



## Notes on the Sengirese.

S. J. Hickson

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teen bushels to seed itself, and I then left it to contend against the weeds. In one year the crop was almost destroyed, yielding less than one bushel per acre, while the produce of two bushels sown and kept clean yielded fourteen bushels. The cereal grain crops possess a power to find food in an unmanured soil which neither potatoes nor turnips possess. I have an unmanured rotation which has been going on for nearly forty years, turnips come in every fourth year. The second crop of Swedes, although kept clean, ceased to produce bulbs, and you may say the root producing power of the land ceased for ever; but fine crops of wheat and barley are still being grown. We have recently published analysis of a number of Manitoba soils showing what enormous stores of fertility exist in those prairie soils. . . .

Yours truly,  
J. B. LAWES."

(B) "Craig House, Dalmally, 18 Oct., 85.  
DEAR MR. ROTH,

We have grown unmanured potatoes for ten years, but for twenty years previously the land had been growing wheat without manure; the last crop of potatoes was  $2\frac{1}{4}$  tons per acre. As a general rule the soils under forest trees are much poorer than the soils under pasture or prairie vegetation. I believe this fact is well-known by experience in the United States. I have a wood which I should think had been covered with oak trees for several centuries, there is hardly any underwood or any green undergrowth and the leaf fall must have rotted underneath. I made an analysis of this soil a few years ago, and it was very much poorer than the soil of my permanent pasture which had been mown for thirty years, and had received no manure. Some of the Manitoba soils almost equal the Russia Black soils in fertility.

Yours truly,  
J. B. LAWES."

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The Secretary read the following extracts from a letter addressed by Dr. S. J. Hickson to Dr. E. B. Tylor, dated from Talisse, North Celebes, Dec. 1, 1885:—

#### NOTES *on the* SENGIRESE.

By DR. S. J. HICKSON.

I HAVE just returned from a most interesting trip to the Sengirese and Talauer Islands. The Sengirese race seems to be an exceedingly interesting one and well worthy of further investigation.

At Manganitu in Great Sengir I had opportunities of ob-

servicing them and gathering information about them. I was for three days in the house of the rajah and during that time in constant converse with Mr. Steller, a German missionary who has worked amongst them for twenty-eight years.

Firstly let me describe the house of the rajah and some of its contents. It was built almost entirely of bamboo and stood about 20 or 30 yards back from a very good and well-kept street; the paths, grass plot, and croton hedges being evidently well and constantly attended to. In front of the house was a verandah  $5\frac{1}{2}$  yards broad, and from that a staircase of five or six steps led into the house. This was simply one large room divided by 6-foot partitions into a large central compartment and a number of small sleeping compartments, one of which I shared for three nights with the Dominie of Menado.

Covering the walls and roof of the verandah, the hall, and our bed room, were magnificent specimens of koffo, a great deal of which had been made by the Queen (called here the Tuwan Bohki). I managed with some difficulty to purchase a piece of this and also a set of the weaving apparatus with a piece of koffo in course of construction.

In the corner of the verandah I noticed a very curious time-piece and mode of keeping the time. It consisted of three parts: Firstly, a sand-glass made of two beer bottles placed mouth to mouth containing some black volcanic sand which ran through in just half-an-hour; 2nd, a number of sticks strung on a piece of string and notched with 1, 2, 3 . . . 12 notches, and a hook which was suspended between the last hour struck and the next one. At every half-hour (day and night) the sentry reversed the half-hour glass, readjusted the hook on the string, and if it were the full hour struck the number on the third part of this complicated apparatus—the gong. I have got the notched sticks, but I could not get the half-hour glass as there was not another one in the village to replace it. I have, however, made a drawing of it, and have instructed my boy to make an imitation of it.

The Sengirese have evidently inhabited these islands for many generations. Their language contains a very large vocabulary, but I am unable to say how far it is related to the local dialects of North Celebes or the Philippine Islands. I have got a prayer-book and a book of psalms translated into Sengirese by Mr. and Miss Steller, and the Gospel of St. Luke and another prayer-book translated by Mr. Kelling.

