

Museum Volunteers, JMM

Taking the Mystery out of History

A Very Rough Guide To BROGA

by Eric Lim



Photo source : Bumi Satu Kampung Dalam 2 Negeri – i Kampung Baru . Imbasan Sejarah Kampung Baru Cina Selangor – Published by Jawatankuasa Tetap Pembangunan Kampung Baru Kerajaan Selangor –First edition 2012 – pp 158 – 159

Introduction

The little town of Broga is like a game of soccer, played in two halves. It is uniquely located within two states – one side is within the mukim of Semenyih, Hulu Langat, in Selangor and the other, falls under the mukim of Lenggeng, Seremban, Negri Sembilan (coordinates [2°56'14"N 101°54'40"E](#)). A border agreement was administered during British administration (more details further down).

To differentiate between the two, the Selangor side is called Tarun Broga. Incidentally, there is a Kampung Tarun on the outskirts of Broga town at the Negri Sembilan side. Similar to many towns in the former Federated Malay States, Broga developed because of tin mining; subsequently rubber was cultivated and, later, farming activities were predominant. Today, it is a popular eco and agro tourism destination.

History

There are many versions as to how the name Broga came about. At the top on the list: it came from the word *buragas*, the name of an ancient mystical beast that lived in the surrounding forest. When tin was discovered, the area became *berharga* ('precious' in Malay). This was corrupted to 'Beroga' and subsequently, it became 'Broga'. To the Orang Asli community, *broga* is the name of a bird that lives on top of the hill. It was also believed that Broga was the name of the river that flows through the area.

In the modern context, in America, the word *broga* is increasingly getting popular! The word combines 'brother' (Bro) and 'yoga' (Ga), the name of a new form of exercise regime particularly for men that combines fitness exercises with traditional yoga postures. The roles are now reversed, Broga (the exercise that is) is so popular that now women are queuing up to join the men in doing it. A check on the local scene, Broga the exercise, is still not available in Malaysia.

The town started as early as 1851 with the arrival of a group of Hakka immigrants from the neighbouring Jelebu district. Broga was under the jurisdiction of Sungai Ujong until 1883. In this year, the Selangor and Negeri Sembilan state boundaries were redrawn. Lukut district in Selangor was exchanged for the Ulu Semenyih district, which also included Beranang and Broga. Lukut was among the earliest and tin producing areas in our country from 1830 to 1860 while Ulu Semenyih, at the time, was covered with virgin jungle and sparsely populated.



Towkay Goh Ah Ngee / Photo source : Parish History, Church of the Holy Family Kajang

Towkay Goh Ah Ngee was the person credited for the start of tin mining in the district of Ulu Semenyih. Towkay Goh started as a businessman and contractor, and later put his faith in tin mining. He was successful in his first ventures at Rawang and Serendah in the 1880's. He then moved to the Broga district and he was again successful in opening up a highly profitable mine. To reach his mine, he made an extension of a branch cart road from Semenyih and it was to be the very first road to Broga. Unlike many of his peers, Goh Ah Ngee was a Catholic convert. One of the important innovations that he brought to the mining industry was direct employment of labour. When British Resident W.H. Treacher made a tour of the area, he reported that it was a Chinese Catholic Settlement. Goh Ah Ngee later moved to Kajang to embark on coffee planting. He left the operation of the mines in Broga in the hands of his son-in-law, Lai Tet Loke. Tin mining activities in Broga continued into the early 20th century and saw the introduction of tin dredges in the area. The remnants of that era can be seen in the name of an existing road in the area aptly called Jalan Kampung Kapal.

The early 20th century, as in many places in Western Peninsula, saw the emergence of rubber as the main crop and the people of Broga switched to rubber cultivation. It continued until today albeit on a much smaller scale.

During the Malayan Emergency, a total of 993 residents in and around Broga were rounded up and resettled at the Broga New Village under the Briggs Plan in 1950. Three years later, 850 of them tried to escape from the village perimeter but all of them were arrested and remanded for ten days. In 1954, a Chinese primary school (today SJK (C) Kampung Baru Broga) was established within the new village and it started with an enrolment of 150 pupils. Earlier, it was believed that a Chinese school was set up in 1902 but it has ceased to exist.

The 'A history of Malaysia – Sino interactions' exhibition held in 2019 revealed an interesting discovery in Broga. This was a Chinese patriotic song entitled 'Song of a new-born Malaya', a song about the deep feeling of love and longing of the Chinese community for their motherland and, at the same time, their earnest hopes and aspirations for the new nation of Malaya. The song was adopted by the Chinese community in Broga in the middle of the 1950s.

