Notes on Stone Implements from Perak

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Source: *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. 17 (1888), pp. 66-67

Published by: [Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2841671>

Accessed: 14/06/2014 14:37

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The following Notes were read by the Assistant Secretary :—

NOTES *on* STONE IMPLEMENTS *from* PERAK.

By ABRAHAM HALE, Esq.

IN "Nature" of October 29th, 1885, I first drew attention to two stone axes which I had procured at Kinta, Perak. I have since been able to increase my collection by several other specimens, all procured from Malays. Most of them having been preserved in the houses of natives of this district for several generations, have been passed down from father to son as heirlooms of no inconsiderable value. At the present time the purpose which they serve is that of whetstones on which to sharpen razors for which they are admirably suited, being for the most part made from what appears to be a very close and fine grained stone, almost like greenstone.

Nearly all the specimens are apparently axes or tomahawks of different descriptions. Of these weapons or implements almost every type associated with the neolithic era seems to be here represented except those which have been bored to admit the haft or otherwise sculptured for the same purpose: of these, however, I have heard tidings here, and hope soon to procure specimens. With one exception which was found by a Sakai about three feet deep in made earth, which he was sluicing off to procure tin sand, I can give no history of the finding of any of these specimens, beyond the imperfectly recollected statement of the Malays, on which no very great dependence can be placed—every one of them being heirlooms.

I have questioned Malays concerning Sakaies and also Sakaies themselves concerning the matter: neither the one nor the other have ever heard of such a thing as these articles ever having had any other use beyond that of whetstones or lucky things to have about the house. Probably much light would be thrown on the matter if one or two of the numerous limestone-caves of this district could be scientifically explored. This task I hope to accomplish before very long myself. For my part I think it more than probable that the Sakaies of early times, say five hundred years ago, before intercourse with Malay traders was established to any extent, were the manufacturers. These specimens are now in the Perak Museum at Thaiping.

DISCUSSION.

Mr. READ pointed out the great interest of stone implements from a new or comparatively unknown locality, and although there were no absolutely new types among the drawings exhibited by Mr.

Hale, yet it was of importance to put on record the fact, that in the small State from which these specimens came, the type is the same as that of the neighbouring islands.

It is by no means surprising to find that there is some difficulty in inducing the native possessors of these ancient implements to part with them. Almost over the whole world these relics of the former inhabitants are regarded by the uncultivated classes as of some supernatural value, either as medicine, or from the idea that carrying them about the person will avert disaster or death. Even among the ancient Greeks, at the time when art was at its best, flint arrowpoints are found set in jewellery of the most perfect style and workmanship, and they can only have been so used in the belief that they carried with them some mysterious power. Dr. J. Anderson, in his excellent account of the expedition to Bharno, mentions a similar belief among the Shans. Indeed, in our own country, and at the present day, instances are known of people of education entertaining the same superstitious belief in the virtues of stone implements.

MARCH 22ND, 1887.

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.

- From the Right Hon. the SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES.—
Despatch from the Acting Administrator of Gambia.
- Statistics of the Colony of New Zealand for the year 1885.
- From the DIRECTOR OF THE UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY.—
Bulletin. Nos. 31–33.
- From the AUTHOR.—History of the Sarsens. By Professor T. Rupert Jones, F.R.S.
- Syllabus of Twelve Lectures on the History of the British Empire. By Rev. Alfred Caldecott, M.A.
- Ethnographische Mittheilungen aus Venezuela. By Hr. A. Ernst.
- Per la priorita di una sua determinazione di resti umani della caverna della Palmaria stali prima attribuiti ad un macacus. Di Ettore Regalia.
- From the ROYAL ARCHEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE.—Archæological Journal, No. 172.