The Sengirese were and are still great mariners, travelling long distances in their sailing boats, many of which are capable of holding 60 or 100 men, for the purposes of trade, the capture of slaves, and fishing. It is a remarkable fact that Tahiti is

the Sengirese word for "rain." As evidence of their qualities as mariners, I may mention that they have 28 days each with a different name, and that they have complete Sengirese names for all the points of the compass. I have got a list written out for me by a Manganitu man of all these.

The dress and coiffure of the Sengirese are such as I described in a previous letter. The only women who wear gay-coloured clothes seem to be the Christians and the concubines of the Chinese. The name of the crescentic fringe of hair is *Pakoe*. The name of the knot of hair on the top of the head of the women is *Botto*.

The Sengirese are not as tall as the inhabitants of Minahassa; they have fair complexions compared with the Malays, high cheek bones, thick upper lips and oval-shaped eyes. Of their hair, which is black and straight, I have got some specimens.

Their marriage customs are purely *matriarchal*, both in endogamy and exogamy. The man always goes to the house of his wife and becomes a member of her family. In exogamy the woman comes to the village of her future husband once before marriage to show her beauty, but the man must go to the village of his future wife to be married, and must stay there at least one year after marriage, after which he may return to his own to see his friends or transact business, but must again return to his wife's family and consider himself a member of her family. The *harta* or dowry paid by the man to his wife's parents is paid in tens, in plates, *slaves*, firearms, cotton goods, &c.

The only persons who are free from the matriarchal system are the sons of the rajahs, who do as they please about following their wives.

The above was told me by Mr. Steller at Manganitu, and may be relied upon as true.

I made, however, numerous enquiries of the rajahs, &c., and I may as well give you the facts I gathered with their various sources:—

1. Mr. Kouveray, formerly Controlleur of Sengir, told me that the matriarchal system exists all over the Sengirese Islands, but could give me no further details.

2. The rajah of Morong (in Talauer) said the husband invariably goes to the house of the wife and becomes a member of her family. If there is a divorce (an occurrence which is very common) the children go "where they don't cry." In case of the adultery of the wife, the co-respondent has to pay a fine to the *parents* of the woman.

3. The rajah of Pulutan (in Talauer) said that the man goes to the house of the wife and remains there. The children of

the marriage, when they are old enough may choose the family to which they will belong, *i.e.*, whether they will belong to the family of their father or mother.

4. The Rajah of Karatong (in the Nanusa Archipelago) said that the man invariably went to the house of the woman, both in endogamy and exogamy.

5. Mr. Gunther (the missionary at Manarang in Talauer) said that the man follows the woman both in endogamy and exogamy; the reverse does occur, but is very rare. The harta or dowry varies with the rank of the woman. For the daughter of a rajah a man must pay 30 slaves, each valued at 45 fl. Divorces are very common, and a rich man is constantly being married to different women and divorcing them again.

6. The pilot, a Sengirese man, who now calls himself Peter Elias, said, speaking of the Sengirese generally, the man always goes to the house of his wife whether she lives in the same village or not. In exogamy the woman only goes to the village of her husband to show herself. The harta (dowry) paid for a rajah's daughter is 12 slaves, 12 gongs, 12 silk (?) shirts, 12 china plates, 100 small plates, 12 swords and 1 katti of gold or its equivalent in money. The children belong to the kampong of the wife.

Other evidence of a similar character I obtained from missionaries, rajahs, &c., but it would be mere repetition for me to go over it all here.

A word or two about the inhabitants of the Talauer Islands and the remote Nanusa Islands.

There is no doubt that there is a large intermixture with Sengirese, and I daresay at many of the coast places a considerable proportion of the population is unmixed Sengirese, but I believe there is a true Talauer race, just as there is a true Talauer language, but that many of them have been carried away as slaves by the Sengirese pirates or driven to the remote islands or less fertile parts of the larger ones.

