THE ORIGIN OF THE MOROS

[Portion of a paper read before the Royal Asiatic Society, Shanghai, and published by permission of the author.—Ed.]

Beginning with the contributions of Dr. N. M. Saleeby¹ on the history and culture of the Moros of the South a collection of monographs has gradually appeared which constitutes almost the first scientific attempt to penetrate the mystery that shrouds the origin of the present inhabitants of the Philippines and their cultural sources.

Among the most recent of these publications, though relating to the earliest period, are those compiled by the ingenious Professor of History in the University of the Philippines—Austin Craig—who is also known for his painstaking and authoritative life of Rizal,² and other works. His pamphlet on “Malays” is largely extracted from a work³ by General Forlong which deals with the origin of the Malay race and its primitive religious ideas. Like Dr. Saleeby,⁴ General Forlong believes that the Malays originated on the Asiatic mainland (the latter holding that they entered India from the north) and long remained under the influence of Indian civilisation. This general theory finds abundant philological evidence in its favor and in addition to that mentioned by General Forlong much more might be cited from the Philippine languages.

The pioneer in this interesting field appears to have been Dr. H. Kern (1833—), formerly Professor of Sanscrit in the University of Leyden, who, in 1880 and 1881 published the results of his observations on the presence

¹ *Studies in Moro History Law and Religion* (Manila 1905); *The History of Sulu* (1905); *Origin of the Malayan Filipinos* (1912).

² *The Pre-Spanish Philippines*, by Austin Craig, (Manila, 1914); *Particulars of the Philippines' Pre-Spanish Past*, by the same author, (Manila, 1916); *Malays*, by the same author, (Manila, 1916).

³ Manila (Philippine Education Co.) 1913.

⁴ *Short Studies in the Science of Comparative Religions*.

⁵ *Origin of the Malayan Filipinos*, Academy Publications I, 1, 37.

⁶ Otto Scheerer in *Philippine Review*, III, 63.

of Sanscrit words in Bisaya and Tagalog. As regards the latter, Dr. T. H. Pardo de Tavera, a member of the Philippine Academy, took up the same line of investigation a few years later.¹ The presence of Sanscrit words in other Philippine languages was noticed by still another and charter member of the Academy, recently chosen as its Chancellor—Dr. David P. Barrows.² But it was reserved for Dr. Saleeby to carry this fascinating investigation to the farthest extent yet reached. Selecting as his particular subject the Magindanaw language of the south Philippines he has not only collected an extensive vocabulary³ of common words therein, which are cognate with Sanscrit, but he marshals other evidence in support of his conclusion that Malay speech in general "is an Indian tongue closely allied to, or originally derived from, Sanscrit—the language of Vedic worship and Vedic days." And he sums up the results of his researches in the following inquiry:

"What conclusion can we then at present draw, other than that the ancient home of these peoples and the birth place of their forefathers was in the land where the Vedic gods were worshipped and an Indian language was spoken, which land can be no other country than that extensive continent of India—the cradle of the Malay race."

Moreover, the term Malay itself, instead of being derived, as General Forlong seems to think, from the Indian *mala* (hill), is more probably connected with the Tagalog *malayo* (far) with its allusion to the long wanderings of the race which General Forlong emphasizes.⁴

When the Malays entered the archipelago now known as the Philippines⁵ they found there an aboriginal race,

¹ See his monographs, *El Sanscrito en la lengua tagalog* (Paris, 1887, 55 pp.); *Consideraciones sobre el origen del nombre de los numeros en tagalog* (Manila, 1889, 26 pp.)

² History of the Philippines, 92, 93. Dr. Barrows also found "a few Sanskrit or Indian words" in the Ilongot language of North Luzon. See his "Ilongot or Ibilaw," *Popular Science monthly*, (December, 1910) LXXVII, 537.

³ Origin of the Malayan Filipinos, Academy Publications, 1, 22-35.

⁴ "They have," he says, "thronged East Africa above 1000 years, and have even a colony at the Cape of Good Hope. They traded everywhere throughout Madagascar—their Malagasa and the Mala-divipas or Maldives. They colonized 500 miles of the West Coast of India, still known as Mala-bar; the great island of Sumatra and adjoining mainland known as the Malaka Peninsular, extending over some 700 miles; all the large island kingdoms of Java, Celebes and their dependencies and the eponymous extensive Molucca group."

