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PERAK, THE ABODE OF GRACE
A STUDY OF AN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY MALAY STATE

A Thesis
Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Cornell University for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

by

Barbara June Watson Andaya

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January, 1975

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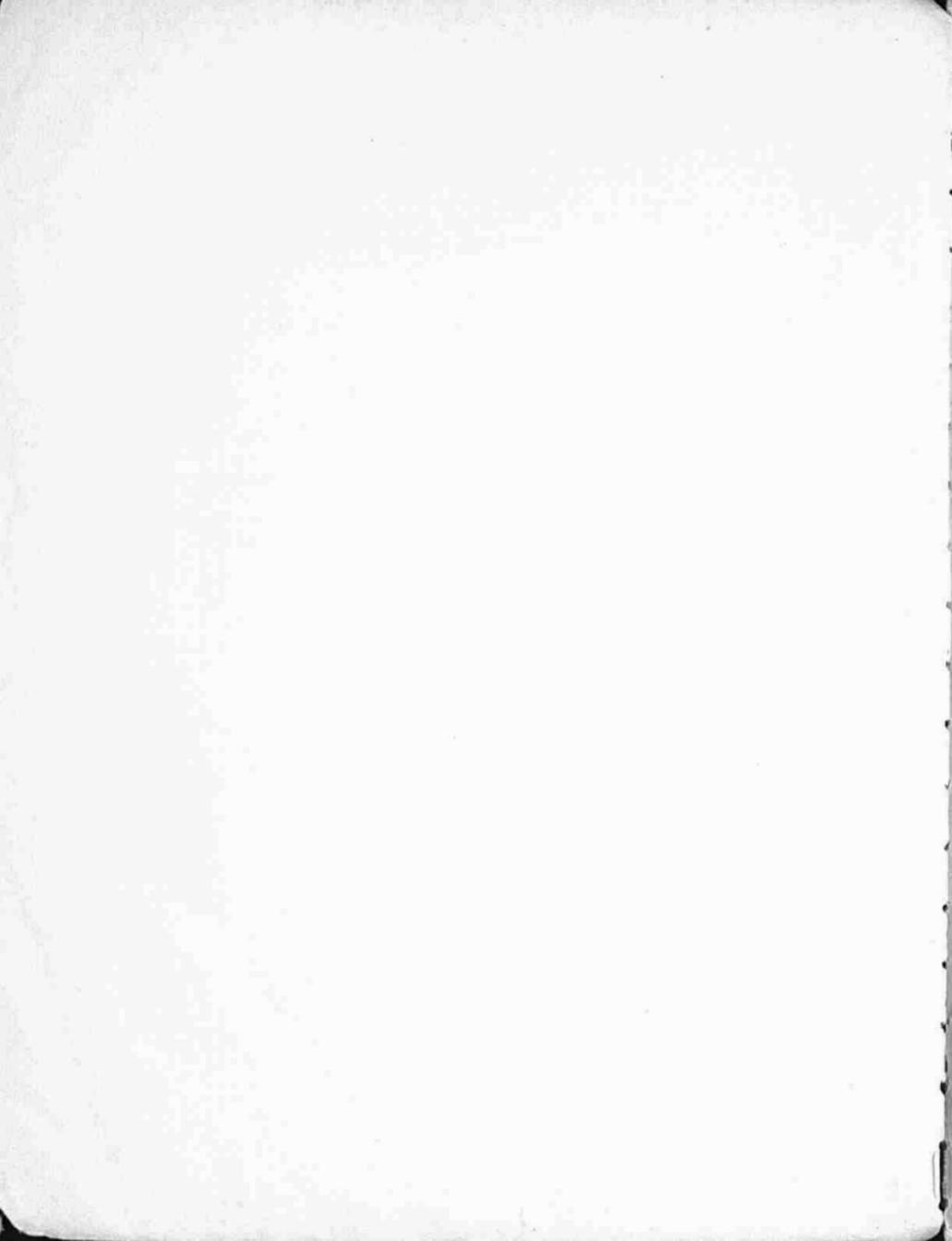
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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

The author was born in Sydney, Australia, on 7 June 1943 and received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Sydney University in 1963. After teaching for three years with the New South Wales Department of Education, she obtained an East-West Center Fellowship and consequently received her Master of Arts degree from the University of Hawaii in 1969. She is married to Leonard Y. Andaya.



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION	1
 <u>Chapter</u>	
I. THE BACKGROUND: PERAK AND THE MALAY WORLD	23
II. PERAK AND THE DUTCH EAST INDIA COMPANY	102
III. SULTAN ISKANDAR AND THE DUTCH ALLIANCE	186
IV. THE REIGN OF SULTAN ISKANDAR SYAH, AS DESCRIBED IN THE <u>MISA MELAYU</u>	237
V. THE TESTING OF THE ALLIANCE IN 1759 AND THE RETHINKING OF 1761	333
VI. A NEW DIPLOMACY, 1765-1768	399
VII. THE YEARS OF REASSESSMENT, 1769-1773	452
VIII. EIGHT TROUBLED YEARS, 1773-1781	493
IX. THE FINAL YEARS OF THE DUTCH ALLIANCE	545
CONCLUSION	596

Appendix

	<u>Page</u>
A. TRANSLATION OF RAJA CULAN'S SYAIR, "VERSES ON THE RAJA'S TRIP TO SEA"	611
B. TIN MINING IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY PERAK	666
C. THE ART OF ELEPHANT HUNTING	674
D. THE PERAK <u>NUBAT</u>	679
E. TREATIES BETWEEN PERAK AND THE VOC DURING THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY	682
C. COPY OF A MALAY LETTER FROM SULTAN ALAUDDIN TO VAN BRAAM, 20 Sept. 1784	689
GLOSSARY	690
BIBLIOGRAPHY	704