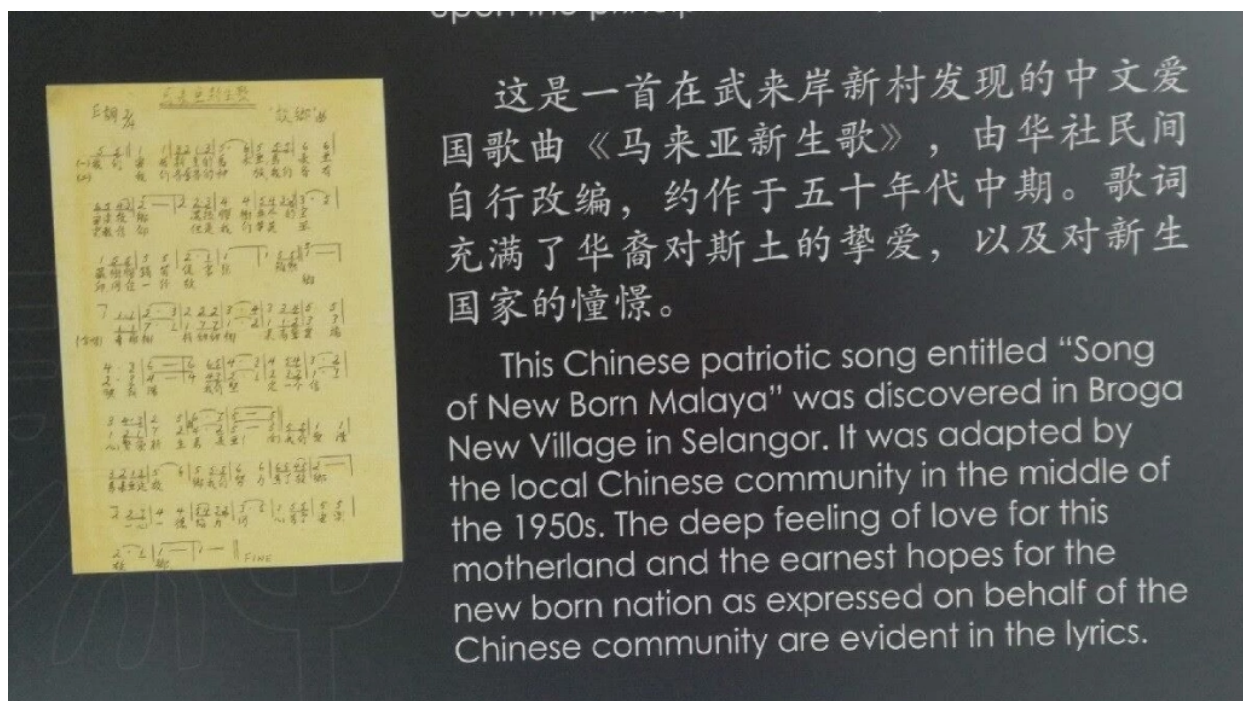
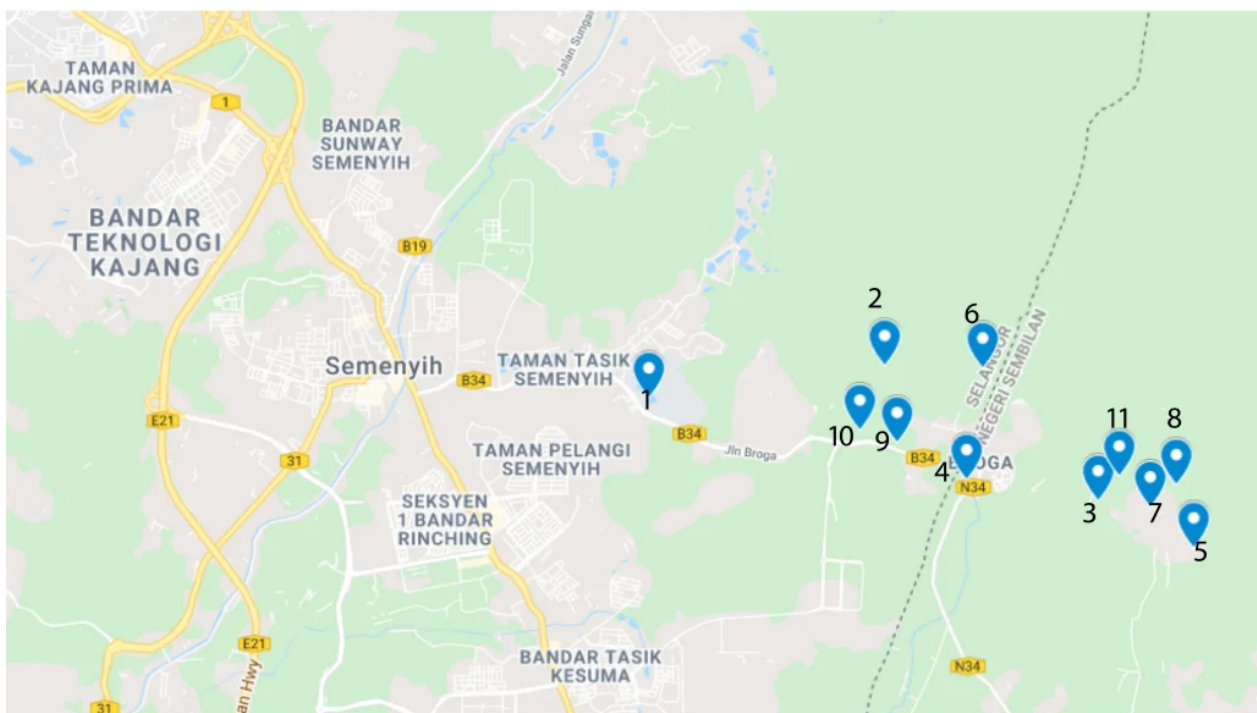