At Pulutan, a remote village in Salibabu, one of the Talauer islands, a rajah came on board with his principal people who were strikingly different from the true Sengirese. Their hair was wavy (not straight) allowed to grow long, and in one or two cases plaited in long thin plaits, their upper lips and alæ nasi were thin, and they all had a fearful vacant expression strikingly different from the sad but not unintelligent expression of the Sengirese.

At the Karatong kampong in Nanusa, the most remote islands we visited, situated twelve hours steaming north-east of Salibabu, I saw plenty of men of the same type (although they had nearly all completely shaved their heads). I asked the rajah

how long his race had inhabited the islands and he immediately answered "Always," and stoutly denied that they had come from Sengir. This Karatong kampong was one of the most interesting I have seen. It was surrounded by a low mortar wall. There were only eight very large houses, each capable of holding four or five hundred people, and they were arranged in an oblong to which there was, as far as I could see, only one entrance. Each house had only one ladder and this was generally in the middle of the house. Each house was built on piles ninety-one inches high. After a careful examination of them externally and internally, I am perfectly certain that these houses have grown. That is to say, the houses have been added to at the sides (both sides) as the family increased in size. I cannot say that they are growing or will grow, as there is no more room in the oblong kampong for their expansion.

Let me here digress a little to make a few remarks on the growth of houses.

The houses of the Karatong kampong grew in two directions, right and left of the ladder. In Lirung, a kampong in Salibabu, they grow only in one direction, right of the ladder. In Manganitu, in Petah, and in some of the Sengirese houses here in Talisse, I have noticed that additions are made at the back of the houses. The meaning of these different modes of growth is obvious. The first two are adopted where there is room on account of the greater facility in adding to the roof. The latter mode was introduced when they began to build their houses in streets as the Sengirese almost invariably do. A more important point however than this is the gradual diminution, or to use a Dutch word, the "verkleining" of houses as the civilization or wealth of the inhabitants increases. This struck me particularly in my return journey from Nanusa, as we gradually got within touch of civilization and the wealth of the inhabitants increased. The largest houses I saw were in Nanusa where foreign vessels very rarely call. In Lirung the houses were somewhat smaller, none of them I should think capable of holding more than 200 persons. At Manarang, also in Talauer, a kampong which contains 3,500 inhabitants, and carries on a considerable trade, the houses were still smaller, but nevertheless some of them must have been able to accommodate 60 or 100 persons.

In Taroena and Manganitu, the two most important places in Great Sengir, and the centre of the cocoa-nut trade, places where money is used and cocoa trees cultivated, &c., &c., the houses were not large enough for more than ten or twenty persons (except the houses of the rajahs, whose numerous followers all claim shelter under their roofs). One step further in this

process and we arrive at mere hovels only capable of holding a man, his wife, and two or three children, such as we find in such a place as Menado, where natives and Europeans live and freely trade and mix together.

If I am not mistaken there is something of the same kind going on now in the suburbs of London and the other large towns in England, where the demand for large well-built houses seems to have nearly ceased, and rows upon rows of small houses are springing up in all directions.

To return, however, from this digression to the house of the rajah of Karatong in Nanusa.

When I entered the house I found the rajah sitting with his back to the central wooden pillar in the large entrance hall surrounded by the president rajah, the *djoegoegoe*, the *Capitains laut*, and the other officials. A miserable lot they were too, all of them ill-clad, ill-fed, with vacant expressions and helpless appearance. Around the hall were the usual bamboo partitions about five and a half feet high, which divided the rest of the house into sleeping compartments for the various members of the large family, and over these were to be seen the heads of the half-naked women who seemed to be there in swarms. Hanging on a long bamboo from the ceiling was a row of little wooden praus and one little pyramidal cage in which there was a little wooden figure. The praus, I learnt, are hung there for protection against diseases, which are supposed to put to sea in them and thus leave the island. I immediately opened negotiations for the purchase of these things. At first the rajah would not allow them to be touched, but he afterwards, as my prices went up, consented to let them go, and I have now got them all with the exception of the best prau, which was taken by the resident, and the little figure in the cage, which disappeared as the man was taking it down from the roof. We only stayed a couple of hours in Karatong, so I was not able to do as much work there as I should have wished. I am very sorry our time there was so short, as I believe it is the best place for enquiring about the original Talaurese, a race of men which I believe would thoroughly repay the thorough investigation of a competent anthropologist.