MAPS AND DIAGRAMS

<u>Map</u>	<u>Page</u>
1. Perak in the Malay World	696
2. Perak in the Eighteenth Century	697
3. A Malay Map of Perak, 1876	698
4. Thomas Forrest's Map of Perak, 1792	699
5. Principal Tin Mining Areas in <u>Hilir</u> Perak, 1768	700
6. Principal Tin Mining Areas in the Kuala Kangsar Area and <u>Ulu</u> Perak, Showing Borders with Patani	701
7. Route of Sultan Iskandar's Trip to Larut, 1761	702
 Diagram to Show Relationship Between Eighteenth Century Rulers of Perak	 703

ABBREVIATIONS

ACC	Archieven de Admiraliteit Colleges
Add. Ms.	Additional Manuscript
ANU	Australian National University, Canberra
AN	Arkip Negara, Kuala Lumpur
BKI	<u>Bidragen tot de Taal-, Land-en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië</u>
B.M.	British Museum
CO	Colonial Office Records
Cod. Or.	Codex Orientalis
fo., foll.	folio, folios.
FCCP	Fort Cornwallis Council Papers
FWCP	Fort William Council Papers
FSGCP	Fort St. George Council Papers
FMJ	Federation Museums Journal
Hj.	Haji
Hs.	Handschrift
IESHR	<u>Indian Economic and Social History Review</u>
IG	<u>De Indische Gids</u>
JIAEA	<u>Journal of the Indian Archipelago and Eastern Asia</u>
JMBRAS	<u>Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society</u>
JSBRAS	<u>Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society</u>

JRAS	<u>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society</u>
JRGS	<u>Journal of the Royal Geographical Society</u>
JSEAH	<u>Journal of Southeast Asian History</u>
JSEAS	<u>Journal of Southeast Asian Studies</u>
JSS	<u>Journal of the Siam Society</u>
KA	Koloniaal Archief
Kon. Inst.	Koninklijk Instituut
MJH	<u>Malayan Journal of History</u>
MJTG	<u>Malaysian Journal of Tropical Geography</u>
Ms.	Manuscript
OB	Overgekomen Brieven (Incoming Letters from Batavia)
OIC	Archieven van het Committee tot den Oost Indische Handel en Bezettingen
OIE	Oost Indie uit Engeland (Documents concerning the East Indies and the Cape of Good Hope sent to The Netherlands from England)
PMS	Papers on Malay Subjects
r	recto
RAS	Royal Asiatic Society, London
Reg.	Register
RKP	Raja Kamaralzaman Papers, Arkip Negara, Kuala Lumpur
SFR	Sumatra Factory Records
SSR	Straits Settlements Records
SOAS	School of Oriental and African Studies, London
TBG	<u>Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde</u>

VBG	<u>Verhandelingen van het Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen</u>
VKI	<u>Verhandelingen van de Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde</u>
v	verso
VOC	Vereenigde Oost Indische Compagnie



INTRODUCTION

In contrast with the nineteenth or even the seventeenth, the eighteenth century Malay world has received little attention from historians of the area. For the most part, scholars have been content to depict the period as one of slumber, if not positive decay, when Malays were forced to yield ground to outsiders, both indigenous and European.¹ Yet the disintegration of the Johor Empire, the rise and fall of the Bugis star, the brief rallying of Minangkabau power, and the loosening of Siamese control over the northern Malay peninsula did not substantially affect the pattern of Malay life, despite the conflicts they evoked. Many smaller states remained essentially untouched, adjusting to each succeeding situation without undue difficulty. The power vacuum of the middle and later eighteenth century found these negeri² puzzled and uncertain of

1. One of the most vocal exponents of the "decay" theory was Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles. Raffles blamed Dutch monopolies for the piracy prevalent in the archipelago during the early nineteenth century and for the "state of decay" in which Malay states found themselves. Lady Sophia Raffles, Memoir of the Life and Public Services of Thomas Stamford Raffles (London, 1830), Appendix, pp. 10-11. See Anne Lindsay Reber, The Sulu World in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries, M.S. Thesis, Cornell University, 1966, pp. 1-31 for a discussion of Raffles' theories and their influence on the historiography of the Malay world.

The view that Asian civilization decayed during the eighteenth century was decried by J. C. van Leur, who argued against projecting a picture of decay back from the nineteenth to the previous century. Indonesian Trade and Society (The Hague, 1955), pp. 271, 283.

2. State or settlement.

the future rather than in a state of decline. The various rulers were fully aware of the issues dominating Malay politics and realised that, in a period of uncertainty, caution was essential. It could be argued that the very insecurity which characterised the later eighteenth century made Malay rulers even more alive to the changing balance of power, even more cognizant of the possible results of what might be called their "foreign policy." For some states, emerging from centuries of dependency, this period was one of a new autonomy, when they were learning to draw on their own resources rather than to act at the dictates of an overlord.

The state of Perak, on the west coast of the Malay peninsula, is a case in point. Dominated by the court of Aceh during the seventeenth century, it had won a modicum of independence only to become a prey to periodic attacks from pirates and Bugis raiders.³ During the 1720's and 1730's Perak was also threatened by the Bugis and Minangkabau disputes which form a continuing theme in the years that followed. Yet from the signing of a treaty with the Netherlands Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC) in 1746 until the end of the century, Perak's rulers managed to tread the fine line of diplomacy, maintaining domestic peace and equitable relations with their neighbors in a period when invasion and

3. See Chapter II. In 1701, for example, Johor sent perahu to Kuala Perak to drive away the pirates there, and Dutch records show that the dangerous waters around Perak were a major impediment to trade between Melaka and areas along the Perak coast. Leonari Y. Andaya, The Kingdom of Johor 1641-1728: A Study of Economic and Political Developments in the Straits of Malacca, Ph.D. Thesis, Cornell University, 1971, p. 217; KA 1668 OB 1719, Gov. Rooselaar to Batavia, 16 April 1709, fo. 60; KA 1905 OB 1725, Report given by Capt. Ackerman on visit to Dinding Island, 4 Jan. 1725, foll. 49-50.

civil war were endemic. The degree to which Perak's alliance with the Dutch contributed to this unprecedented situation is the basic concern of this study.