⁵ This name was not applied until long after Spanish occupation when it was given in honor of the reigning monarch Felipe II. Magellan, who discovered the group on San Lazaro's day, named it after that saint.

dark-skinned, of short stature and curly hair, resembling, and probably akin to, the Papuans of New Guinea, the aboriginal Semang of the Malay peninsula,¹ the Mincopies of the Andaman Islands² and perhaps to the blacks of Australia. Long afterward this race received from the Spaniards the name of Negritos (little blacks). Once numerous and distributed throughout the islands they are now confined to a few provinces while their number is very small³ and believed to be rapidly diminishing. Yet it is long since active warfare between them and the Malay intruder has decimated the former's ranks. Their present decline seems rather due to a prolonged process of amalgamation, largely at their expense, with the incoming race. Dr. Barrows long since expressed his conviction that

"Much has been made of the 'Indonesian' theory and far too much of pre-Spanish Chinese influence, but the result to the physical types found in the Philippines of the constant absorption of the Negrito race into the Malayan and the wide prevalence of the Negrito blood in all classes of islanders has been generally overlooked. . . .

"I shall not attempt here," he adds, "to estimate the proportion of Negrito blood in the Christian peoples of the Philippines—Bisaya, Bikol, Tagalog, Ilokano, etc.—further than to express my conviction that in certain regions it is very large and has greatly modified the primitive Malayan type."

This mixture of blood has produced in certain parts of the Philippines, groups which, though not pure Negritos, resemble them to a degree more or less considerable according to the amount of Malay infusion. The Bataks of Palawan are practically Negritos while the Tagbanuas of the same island are predominantly Malayan with a Negrito strain.

Thus the diffusion of Malays appears to have skirted practically the entire inhabited coasts of Asia and to have left its trail stretching from South Africa to Korea.

Of the cultural influences affecting this widely scattered race the Indian was the first and most powerful.

¹ Barrows, *The Negrito and Allied Types in the Philippines*, *American Anthropologist*, (N. S.) XII, 375, citing Skeat & Blagden's *Pagan Races of the Malay Peninsula*.

² Reed, *Negritos of Zambales* (Philippine Ethnological Survey Publications, Vol. II pt. I) 13 *et seq.*

³ Dr. H. Otley Beyer in his recent work on the "Population of the Philippine Islands in 1916" estimates (p. 22) the Negritos at about 36,000, or less than one-half of one per cent of the total population.

But in spreading northward the Malays naturally encountered the civilization which was then dominant in eastern Asia—the Chinese.

Professor Craig shows how, as early as the third century of our era, Chinese writers mention what we know as the Philippines, grouping them with Formosa; and his chronological leaflet, issued separately from the other pamphlets, indicates that there has hardly been a century since in which reference to the Philippines fails to appear in some Chinese work.

Meanwhile communication between the two countries appears to have continued, persistently even if intermittently, until checked by unwise and ill adapted immigration restrictions originating in Spain; and one begins to understand from the antiquity of this contact how it is that the Chinese people and their civilization have come to exert such an extensive and permanent, though withal unobtrusive, influence upon the Philippines. The motive of this contact seems to have been primarily commercial. The "New History of the T'ang Dynasty," dealing with the period from the seventh to the tenth centuries of our era, states that:

"When Chinese merchants arrive there, they are entertained as guests in a public building and the eatables and drinkables are abundant and clean."¹⁴

But these old writers whose work is here made accessible have something more to record than commerce. Social customs, religious beliefs and practices and even juridical conceptions find a place in their narratives. Thus the historian of the T'ang Dynasty above quoted informs us that these primitive inhabitants of the Philippines

"have no corporal punishments, all transgressions being penalized with fines in gold which vary according to the nature of the offence. Only robbers and thieves are made to suffer death."

It is the agreement of all this with what we know from other sources that stamps the descriptions as accurate and genuine and it is just here that the work of Dr. Robertson connects with that of Professor Craig.