Slavery, as you will have gathered from what I have said above, flourishes in Sengir and Talauer, and the Dutch Government have at present taken no steps to suppress it. In Great Sengir there are three kingdoms, *Taboekan* on the east coast, and *Taroena* and *Manganitu* on the west. In *Manganitu* alone is slavery being gradually abolished, owing to the efforts of Mr. Steller, the German missionary there. Some of the modes of making slaves are not uninteresting.

In the manipulation of sago and rice, quantities of the material are often left in an old prau in the woods until they are ready for consumption. If during this process a man passes by the prau, it is supposed that he takes away the spirit of the sago or padi, or what not, and if caught he is at once seized by the rajah, and he and his whole family become slaves.

When a man dies who has been accustomed to fish in any particular place, that place is often declared to be holy. It is given over to the dead, in order that his ghost may come and fish there as he did when alive. It is "*tabu*" as they say in the South Sea islands, or "*pilih*" as they say in Sengir.

If any one is seen by the family of the deceased to go there in a canoe or to fish there, he is at once brought before the rajah and becomes a slave of the family of the deceased.

There are many other ways of making slaves. Thus, when a particular region is in mourning for any one, any person using a parasol, wearing ornaments, or otherwise breaking the laws of mourning is made a slave.

The facts which I have laid before you in these notes prove, I think, that the Sengirese race is a very old one, and probably a partially degenerated one. The Sengirese differ from the Alfurs of Minahassa not only physically but also in their customs and morality. In Sengir, as I have pointed out, there is a true matriarchal system, among the Alfurs of Minahassa the system is patriarchal (according to Wilken). The morality between the sexes is in the former case very strict, and in the latter somewhat lax. The Sengirese were in former times enterprising, daring, and war-like. I believe that the Alfurs of Minahassa were not.

The question then naturally arises, did the Sengirese come *via* Minahassa, Celebes, etc., or *via* the Philippine islands from Eastern Asia? This question I cannot answer, and as I know nothing about the Philippine islanders I dare not speculate upon it. I do not know that anyone has yet attempted to answer it, but when we consider the geographical position of these islands and the many interesting traits which their inhabitants show, I cannot help thinking that it is one that is well worthy of solution.

*Names of the Days of the Month in Sengirese.*

Nama-nama boelan di langit.

1. Těkalě (New moon).
2. Kahoemata pakesa.
3. Kahoemata karoene.
4. Kahoemata katelloene.



5. Sehangoe haresě.
6. Batangoe haresě.
7. Likoed'oe haresě.
8. Sehang'oe lettoe.
9. Batangengoe lettoe.
10. Likoed'oe lettoe.
11. Awang.
12. Sehangoe pangoempia.
13. Batangengoe pangoempia.
14. Empaoese.
15. Limangoeng boelan.
16. Těpping.
17. Sai pakesa.
18. Sai karoene.
19. Sai katelloene.
20. Sehangoe lettoe.
21. Batangengoe lettoe.
22. Likoed'oe lettoe.
23. Awang.
24. Sehangoe pangoempia.
25. Batangengoe pangoempia.
26. Empaoese.
27. Limangoen basa.

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MAY 11TH, 1886.

FRANCIS GALTON, Esq., F.R.S., *President, in the Chair.*

The Minutes of the last meeting were read and signed.

The following presents were announced, and thanks voted to the respective donors:—

FOR THE LIBRARY.

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