In 1939 J. C. van Leur pointed to the paucity of scholarship concerning eighteenth century Indonesia, especially any studies of outlying posts.⁴ Although ample archival material is available for an examination of this period, for various reasons it has never been exploited. The "unbroken unity" which van Leur argues can be traced in the history of Asian civilization from the seventeenth through to the nineteenth century is not reflected in Indonesian historiography.⁵

Historians have isolated several causes behind the lack of interest in the eighteenth century. While the vast bulk of material relating to this period comes from the archives of the Dutch East India Company, Dutch scholars, as Coolhaas has indicated, have tended to ignore what is regarded as a somewhat inglorious era in colonial history.⁶ Although van Leur claims that the conception of a weak eighteenth century in Dutch history was in many ways a myth created by the 1795 patriots and the Romantics, Professor Boxer points to a very real decline in Dutch fortunes. He contrasts the reports of the Governor-General and Council

4. van Leur, Indonesian Trade and Society, p. 275.

5. Ibid., p. 283.

6. W. Ph. Coolhaas, "Dutch Contributions to the Historiography of Colonial Society in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," in D. G. E. Hall, ed., Historians of Southeast Asia (London, 1961), p. 226. A comparison can be made, for example, between the bulk of published archival material available for the seventeenth century with the paucity of that relating to the eighteenth.

of Batavia in 1648 with those of 1750; no more could the Dutch officials in Indonesia say "we are living, thank God, in a flourishing century."⁷ On the other hand, it can be argued that while this decline may partly account for lessening Dutch interest in the eighteenth century, it should not logically influence the attitude of those concerned with indigenous history.

If little attention has been directed to Indonesia in general, the history of the peninsular Malay states has been almost completely neglected by Dutch scholars.⁸ This apparent indifference may, to a degree, be traced to the signing of the Anglo-Dutch Treaty in 1824.⁹ By dividing the Malay Peninsula from Sumatra, the Treaty created an artificial entity of an area which had always been an inseparable part of the Indonesian world. The Melaka straits had been for Malays an inland sea, a natural highway serving "to link together the adjoining shores since the dawn of history."¹⁰ The division of the old sultanate of Johor

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7. C. R. Boxer, The Dutch Seaborne Empire, 1600-1800 (London, 1965), p. 268. For the original comments by Governor-General van der Lyn in 1649 and Governor-General Mossel in 1750, see J. K. J. de Jonge, De Opkomst van het Nederlansch Gezag in Oost Indie: Verzameling van Onuitgegeven Stukken uit het Oud Kolonial Archief (The Hague and Amsterdam, 1862-83), VI, 8-13, X, 164-165.
8. One should mark the notable exception of E. Netscher's De Nederlanders in Djohor en Siak, VBG, XXXV, 1870.
9. The text of the treaty is in H. Marks, The First Contest for Singapore, VKI XXVII (1959), 252-262. Marks also discusses the preceding negotiations, as does Nicholas Tarling in Anglo-Dutch Rivalry in the Malay World, 1780-1824 (Sydney, 1962), pp. 81-173 and Ph. van der Kemp, "De Geschiedenis van het Londonsche Tractaat van 17 Maart 1824," BKI, LVI (1904), 1-244.
10. C. A. Fisher, Southeast Asia: A Social, Economic and Political Geography (London, 1964), p. 585.

brought about by the treaty destroyed the essential unity, the gestalt, of the Malay world. The Bendahara of Pahang expressed the shock which was felt by Malays, the pawns in a European political gambit.

We have been struck with amazement at the dispensation of the Lord, the Creator of all the worlds, who has accomplished his divine will and decree in a way which is not comprehensible to us, parting brother from brother, father from son and friend from friend.¹¹

This new geographical and political division, a startling departure from anything known before in the archipelago, created a historiographical division as well. Since then, Dutch scholars have evinced little interest in the peninsular states and, with a few exceptions, their British counterparts have not attempted to exploit the vast mass of Dutch material available in both archival and published form.

It is ironic that, while relevant European sources for the eighteenth century were not explored, a large body of material was collected from the Malays themselves. Some British administrators and civil servants were sufficiently interested in Malay literature, customs and folklore to record their own observations and findings, to trace genealogies, to publish or collect Malay legends and histories.¹² During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century their work laid the foundation for Malay studies and to them the modern student owes a particular debt.

One of the most prominent of these early scholars was W. E. Max-

11. Notes and Queries No. 4, issued with JSBRAS, XVII (June, 1886), 111-113.
12. See C. D. Cowan, "Ideas of History in the Journal of the Malayan (Straits) Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1878-1941," in Hall, Historians of Southeast Asia, pp. 279-285.

well.¹³ Without the material he collected, any study of Perak history would be rendered infinitely more difficult. He understood the importance of obtaining information relating to "local traditions, and of getting explanations about various customs and ceremonies of the Perak Malays which will diminish as civilisation extends and as the days of Malay rule recede further into the past."¹⁴ His collection of manuscripts and genealogies, now deposited in the libraries of the Royal Asiatic Society and of the School of Oriental and African Studies in London is invaluable for those interested in Malay custom and history, as are the numerous articles and translations which Maxwell submitted to the early editions of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society. As one contemporary observer wrote of him:

Speaking their language idiom fluently, he not only likes [the Malays] but takes the trouble to understand them and enter into their ideas and feelings. He studies their literature, superstitions, and customs carefully. . . . I should think few people understand the Malays better than he does.¹⁵

