

Mr. Groeneveldt does not point out that the name given to it in the Chinese text affords a strong corroboration to this identification. It may be questioned indeed whether the Chinese nomenclator meant the words here rendered *gold* and *silver* to be read phonetically, or whether he himself assumed this ingenious transcription to be a true etymological rendering of the Malay name, which is *Kemeniyan*. Either way, the Chinese name* is phonetically near enough to the Malay name to make it certain that benzoin is meant.

* Cant.—Kem ngen.
Hak.—Kim ngyin.
Hok.—Kim gun.
Hail.—Kium ngien.

Batara Guru.

In a Mayang Invocation published in the *Selangor Journal* of the 7th Sept., 1894, the following interesting passage occurs:

السلام عليكم كونق كونجج درقد نينق كو يغبرنام فترا كورو كورو اول مولا
مجادى دان جاديش ايت دغن جسد جادى

“H. C.” translates this:

“Peace be unto thee! I am about to remove from thee, my Grandsire, who art styled Pētēra Gūru, the original teacher, who art from the beginning, and who art incarnate from thy birth.”

I am inclined to read the adverbial Arabic **اول** with the following word **مول** rather than with the preceding word **كورو**. This, however, does not alter the general sense of the passage beyond bringing out more clearly the fact that “Guru” is used as a proper name.

In the *Selangor Journal* of the 22nd February, 1895, the following passage occurs in an article on the invocation of the Padi Spirits, over the signature of “W. S.”

“When the jungle is first cleared for the forming of a “new Padi swamp, importance is attached to the invocation of “certain mythical personages who may have probably been the

“deities of the Malay in the pre-Mohammedan epoch. These
“the Pawang should invoke by name as follows:

“ ‘Toh Mentala Guru!

“ ‘Sarajah (? Si Raja) Guru!

“ ‘Gempitar A’lam!

“ ‘Sarajah (? Si Raja) Malek!’

“All that I can find out about Toh Mentala (here called Toh
“Petala Guru) is that he was the all-powerful Spirit who took
“the place of Allah before the advent of Mohammedanism; a
“spirit so powerful that he could restore the dead to life and to
“whom all prayers were addressed. This name is said to be still
“preserved among the genuine Orang Laut. The old
“customs are fast dying out, and very few Malays I have met
“now know the names of the four deities (or demons) given
“above.”

A note is appended to the word: “Toh Mentala guru:”
“These four titles are said to refer to four different deities but
“I see no reason why the next two should not be merely epi-
“thets of Toh Mentala.”

“Batara Guru,” or “Sang-yang Guru” is the name by
which Siva is known to his worshippers who constitute the vast
majority of the Balinese, and who probably constituted the bulk
of the old Javanese. About his identity with the “Pētēra Gu-
ru” of the Mayong invocation, and with the “Petala Guru” or
“Mentala Guru” of the Pawang’s appeal, there can be very
little doubt. I would suggest the following version of the
latter:

“To’ Batara Guru!

“Sang-raja Guru!

“Gěmpitar alam!

“Sang-raja malik!

The four lines refer to the same deity; “Malik” being merely
the Arabic for “King” and not a proper name.

Malay theatrical performances and dances owe so much to
Javanese influence that it would be dangerous to infer from a
Mayong invocation that Batara Guru was necessarily known to
the pre-Mohammedan Malays. Nevertheless it is possible enough

that they were of the same religion as their neighbours the Javanese. The formula uttered by the Pawang goes far to show this; and I concur with Mr. Skeat in expressing a hope that something will be done to rescue these fragments of old Malay folklore from the destruction with which they are threatened.

Batara Guru plays a considerable part in Malay literature, but as that literature is so often merely translated from the Javanese, no conclusion can safely be drawn from it regarding the ancient religion of the country. In the *Hikayat Sang Samba* (the Malay version of the *Bhaumakavya*) Batara Guru appears as a supreme God with Brahma and Vishnu as subordinate deities. It is Batara Guru who alone has the water of life (*ayer utama* (*atama*) *jiwa*) which brings the slaughtered heroes to life. This attribute corresponds closely with the account of "Mentala Guru" given by the pawang to Mr. Skeat.

The following pantuns given me by a comparatively illiterate Malay are of some interest in connection with this question of Batara Guru. I give the text as I received it, but it bears signs of being corrupt in parts:

Ambil golok kupas kelapa,
Përah santan ambil pati;
Naik ka gunong përgi bertapa
Menghadap Bërahmana, maharaja Sakti.

Përah santan ambil pati
Kasih makan Dato' Pënghulu;
Bërapa di tanya ta-biar bëmimpi
Kapada Bërahmana Sang Raja Guru!

Bersanding di gëtâ Raja Mélayu
Bërukir bunga tampok përada
Berkata uleh Sang Raja Guru
"Galoh mënjëlma di manjapada!"