Formerly Chancellor of the Philippine Academy and Insular Librarian the former is too well known to need extended mention here.¹

The materials collected by these two—Professor Craig and Dr. Robertson—furnish us glimpses of the relations between Chinese and Malays down to the time when the latter first came under the influence of the Arab missionaries of Islam. At this point the notable and illuminating work of Dr. Saleeby commences; for while this was the first to appear, it covers the latest period of pre-Spanish, Philippine history.

Dr. Saleeby is of the opinion that the Malays left the Asiatic mainland at least as early as 1000 B. C. As the first Mohammedans did not enter India much if any before 600 A. D. they could hardly have influenced the Malays there. The Moslem conquest of India began in 1024 and Moslem influence was extended to Malaysia about 1300. Leaving the mainland the emissaries of Islam seem to have proceeded first to Sumatra and thence to the other islands of the Malay archipelago whose inhabitants are now so largely of their faith. They entered the Philippines by two routes, the first via Balabac and Palawan to Manila Bay and the second by way of Tawi-Tawi and Sulu to Magindanaw (now Cottabato). They appear to have reached Sulu before 1380 and when the Spainards arrived at the Pasig river, less than two centuries later, they found a Mohammedan prince—Rajah Soliman—reigning in Tondo, now a part of Manila, and Islam quite extensively established there.

To the Spainards who had just succeeded in expelling the Moors from their home peninsula it seemed a religious duty to repeat the process as regards these coreligionists in the Philippines to whom they applied the same term—*Moros*. The process was completed in the northern and central Philippines where, except in the mountain regions of Luzon, most of the inhabitants came under the influence of the Spanish Friar Missionaries. But the Malays of the southern Philippines have re-

¹ Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands 1493-1898*—Cleveland Ohio 1903-1909 in 55 volumes.

mained Mohammedan to this day. And the new influence which thus affected them came directly and not indirectly from Arabia. Abu Bekr who introduced Islam into Sulu was a real Arab and so late as 1911 when I visited the Lake Lanao region of central Mindanao the military commandant there (Colonel Beecham) told me that the leading Moro of the locality was a man from Mecca. On the other hand among the Moros of to-day are not a few "hadjis" who proudly wear the green turban in token of a pilgrimage to the Holy Land of Islam.

Among the most interesting monuments of this long domination of Islam in the southern Philippines are the series of legal compilations, often called codes, which Dr. Saleeby discovered and translated.¹ A detailed examination of them would lead us too far afield and besides would require a separate monograph for adequate treatment. Suffice it here to say that they constitute a curious blending of Moslem law with Malay custom and that, while crude and unsystematic in arrangement, they contain some rather advanced provisions. They were mainly intended for the Moro *panditas* (judges) who were unfamiliar with Arabic and therefore unable to read the real Mohammedan law books. But they have introduced not a little of the law of Islam which the American government in the Philippines has recognized by authorizing the Moro Provincial Council "to modify the substantive civil and criminal law . . . to suit local conditions among the Moros" etc., "to conform . . . to the local customs and usages."

Here, then, we have a concrete and striking example of an external influence which has profoundly affected Malayan culture in two vital features—religion and law—just as it had been previously affected by Indian influence as regards language and Chinese influence respecting commerce and social customs. Thus we discover that the external influences which affected successively the Malayan Filipino were the three most poten-

¹Studies in Moro History, Law and Religion, Philippine Ethnological Survey Publications, IV, pt. I (1905).

²Compilation, Acts of the Philippine Commission p. 251.

tial civilizations of Asia—the Indian, the Chinese and the Arabic. And operating concomitantly with these was an internal influence which, if less obtrusive, was even more effective and real—the local contact and amalgamation with the Negrito. And if there is one outstanding lesson to be drawn from a study of the Malay race it is the unity and continuity of history in the Far East and the solidarity of its culture. For it shows that the native races of this region are not isolated units, having no relation to each other, but sharers in a common civilization whose influence has been age-long and far reaching. Surely, therefore, none of the laborers in such a common, though extensive, field can afford to be ignorant of, or isolated from, their fellows.

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