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13. William Edward Maxwell was born in 1846 and received a training in law. He was acting Assistant Resident in Perak in 1876 and Assistant Resident from 1878 to 1882. He died in 1897. For a fuller biography, see Emily Sadka, The Protected Malay States (Kuala Lumpur, 1968), pp. 389-390 and D. Kovilpillai, Sir William Edward Maxwell in Malaya, 1865-1895, B.A. Hons. Exercise, Uni. of Malaya, Singapore, 1958 and Cowan, "Ideas of History," pp. 279-281.
14. W. E. Maxwell, "Notes on Two Perak Manuscripts," JSBRAS, II (Dec. 1878), 193.
15. Isabella Bird, The Golden Chersonese and the Way Thither (Kuala Lumpur and London, 1967), p. 285. This fulsome praise should be qualified by noting Hugh Low's comment: "Mr. Maxwell seemed to be much liked by [the people] . . . he is a little rough and hasty in his ways with the inferior classes." But Low praised Maxwell for his diligence and felt he was an admirable choice for the position of Assistant Resident. Emily Sadka, ed., "The Diary of Sir Hugh Low, Perak, 1877," JMBRAS, XXVII, 4 (1954), 41, 48, 63.

Many years later, R. J. Wilkinson, himself an avid student of Malay history and folklore, and his protege, R. O. Winstedt, the doyen of Malay studies, collaborated on a history of Perak which incorporated material from an earlier work of Wilkinson's¹⁶ as well as information collected by Winstedt as Inspector of Schools in Perak.¹⁷ A principal informant for both Maxwell and Winstedt was Penghulu Raja Haji Yahya, who was not only the Perak mufiti¹⁸ but was also a poet in his own right. Raja Haji Yahya was, furthermore, a descendent of Raja Culan, author of the eighteenth century Perak chronicle, the Misa Melayu, and was himself an authority on Malay court ceremonies.¹⁹ It was he who helped compile the family genealogies of the Perak nobles and who provided much of the material used by Winstedt and Wilkinson.

It is forty years since Winstedt and Wilkinson published their joint "History of Perak" in October, 1934.²⁰ Since that time no new work

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16. R. J. Wilkinson, A History of the Peninsular Malays (Singapore, 1923). See his own account of the growth of his interest in Malay culture in the preface to A Malay-English Dictionary (London, 1959), I, i-iv.
17. Both Wilkinson and Winstedt had long experience in Malaya and were keenly interested in Malay history, literature and culture. For a brief biography of Winstedt and a bibliography of his writings, see John Bastin and R. Roolvink, eds., Indonesian and Malayan Studies: Essays presented to Sir Richard Winstedt on his Eighty-Fifth Birthday (Oxford, 1864, pp. 1-23) and Winstedt's own autobiography, Start from Alif, Count from One (Kuala Lumpur, 1969). For further notes on Winstedt's life as well as that of Wilkinson, see Cowan, "Ideas of History," pp. 282-285 and William Roff, The Growth of Malay Nationalism (Kuala Lumpur, 1967), p. 137, n. 32 and p. 130, no. 10.
18. Muslim judge who gives rulings on points of law.
19. Bastin and Roolvink, Indonesian and Malayan Studies, pp. 2-3.
20. R. O. Winstedt and R. J. Wilkinson, "A History of Perak," JMBRAS, XII, 1 (1934).

relating to pre-1800 Perak has appeared. "A History of Perak" has thus become virtually the sole source of background information for scholars working in the later period. Yet, as the authors themselves realized, their work had severe shortcomings, especially in regard to the eighteenth century. For the post-1800 period, they could draw on English records and for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Winstedt consulted pioneer works by Dutch scholars as well as the published Dagh-Register from Batavia.²¹ For the years from 1700 to 1800, however, the authors relied heavily on the available Malay histories, attempting to extract from them the "facts" in order to build up a skeleton outline of events. But the very nature of Malay sources renders them unsuitable to this approach and consequently, the period which this study will survey suffered badly. In his preface, Winstedt pointed to the limits of his work:

Meticulous, even tiresome detail must precede generalisation. There is hardly a deduction in this book; it is a plain unvarnished record of facts. Certainly the scaffolding of history consists of facts and this book pretends no more than to provide scaffolding. . . .²²

However, despite Winstedt's hope that "A History of Perak" would be simply a contribution to the ongoing process of historical research, it is still regarded as a standard work on pre-colonial Perak on which both Malaysian and western writers depend heavily.²³

21. Dagh Register Gehouden in 't Casteel Batavia van t Passeerende Jaer ter Plaetse als over Geheel Nederlands India, 1624-82 (Batavia, 1887 etc.)

22. Winstedt and Wilkinson, "History of Perak," Preface.

23. See, for example, Khoo Kay Kim, The Western Malay States 1850-1873:

For a deeper understanding of events in Perak during the eighteenth century, one must go to the primary sources, the records of the Dutch East India Company deposited in the Algemeen Rijksarchief in The Hague. While the material to be found in The Netherlands to-day is only a fraction of what must once have been housed in the "lost archives" of Dutch Melaka,²⁴ it nonetheless preserves a huge corpus of material relating to the history of the Malay world. The content of this information, however, differs according to the nature of Dutch relations with a particular state. For example, the correspondence between succeeding Melaka governors and Company representatives in Perak differs from information about Johor, where there was no permanent VOC post. In summarising affairs in the latter state, the Governor depended on second-hand accounts and reports submitted by special missions;²⁵ in Perak, on the other hand, he had a permanent resident who could furnish him with details of day-to-day existence.

This came about as a result of the treaty signed between the VOC and Sultan Muzafar Syah of Perak in 1746, by which the Company gained a monopoly of the tin trade and the right to establish a factory under the supervision of a resident. The latter, replaced triennially, was expected to furnish regular reports, not only about the trading situation,

23. (cont'd.)

the Effects of Commercial Development on Malay Politics (Kuala Lumpur, 1972), pp. 29-34; Haji Buyong Adil, Sejarah Perak (Kuala Lumpur, 1972), pp. 1-48.