Photo source : A History of Malaysia – Sino Interactions exhibition

Moving forward to 2002, sleepy Broga was thrust into the limelight when it was named the new site for the RM 1.5 billion thermal incinerator project, which was relocated from Kampung Bohol, Puchong. The proposed site was on state land

adjacent to the Sungai Lalang Forest Reserve, at the foothills of the Main Range. The proponent of the project was the Ministry of Housing and Local Government and Ebara Corporation, a Japanese waste management company, to build the incinerator. Upon completion, it would be the largest waste incinerator in Asia with the capability to incinerate 1,500 tonnes of rubbish a day. Broga-born Alice Lee Yoke Kim and some of the town folks immediately rose to protest the project amidst worries about pollution risks, disposal of toxin incinerator ash and they expressed concerns with the maintenance of the incinerator. They took the Government to court in 2003 and fought tooth and nail for four years until finally in July 2007, the court announced that the project was terminated. As a result, the Government had to pay RM 100 million as compensation to the equipment suppliers and contractors. The campaign to stop the Broga incinerator project (from 2002 to 2005) was recorded and made into a documentary entitled '*Alice lives here*' by an independent production house, Reel Power Productions 2005.

Places of interest



University of Nottingham Malaysia Campus (UNMC)

Located along Jalan Broga (Selangor state road B34) which starts at the left turn off Federal Route 1 just after the town of Semenyih is the **University of Nottingham Malaysia Campus (UNMC) (1)**. It would have been ‘living next door to the waste incinerator’ had the project been given the go ahead. UNMC was established in 2000 and it is a partnership between the university, Boustead Holdings Berhad and YTL Corporation Berhad. It opened at Wisma MISC in Kuala Lumpur and in September 2005, it moved to the current multi-purpose built park campus. Occupying a 101 acres site, it was the first ever branch campus of a British university established outside the United Kingdom. Currently, UNMC has over 4500 students from more than 70 countries. University of Nottingham has another branch campus at Ningbo, Zhejiang Province in China.



UNMC / Photo source : [Malaysia Campus History – The University of Nottingham – Malaysia Campus](#)

Broga Hill / Bukit Broga

Just a short distance from UNMC is **Broga Hill / Bukit Broga (2)**, a popular hiking destination. It is located at the edge of the Titiwangsa Range and at 400 metres (1312 feet) in altitude, it is rated as an easy hike, even for beginners. The actual name of Broga Hill is Bukit Lalang, which refers to the cogon grass that grows abundantly at the top of the hill in place of the missing trees. It has a unique appearance but it is proving to be the special feature of the hill as it provides an unobstructed and panoramic view of the land below. There are three peaks where visitors can hike up to for viewing but the first peak seems to be the crowd favourite. For those who want a challenge, they can continue hiking further 3.1 km to Gunung Tok Wan, which is 675 metres high and another 1.2 km to Puncak

18 at 809 metres high. Unlike the cogon grass at Broga Hill, these trails are surrounded by more familiar primary rainforest. The hill was given another boost when some scenes from a local hit movie ‘*Ola bola*’ were shot here.