The story goes on to relate how the Galoh (princess) whose name is given as Galoh Chandra Kirana is transformed by Batara Kala into a man and how her betrothed, Panji Misa Këlana wanders distractedly in search of her with the poor consolation.

Raut raut daun kělapa
 Hëndak dibuat lidi pënyapu;
 Tujoh tahun sudah bertapa,
 Këmüdian chari boleh bërtëmu.

Ultimately the lovers are reunited. The references in these pantuns will easily be understood by those acquainted with the leading incidents in the "Panji Cyclus" of tales—(v. Essays relating to Indo-China, Second Series, Vol. ii. p. 40) It is noteworthy however that Batara Guru is identified in the pantuns with "Berhmana." "Brahma" is usually "Bërma" or "Bërma Sakti;" and the author of the pantun appears to have been a comparatively modern Malay who attempted to improve on the old legend which did not explicitly state who Batara Guru was.

Another point of interest is the expression "Batara" or "Sang-yang" which is prefixed to "Guru." "Yang," of course, is not "yang," who,—but "Yang," a deity (compare Sembahyang, ka-yang-an.) "Sang-yang" is never (in Malay literature, so far as I am acquainted with it) applied to any demi-god or inferior deity. Thus we have "Sang-yang Guru," "Sang-yang Bisnu," but never "Sangyang Hanuman," or "Sang-yang Dermadewa." These inferior divinities are merely "Sang," (e. g. Sang Dermadewa, Sang Samba, Sang Sri Hanuman)—a honorific also applied to mortals, e. g., Sang Sapurba, Sang Ranjuna Tapa; and even to animals in fables, e. g., Sang Kanchil, Sang Tikus. The expression "Batara" is also limited to the greater Hindu divinities (except when used as a royal title), e. g., Batara Guru, Batara Kala, Batara Indra, Batara Bisnu, etc. Thus the expressions "Sang-yang" and "Batara," are fairly coincident in their application. But there are a few deities of whom the honorific "Sang-yang" is used but not "Batara," e. g., "Sang-yang Tunggal," the only God, "Sang-yang Sokma," etc. Thus "Batara" would seem to be limited in use to the actual names of Hindu deities as distinct from epithets describing those deities. "Batara Guru" would seem to be an exception—the only one—to this rule and to point to the fact the original meaning of "Guru" had been lost sight of and that the expression had come to be regarded only as a proper name.

In the "Sila-silah Raja-raja di tanah Jawa" (v. Indo-China

Essays, Series II, vol. ii. p. 20) an extraordinary genealogy is given representing Adam as the father of Seth, Seth of "Nûrchaya," Nûrchaya of Sang-yang Wěnang Sang-yang Wěnang of Sang-yang Tunggal, Sang-yang Tunggal of Guru, and Guru of Sangyang Sambu, Běrahma, Mahadewa, Bisnu, and Dewi Sěri. It is impossible to do much with this genealogy except to notice that "Guru" is treated as distinct from the "Mahadewa," another name for Siva. Thus Guru is represented as the father of the Hindu Trinity, and also of Sambu (whom I cannot identify) and Sěri, who is the Hindu Sri, the goddess of grain and therefore a deity of immense importance to the old Javanese and Malays' "Sri" is the goddess invoked in another invocation in the *Selangor Journal* article of the 22nd February, 1895; where the Pawang addresses the padi:

"Lagi di dalam Shurga
 "Bernama buah khaldi (?)
 "Sampai ka-dunya bernama
 "Buah Sěri, těnyang Sěri."
 "Jangan rosak jangan binasakan
 "Buah Sěri, těnyang Sěri."

To this passage Mr. Skeat adds a note: "The Sěri fruit "may mean the blessed fruit (in the ordinary sense of Sěri or Sri) "and be given as a euphonious title to padi, but it reminds one "strangely of 'Ceres,' the goddess of grain."

R. J. W.

Calanthe vestita Lindl. in Selangor.

This well-known and popular orchid has rather a remarkable distribution, being found in Tenasserim and Borneo, and it might well be expected to occur somewhere in the intermediate region, especially in limestone districts. It does not occur, so far as is known in the Lankawi islands, where it might have been expected, being replaced there by the pretty *C. rubens* Ridl., but I found a single plant in a crevice in a tree on the top of the limestone rocks at the Kuala Lumpur caves (Gua batu). It was in perfect flower in December, and was a very fine form. The upper part of these rocks is in many places quite inaccessible, and indeed it is in but few places one can get



Wilkinson, R. J. 1897. "Batara Guru." *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 30, 307–311.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/133377>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/375616>

Holding Institution

Smithsonian Libraries and Archives

Sponsored by

Biodiversity Heritage Library

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: Not in copyright. The BHL knows of no copyright restrictions on this item.

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.