24. See F. R. J. Verhoeven, "The Lost Archives of Dutch Malacca," JMBRAS, XXXVII, 2 (1964), 11-27.

25. Andaya, The Kingdom of Johor, pp. 8-10.

but also about events in the neighbouring states as well as in Perak itself. Unfortunately, though copies of the resident's letters from 1746 to 1757 were kept in Batavia and Melaka, they have long since been lost.²⁶ The historian must rely on the missives from the Melaka Governor and Council to the Governor-General at Batavia which, in summarising the Company's fortunes in the peninsular area, include the main points from the Perak resident's letters. This amounts to an unofficial censoring, for the information Melaka considered trivial may well have proved invaluable to future researchers. It is therefore gratifying that after 1757 orders were issued for copies of the incoming and outgoing letters between Perak and Melaka to be sent on to Amsterdam. To these were added the increasingly detailed "secret and apart letters" which, in the latter part of the century, focussed heavily on the activities of the Bugis and the English in the peninsular area.

Yet these records, valuable as they are, should not be regarded as infallible, for the quality and content varies according to the competency and interest of individual residents. Some sent relatively detailed letters to the Governor, while others were content to despatch information which appears shallow and incomplete, at least from the historian's viewpoint. The fact that these residents was replaced at regular intervals, however, means that some check on personal prejudices or

²⁶. The archival staff of the Arsip Nasional in Jakarta have made great progress in recataloguing and organising the present holdings. They were most patient and helpful in showing me what was available but there was no record of the Perak letters prior to 1758 nor of several other reports missing in The Hague. I noted in particular the lack of Thomas Schippers' report of 1753; Ary Verbrugge's Report, 1756; Antony Werndly's Report, 1772; Johan Hensel's Report, 1782 and the letters from 1762.

inadequacies is provided. Further information comes from the special missions which were periodically sent from Melaka to Perak on the accession of a new ruler, to negotiate another treaty or to investigate some disturbance in trade or tin deliveries. The material gathered by the envoys serves to flesh out that provided in the resident's letters and acts as a further control on information given by him.

Even so, the VOC material, regardless of its source, contains inherent biases. These letters and reports are essentially trading accounts, aimed at supplying information about the economic situation in terms of Dutch interests. They may serve to misrepresent reality, since, if trade went well, the Dutch felt there was little more to say. It was only when the flow of tin in Perak was interrupted, or when the Company's position was threatened, that the reports become copious. While the Melaka Council might inform Batavia that in Perak "everything is in a quiet and peaceful situation; the tin collection is more frequent. . . .²⁷ There is nothing particular to deal with,"²⁸ the historian should not assume that time stood still. It is significant that there is least Dutch information about the reign of a strong ruler like Sultan Iskandar Syah (1752-1765), when the tin trade proceeded smoothly, but it is in precisely these years that the Malay material is most extensive.

It will become clear that an increase in the amount of information concerning Perak may merely indicate a situation which, while endangering or potentially threatening to Dutch trade, was of minor im-

27. Zeeland papers, 5203/1364/5528, Gov. Boelen to Batavia, 29 March 1762.

28. Zeeland papers, 5263/1704, Boelen to Batavia, 29 March 1763.

portance in Malay eyes. By the same token, the comments and value judgments of Dutch observers about the character of prominent Malay personalities invariably coincides with the degree to which they were considered amenable to or co-operative with VOC policy. Again, despite the abundance of detail available in the Dutch sources, the information deals principally with Company-court relations and with the progress of the tin trade. Only rarely is there a glimpse into the lives of the ordinary people or a hint of their attitudes towards their own rulers or the alliance with the Dutch. Yet though the VOC records do not permit the same detailed analysis of society as does the British material used by J. M. Gullick in his study of nineteenth Perak,²⁹ they constitute fifty years of unbroken correspondence which can make a substantial contribution to our understanding of the nature of the so-called "traditional" Malay state.³⁰ Despite the frustrations a researcher encounters when using them, these Dutch letters and reports supply unique data, unavailable in any other source. As such they remain the framework of this study, a framework upon which the Malay materials can be superimposed to give an

29. J. M. Gullick, The Indigenous Political Systems of Western Malaya (London, 1958).

30. On the basis of my own research, I find it impossible to agree with Graham Irwin's comment about the eighteenth century Melaka records. When the records of Dutch Malacca are most extensive, as they are in the second half of the eighteenth century, they are least interesting, being largely compounded of arid legal controversies, details of not very enterprising trading and the purely domestic affairs of what by then had degenerated into an ingrown and inward-looking community. G. Irwin, "University of Singapore Library. Dutch Archives Microfilm Collection," in K. G. Tregonning, ed., Malaysian Historical Sources (Singapore, 1962), p. 129.

added dimension and to help the twentieth century historian see events as they might have appeared to Perak Malays in the eighteenth.

The Malay material for the period exists in varied forms. As this study will show, eighteenth century Perak history is intimately linked with that of its neighbour, the Bugis state of Selangor. Events in Perak as seen through Bugis eyes are described in two major works, the Tuhfat al Nafis and the so-called Hikayat Negeri Johor. The most well-known version of the Tuhfat al Nafis was written in Riau sometime after 1865 and represents what might be termed the "official" Bugis view of their activities in the Malay world. The text has been highly regarded by western historians for its apparent objectivity and the lack of the mythical element common to Malay histories. As recent studies have shown, however, Raja Ali Haji, its author, was as concerned as any Malay chronicler with the reputation of his ancestors and frequently adapted or expanded his sources to present his forebears in a more favourable light.³¹ To a lesser extent this is also true of the Hikayat Negeri Johor, which has been identified as the Sejarah Selangor consulted by Raja Ali Haji.³²

31. See Virginia Matheson, "The Tuhfat al-Nafis: Structure and Sources," BKI, 127, 3 (1971), p. 389. I am most grateful to Dr. Matheson for allowing me to consult relevant sections in her thesis, The Tuhfat al-Nafis (The Precious Gift): A Nineteenth Century Malay History Critically Examined, Ph.D. Thesis, Monash University, 1973.