Broga Hill / Photo source : https://paradisevalleybroga.com/en_US/

Broga Shi Na Du / Sak Dato Temple

Unlike the earlier sites, which are located on the Selangor side, this site is located in Negri Sembilan and it is listed on top of the ‘Must Do’ list when visiting Broga. The place is **Broga Shi Na Du / Sak Dato Temple** ((武來岸玉封石哪督廟) (3). This temple is believed to be more than 150 years old. The name is closely connected with the Orang Asli community living in the neighbouring village. Aman was his name and he was a miner. As he had many Chinese friends, he had wanted to adopt a Chinese name and finally decided on the surname ‘Shi’ (stone in Mandarin) and he became known as Shi Man. During the Japanese Occupation, Japanese army had planned a mass killing of residents of Broga but the action was not carried out when a mystery person suddenly appeared on the scene. The residents believed that the mysterious person was none other than Shi Man.

When he died, he was deified as Shi Na Du (in Mandarin) or Sak Dato (in Cantonese).

A new temple was established at the current site in 1970 to replace the first temple. It has undergone several upgrading works, including a suspension bridge, a koi pond, various statues including the twelve Chinese zodiac animals, pavilions, an herb garden, a cultural centre, benches and a tarred path around the temple and park. There is also a huge statue of Sun Wukong (Monkey King of the 'A journey to the West' fame), which made its way into the Malaysia Book of Records as the tallest statue of Sun Wukong in the country.

Not too long ago, Sak Dato Temple was a popular filming location especially for the shooting of Chinese New Year music videos. It also became a place for divining lucky numbers. The temple is one of the largest full-sized Datuk Kong temples in the country and it is setting the trend in the pattern and design for future development of Datuk Kong temples in the country with an eye on the promotion of the tourism industry.



Sak Dato Temple / Photo source : <https://www.facebook.com/Broga.SDT/>

Training Camps

With a back-to-nature setting surrounded by lush forest, Broga is an ideal place for the setting up of training camps. Just within 42 km or about an hour drive from Kuala Lumpur, it is a perfect getaway from the hustle and bustle of city life. There are three main training camps that offer both on-site as well as off-site activities with various types of accommodations from VIP chalets, honeymoon deluxe chalets, deluxe rooms to dormitories. There are also multi-purpose halls, seminar rooms and food catering.

Outdoor Team Building Adventure Camp or OUTBAC Broga in short (4), located at Kampung Sri Broga is the training camp that is nearest to the town. Established in 2002, Outbac specialises in team building activities and caters to a wide range of clientele. Outbac is spread over an area of 6.5 acres and is an internationally accredited (NARTA certified) campsite in Malaysia.

Next is **Excel Training and Country Resort** (5) located at Kampung Kapal. This 18 acres camp is built by Dato Hj. Mohd Fadzilah Kamsah, prominent and renowned motivational and training speaker. Some of the facilities and activities provided by Excel are a swimming pool, open-air cafeteria, paintball park and fruit farm walkabout.

Last but not least is **Paradise Valley** (6), located at Jalan Tarun Broga. As the street name suggests, it is on the Selangor side of Broga. Apart from meetings and team building activities, it is a good location for church retreats, family gatherings and weddings and receptions. It also provides various day tour programmes like wall climbing, kayaking, abseiling, flying fox and obstacle courses. Its off-site activities include Broga Hill hiking, waterfall trekking and caving.



Paradise Valley / Photo source : https://paradisevalleybroga.com/en_US/

Eco and Agro Tourism

Located within walking distance to Sak Dato Temple is **Broga Bliss Eco Garden (7)**. It is an ideal place for a family gathering, private event and a retreat and facilities include a pool, organic farm, BBQ pitch and kitchen. There is also a campsite. Interestingly, located close by to Broga Bliss is **Doghouse Broga (8)**, a boutique hotel for pet dogs which features dog villas, outdoor and indoor play areas and a swimming pool. As an additional service (and additional cost, of course), Doghouse Broga also provides pet taxi, a pick-up and return service.

