of Muslim agricultural frontiers whereupon oral traditions continued to associate rice yields, irrigation and climate to the performance of the *berpuar* rite.[533] This *berpuar* rite in turn, was spearheaded by *pawang*s such as the successors of the Tamil miracle-worker Abdullah Pillai, involved the invocation and propitiation of transcultural spirits, and was zealously pursued in spite of the Supreme Law Giver, Dato Hajji Ipap's (in office, 1938-1962) campaign to fine clan chiefs who facilitated *pawang*s and their eclectic spirit pantheons.[534] Peletz's work that suffers from an association of the *pawang* with pre-Islamic 'shamanism', suggests that 'Allah's progressive monopolization of sacred power and associations' upon the western Malayan rice frontier vis-à-vis the 'shamanic pawang' only began in the 'late 1950s'.[535]

Evidence of *pawang*-ic hubs in cosmopolitan forests of 20th century Malaya also emerges in the recently compiled hagiography of the 19th century breastmilk-dispensing miracle-worker, Toh Bidan Susu Lanjut who was intimately and physiologically associated with the expansion of mining frontiers in western Malaya, and mentioned in Chapter 3.[536] A scrutiny of the bilingual Malay-Tamil hagiography of the *keramat*, *Riwayat Hidup Keramat Toh Bidan Susu Lanjut*, is illustrative of the fact that meticulously-named Tamil Muslim descendants of the miracle-worker who inherited both her *berkat* and

[533] Peletz, *Share of the Harvest*, *Kinship, Property, and Social History Among the Malays of Rembau*, 159, 320.
[534] Peletz, *Share of the Harvest*, *Kinship, Property, and Social History Among the Malays of Rembau*, 159, 320.
[535] Peletz, *Share of the Harvest*, *Kinship Property and Social History Among the Malays of Rembau,* 159, 320.
[536] Muhammad Ridhwan's *Riwayat Hidup Keramat Toh Bidan Susu Lanjut*

supernatural 'milk', and the *berkat* of shrines in the Coromandel Coast, continued to serve as miraculous intermediaries of rubber and palm oil plantations beyond their spiritual predecessor's lifetime, in 20th century Malaysia. Furthermore, whilst this dissertation has solely focused upon textual or written sources, it has involved a series of conversations and consultations of *pawang*-ic terminology with, and observations and historical interpretations of the testimonies and traditions of, a range of Malay, Hadhrami, Tamil, and even Chinese Muslim *pawang*s or *bomor*s in Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore. These *pawang*s and *bomor*s continue to be employed for the penetration of spiritual plantations, trapping and domesticating snakes and crocodiles, instructing martial arts, facilitating economically-beneficial climate, protecting the livelihoods of subsistence planters and fishermen, spiritually spearheading real estate development, and determining the results of local elections. It is perhaps fitting to conclude this dissertation with a testimony of the aforementioned shrine custodian and active *bomor*, Muhammad Hashim that was indeed recorded at a spot at which *Pawangs on the Malay Frontier* was conceptualized, the courtyard adjacent to the tomb of a 19th century female *pawang*. In this testimony, the *bomor* Muhammad Hashim accentuated the historical and contemporary role of the Muslim miracle-worker in penetrating frontiers of the Peninsula and the cosmopolitan nature of these frontiers that were replete with eclectic miracle-workers, clients and spiritual beings who included Muhammad, Fatimah, Ali and the *jinn Islam* (Islamic *jinn*), Siva. Echoing Abdullah Al-Aydarus's late 19th century denigrations of self-styled *pawang*s, Muhammad Hashim stated:

> *the bomor the friend of God [waliallah] came from all the way from Hadhramaut, even India … the dangerous journeys they took to open up the forests then [in the 19th century] … the bomor now clears the path for plantations, businesses and residences in Malaysia … invoking the name of the prophet the waliallah Muhammad, the waliallah Fatimah, the waliallah Ali and the jinn Islam Siva and opening up even the darkest woods … alas the self-proclaimed bomor has become a god of silly Malay people [-] Indian people [-] even the Chinaman in Malaysia and Singapore … now even liars travel here to loot people [-]*

Arabs come [-] even from India people have come to become bomors … God willing [-] the time will come when this place will be purged of these liars who claim to be bomors.[537]

[537] Muhammad Hashim, Interview conducted by author (Kampung Kallang [Singapore], 2010).

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