Quotations from the Tuhfat al-Nafis in this study refer to the text romanised by Munsir bin Ali and published in Singapore in 1965. Munsir bin Ali used the transcription by Winstedt which was published in Jawi in JMBRAS, X, 2 (1932).

32. Ismail bin Hussein, Hikayat Negeri Johor, M.A. Thesis, Univ. of Malaya, 1962, p. 38; Matheson, "The Tufat al Nafis," pp. 380-81. Quotations referring to the Hikayat Negeri Johor in this study are from Professor Ismail's romanisation, which represents one single text, rather than a combination of two, like that transcribed by Winstedt and published in JMBRAS, X, 1 (1932), pp. 170 ff.

The pro-Bugis bias of these texts is countered by the Minangkabau-oriented "history of Siak," which provides details about the Siak princes who were to have an indirect but important effect on the course of Perak history.³³

There is a large number of Perak texts, genealogies, law codes and legends, in the collections of the School of Oriental and African Studies and the Royal Asiatic Society in London, and in the Arsip Negara in Kuala Lumpur.³⁴ One of the most useful for the present study is that numbered 105 in the R.A.S. Maxwell collection, which will be called Silsilah Raja-Raja Perak I (Genealogy of the Kings of Perak). Described as a "remarkable little text," this silsilah begins with an abbreviated Sejarah Melayu, continues with a history of Johor and moves to Perak after the killing of Johor's Sultan Mahmud in 1699.³⁵ Though basically a king list, this genealogy, like the Silsilah Melaka Kerajaan Negeri Perak (Maxwell 24, R.A.S.) and the Silsilah Raja-Raja Perak II (Maxwell 103

33. Matheson, "The Tuhfat al-Nafis," p. 389. The History of Siak quoted by Raja Ali Haji has been identified as Cod. Or. 7304 in the Uni. of Leiden library. Dr. R. Roolvink is now engaged in a critical edition of this text.

34. For example, Maxwell 44, R.A.S.; SOAS Mss. 40333; 46943; 40327 (translated by J. Rigby as The Ninety-Nine Laws of Perak (Kuala Lumpur, 1929); Raja Kamaralzaman papers, SP. 9 (Arkip Negara, Kuala Lumpur), nos. 6c, 13, 14, 15.

35. R. Roolvink, "The Variant Versions of the Malay Annals," BKI, 125 (1967), 306 and n. 12. There are two copies of this manuscript, Maxwell 105 in the Royal Asiatic Society and Cod. Or. 7645 in the Leiden University Library. The latter was originally copied for Maxwell in Penang in 1888, the original copy belonging to Raja Osman, the Bendahara of Perak. Maxwell apparently gave the text to Snouck Hurgronje. The last section of this text, which deals with the history of Perak, was translated by W. E. Maxwell as part of his article "A History of Perak from Native Sources," JSBRAS, IX (June, 1882), 95-108. Quotations from the Silsilah Raja-Raja Perak I are from the R.A.S. manuscript.

R.A.S.),³⁶ contains information which does not appear elsewhere and serves to complement the major eighteenth century Perak text, the Misa Melayu.

According to Professor Teugku Iskandar, the Misa Melayu falls naturally into three parts, each of which was written at different times. The first section covers events in Perak from the beginning of the eighteenth century until 1758 and is the work of a contemporary chronicler, Raja Culan. He also composed the long svair, or poem, which makes up the second section of the text and describes a voyage to sea by the ruler in 1761. The last part, briefly recounting events from the death of Sultan Iskandar in 1765 and ending with the succession of Sultan Alauddin in 1773 was added later, probably by another writer. Subsequently, a copiest joined the three texts together,³⁷ in which form it was romanised and published by Winstedt in 1919 and has since been reprinted several times.

Convention required that Raja Culan, the author of the Misa Melayu, decry his own ability, but his work is nonetheless a fine example of classical Malay, both in prose and poetry. Scholars have tended to com-

36. Maxwell 24 in the R.A.S. collection, which I have entitled Silsilah Melaka Kerajaan Negeri Perak contains some independent traditions not found in other genealogies. The earlier sections may pre-date the Misa Melayu, although one copiest, possibly Maxwell's, made certain insertions which show that he consulted Raja Culan's work.

Maxwell 103, called Silsilah Raja-Raja Perak II, was compiled by Raja Haji Yahya in 1882 and apart from a few historical notes in a pure genealogical record, intended as a continuation of Maxwell 105. Maxwell also translated this and published it under the same title as his previous article. See "A History of Perak from Native Sources," JSBRAS, XIV (Dec. 1884), 305-321.

37. Personal communication, Feb. 20, 1973.

pare it with the Sejarah Melayu, which is much longer and more varied in content. But the Misa Melayu differs in that the time-span covers only about thirty years, from the civil war in the reign of Sultan Muzafar until the succession of Sultan Alauddin in 1773. Raja Culan thus wrote about events which he himself witnessed and with which he was intimately acquainted. This alone makes the text worthy of attention.

There are several manuscripts of the Misa Melayu in existence. The published edition³⁸ was based on three texts collated by Winstedt. The first, which he calls A, is dated A.H. 1252 (1836) and was originally in the possession of Sultan Idris of Perak (1887-1916), who presented it to Wilkinson. The second manuscript, B, was copied in 1908 from one dated A.H. 1252 and was obtained by Winstedt at Belanja, on the Perak River. This contains only the prose sections of the history and has been deposited in the library of the School of Oriental and African Studies as Ms. 48165 (i). Ms. 48165 (ii) in the same collection is Winstedt's manuscript C, which is the syair itself. It was written from memory during the time of Hugh Low's residency in Perak, but closely parallels the version given in A.³⁹ W. E. Maxwell also obtained a copy which is now

38. There are several minor errors in the published edition, which was first edited by R. O. Winstedt and published in Singapore in 1919. For many years it was out of print until it was republished in 1962 by Pustaka Antara in Kuala Lumpur, together with some additional notes. Since 1962 there have been regular reprints. Quotations refer to the 1965 edition, although matters of content have been checked against MS 632 from the Koninklijk Instituut Library in Leiden.