As for organic farms, there are **Fireflies Organic Farm Broga (9)** and **Ladybird Organic Farm (10)**, both located along Jalan Broga. Both offer their produce for sale and conduct educational tours where visitors can experience organic vegetable farming, from seed sowing through harvesting. **A Farm Agrotech (11)** was formed in 2012 as an agricultural consultancy company and later included aquafarming into their repertoire when they started to grow *Tor tambroides*, or *empurau* in Malay, in captivity. Today, they offer a full range of services to aqua and agricultural companies.





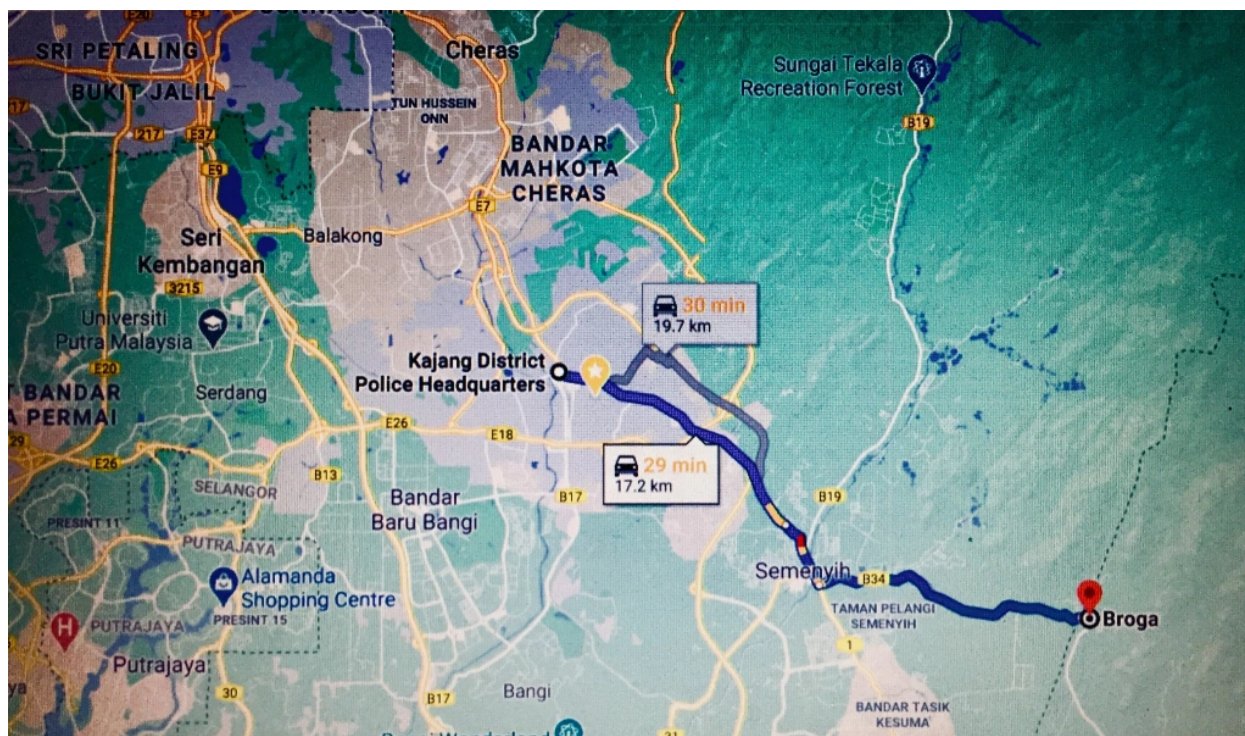
(L) Fireflies Organic Farm Broga / Photo source :

<https://www.facebook.com/firefliesorganicfarmbroga/>

(R) Ladybird Organic Farm / Photo source : <https://www.facebook.com/LadyBirdOrganicFarm/>

Getting There

From Cheras, use the Cheras – Kajang Expressway (E7) and exit to Kajang town. At the main intersection (between Stadium Kajang on the right and Police Station on the left), turn left to join Jalan Semenyih (this is Federal Route 1). Go all the way to Semenyih town, and at the T-junction just after the town, look out for signs to University of Nottingham and Broga (state route B34) and turn left. The distance is 8.2 km or about 11 minutes drive from this junction to Broga town.



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Alice Lives Here



The story of how the gritty citizens of Broga fought the constructions of the largest municipal waste incinerator in Asia, is told through the eyes of Alice Lee; a Broga villager.



Freedom Film Network

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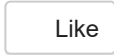
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2 thoughts on “A Very Rough Guide To BROGA”



Thrifty Traveller

March 8, 2021 at 6:44 pm

One of my favourite places.

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