

**The Mandailings in Peninsular Malaysia****The Rawa War of 1848**

Thomas Braddell in his note on the history of Negeri Sembilan enclosed with SS Despatch to the CO dated 29th December 1874, reveals the involvement of the Rawa (Rao) and Mandailing in the Rawa War of 1848. The latter were in Sungai Ujong (Seremban today) following the wake of the Padri War (1816-1833).

" The Rawa disturbances in 1848 are of sufficient importance to justify a few words giving an account of another and a most serious misfortune to the Sungai Ujong mine.

" The Rawa are an adventurous people with a strong turn for trade, living to the north east of the Pagarooyong (Menangkabowe) district, in the middle of Sumatra. They have long been in the habit of trading to the Peninsula, and have established Colonies in several places, the most important of which was at Pahang, where they almost monopolized the trade. The superiority of these people over the ordinary Malay give rise to jealousies which require them to be on their guard, and to combine for mutual protection, so that when any of the tribe are injured the rest are bound to assist in protecting them, a feature in their character which adds to the dislike of them entertained by the Malays; but being like the Chinese, good colonists, they are allowed to remain in the Malay countries.

" Causes of. - A number of the tribe had settled in Sungei Ujong, and were getting the chief portion of the local trade in their hands where three of them were put to death by the Klana for an alleged offence. The justice of the execution was denied by the trio, and they determined to exact vengeance. Assistance was sent for to Pahang, their head quarters, and open war was declared. This was said to have been the pretext for the war, but the truth probably was, that the many differences and jealousies between the two races had brought matters to such a state that it required very little to bring on a war.

" Result of. - The Rawa proved their individual superiority over the Malays during the war. But being few in numbers and distant from their resources they were at last obliged to retire; and they have not since been allowed to return to the country. The Rawas who are now in Sungei Ujong are said to be Tamoosai Rawas, and do not mix with the others, Rawa Ulu (or up country Rawas); in fact the Tamoosais sided with the Klana."

Here in this passage we have the first mention of the presence of the "Tamoosai" in the Peninsula in the second quarter of the 19th century. There were probably two groups of people from Rao - the Mandailings and the Rao. Rao is the frontier country between Minangkabau and Mandailing. The Rao or "orang Rawa" as they are known in the Peninsula and in East Sumatra. The "Tamoosai Rawas" were Rawa from Tambusai, while Rawa Ulu (or up country Rawas) were probably Mandailing, whose homeland was to the north of Rao. Of course, this does not discount the Tambusai's presence, a distinct group in themselves.

The Mandailing involvement in the "Sungei Ujong" affair was confirmed by J.C. Pasqual who wrote about the episode in 1930s based on an account from "Raja Allang ibni Raja Brayun, who was a Forest ranger of the Ulu Langat district in the late 'eighties (1880's)". He implied that the Mandailings were not on the side of Dato' Klana but against him.

" At this time Raja Brayun, a Mendeleng from Sumatra, invaded Sungei Ujong and attacked Datoh Klana Sendeng, because a friend of Raja Brayun was murdered and Datoh Klana Sendeng refused to pay the blood money of \$400 according to 'adat' Malayu. On the side of Raja Brayun there was Panglima Garang and Panglima Si Gara, both 'invulnerable' and fierce warriors, besides 500 fighting men. But he was defeated although he had bribed one of Datoh Klana Sendeng's men with \$3,000 to burn the granaries and blow up a powder magazine. Raja Brayun then retired to Recko, a village on the Langat river a short distance upstream from Kajang, and invited Raja Abdulsamad to live with him. He built a stockade at Recko and had a large force of fighting men who lived by robbery and raiding Sakais to sell them into slavery."

Mandailings as well as Rawas raided Orang Asli and sold them into slavery. This is not to say that historically all Mandailings and Rawas were a party to this. Other Mandailings were also noted in British records as having employed Orang Asli.

**>>> back to 'The Mandailings in Peninsular Malaysia'**

[contents](#)[links](#)[contact](#)[pictures](#)[old pictures](#)