The name Misa Melayu caused some comment. Maxwell at first thought that Misa was a corruption of misal, meaning exemplar but later came to the conclusion that it had been modelled on Javanese works, the titles of which also bear the honorific Misa. Maxwell, "History of Perak from Native Sources," (1884), 310. See also Winstedt's notes, Misa Melayu, p. 209.

in the Royal Asiatic Society as Maxwell 25 and was copied in 1877 in Singapore from a manuscript belonging to Raja Muda Yusuf of Perak. Maxwell donated another copy of this to the Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal, Land en Volkenkunde in The Netherlands, of which he was an honorary member. It is now in the Institute's library in Leiden as HS. 632. These two texts show some variations with those used by Winstedt, but these are minor and are of interest only to the philologist.

No detailed examination has been made of the Misa Melayu, although some reading aids, designed basically for school children, have been published.⁴⁰ This is the more surprising since the literary worth of the text has been acknowledged and it bears all the hallmarks of the traditional Malay chronicle.⁴¹ The ruler and his court are the focus for the narrative and the government of the Raja is used as a directive, a basis on which to arrange historiography. The remarks made by Professor Teeuw about Malay histories in general are equally applicable to the Misa Melayu. The Malay hikayat, he says, was not merely a record of events; it was also a glorification of the ruler and his dynasty.

It would be foolish to expect such an historian to observe objectively in any western sense. His own experience of life and the world around him must determine to an absolute degree what he sees and how he sees it. The result is a type of historical writing which conforms to the environment and viewpoint of the writer;

39. Winstedt's notes, Misa Melayu, pp. 207-208.

40. Buyong Adil AlHaj (Haji Buyong Adil), Panduan Mempelajari Hikayat Misa Melayu (Singapore, 1966); Ismail Ahmad, Misa Melayu (Melaka, 1966).

41. C. Hooykaas, Over Malaise Literatuur (Leiden, 1947), p. 99.

this can only mean deep respect and praise for his prince. Episodes which do the royal personage less than justice are ignored or minimised. The royal genealogy is streamlined; the identification of the prince with his distinguished ancestors is jealously guarded.⁴²

The very faithfulness of the Misa Melayu to these traditions may supply a possible reason for its comparative neglect. Historians in the past, eager for "facts," have been disappointed. In Maxwell's words

Accounts of palace festivities, the installation of chiefs, the amusement of youthful princes, the superstitious ceremonies in cases of illness, religious observances and royal progresses fill page after page while events of historical interest receive comparatively little notice.⁴³

Winstedt's comments are kinder, for he points to the literary as well as historical merits of the work, considering it one of the "more valuable" of Malay chronicles.⁴⁴ As yet, however, no attempt has been made to see the text in its own cultural context and consider it as a product of Malay historical method.

It is obvious that the sources for a history of Perak in the eighteenth century, both European and indigenous, must be approached with some care and dealt with on their own terms. They have proved both an asset and a liability to the present study: an asset, because without them the

42. A. Teeuw, ed., Sejarah Melayu (Amsterdam, 1952), p. ix. J. J. Ras, in a timely discussion, has pointed to the fact that "scholars have continued in many cases to evaluate Malay chronicles in the same way as was usual in the nineteenth century." Apart from a few exceptions, the approach to Malay texts has not changed for over a century. J. J. Ras, ed., Hikajat Bandjar (The Hague, 1968), pp. 12-14.

43. W. E. Maxwell, "Notes on Two Perak Manuscripts," JSBRAS, II (Dec. 1878), 189.

44. Winstedt's notes, Misa Melayu, p. 208.

history not only of Perak, but of other areas in the eighteenth century Malay world would remain a blank; a liability, because by their very nature they have delineated and, to a degree, limited the scope of research. Despite the bulk of information Dutch and Malay sources provide, many questions remain unanswered. In such cases the problems raised have been discussed and, if possible, conjectures made, but the temptation to force the material into tidy patterns has been resisted. As in other studies of pre-colonial Southeast Asia, the dearth of information means that the historian's choice of time span and the depth in which he can treat certain subjects is to a great extent shaped by the material available.

This study deals in detail with the period after 1746, the year that the VOC signed a treaty with Perak and the year in which informative reports and letters begin. The Misa Melayu takes up the account a little before 1746 but ends in 1773. After this date there is very little material relating to Perak in Malay sources and the historian must depend largely on the Dutch Company records. This inevitably influences the extent and direction of research. The surrender of Dutch Melaka in 1795 means that even this source dries up until the English documents take up the story again early in the nineteenth century.

A primary concern of the writer is to establish the factual framework within which the events take place, to organise and simply record what occurred in a period about which comparatively little is known. By tapping sources hitherto ignored, it is hoped that a small gap in Malay history will be filled and that material will be provided which will facilitate research in other areas of Malay studies.

A second aim of this thesis is to supply a case study of the manner in which an eighteenth century Malay state functioned. As Wolters has argued: "Studies of Southeast Asian history must always take into account how the world was seen from specific places. Regional histories are subjects in their own right and not examples of the history of larger areas."⁴⁵ This study is essentially a plea for the uniqueness of each Malay negeri; generalisations concerning the nature of "traditional society" may be premature before a number of examples are provided from which common elements as well as disparities can be extracted. Gullick's pioneering work on the indigenous political systems of three western Malay states immediately prior to British intervention may not necessarily apply to the preceding centuries.⁴⁶

Although Perak's history is unique, many of the problems which confronted its rulers were similar to those of other small Malay states along the coasts of the peninsula, Borneo and east Sumatra. A recent study has stressed Kedah's "search for security and independence" during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.⁴⁷ The same concern can also be found in Perak. Like other weak states, Perak had frequently been forced to accept vassal status and acknowledge the suzerainty of a powerful state in the area. During the eighteenth century, however, the

45. O. W. Wolters, The Fall of Srivijaya in Malay History (Ithaca, 1970), pp. ix, xii.

46. Gullick makes it clear that the situation he describes refers mainly to Perak, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan in the period immediately prior to 1874. Gullick, The Indigenous Political Systems, p. 1.

47. R. Bonney, Kedah, 1771-1821: The Search for Security and Independence (Kuala Lumpur, 1971).

loosening of centres of control such as Johor, Aceh and Siam gave new opportunities for alliances. In its search for a strong ally, Perak chose the Dutch East India Company, which became its partner in a contracted friendship.

Attention will focus on the reigns of three brothers, who in turn became rulers of Perak. The first of these is Sultan Iskandar Syah (1752-1765), whose reign is remembered as one of particular glory, although it will be shown that his authority was not as complete as legend would have us believe. Nonetheless, his strong personality emerged from a background of chaos to dominate the political scene and during his reign the position of sultan attained its apogee. Under Sultan Iskandar's rule the economy flourished and he successfully manipulated the Dutch treaty to Perak's advantage while remaining uninvolved with his neighbours, Selangor and Kedah. The Misa Melayu, which he commissioned, served to commemorate this period for Perak Malays, who remembered not the skilful negotiations with the Dutch so much as the brilliance of Sultan Iskandar's court and the efficiency of his government.

Sultan Iskandar was succeeded by his brother, Sultan Mahmud Syah (1765-1773), who made a radical volte face in policy. During his reign Perak became increasingly involved in the affairs of both Selangor and Kedah. Towards the end of his life, Sultan Mahmud decided that Perak's future security depended on a closer association with the Bugis of Selangor rather than on a continuation of the Company alliance. Only his death and the succession of his brother, Sultan Alauddin Syah (1773-1792) prevented a wholesale rejection of the treaty. In the atmosphere of

growing uncertainty which prevailed towards the end of the eighteenth century, Sultan Alauddin continued to regard the Dutch as Perak's logical ally. But while the Perak Malays held to the alliance, the Company itself was crumbling. Sultan Alauddin's successor was to find the treaty which his predecessors had supported for so long swept from under him.

These three rulers, though their policies differed, had one goal in mind--the maintenance of the independence of their state, Perak Daru'r Rizwan, Perak, the Abode of Grace. This study will show that they were successful, for, despite its weakness, Perak escaped the attacks from Siamese, Dutch or Bugis forces incurred by Kedah, Selangor, Riau, Siak, Kelantan and Terengganu during the course of the eighteenth century. The manner in which Sultan Iskandar and his brothers formulated their policies towards the VOC and their Malay neighbours forms a continuing theme in this work. At the same time an effort has been made to convey something of the character of Perak itself and of the personalities, both Malay and European, who helped shape its history. No source provides the entire story but each contains its own insights. Together these varied accounts make up history, which is itself multi-faceted.

Chapter I

THE BACKGROUND: PERAK AND THE MALAY WORLD

It is not until approximately 1500 that the toponym 'Perak,' referring to the small pocket of Malay settlement along the river of the same name, begins to emerge in written records. Tomé Pires, a Portuguese who lived in Melaka for two and a half years at the beginning of the sixteenth century, described Perak at this time as a "village" of about two hundred people. It was, he said, a dependency of Melaka and paid an annual tribute in tin, its most important product.¹

Prior to Pires' account, there is no mention of Perak as such. Archeological findings, combined with Malay legend, indicate that as early as the sixth century there were settlements along the coast in Larut, Benuas and Dinding and inland in the Kinta area.² The evidence shows that these areas had some contact with India and it has been sug-

1. A. Cortesao, The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires, an account of the East, from the Red Sea to Japan, written in Malacca and India in 1512-5, Hakluyt Society second series (London, 1944), II, 261.
2. For a summary of these findings, see H. Quaritch Wales, "Archaeological Researches on Ancient Indian Colonisation in Malaya," JMBRAS, XVIII, 1 (1940), 47-57. See also Winstedt and Wilkinson, "A History of Perak," pp. 5-7; Paul Wheatley, The Golden Kheroneses (Kuala Lumpur, 1961), pp. 197, 297; Maxwell, "The History of Perak from Native Sources," (1882), pp. 87-88; C. C. Brown, "Sejarah Melayu or Malay Annals," JMBRAS, XXV, 1 & 2 (1952, 1953), 18.

gested that Kuala Selinsing, in Larut, may have been a centre for collection, distribution and exchange of goods.³ Written material gives no further information about the nature of these early settlements. We are left with the impression that, even by the mid-fifteenth century, this was a virtually uninhabited tract of land, its coastal plains and inland mountains covered by dense jungle which was penetrated only by swift-flowing rivers. The coast was indented by small bays, creeks and rivers, with mangrove swamps marking the mud flats. Neither Arab, Chinese, nor Indian records mention any ports of call along the eighty-mile coast of present-day Perak. The waters were shallow and passing ships kept well to the west of Pulau Sembilan and Pulau Pangkor, about ten and twenty miles respectively from Kuala Perak.⁴ Even the much-travelled Chinese admiral, Cheng Ho, did not come closer, although in 1409 he sent some men ashore to Pulau Sembilan to gather "aromatic woods."⁵ The area now known as Perak attracted as little attention from Arab sailors. A navigational guide dated 1426 merely notes that the hills of Dinding provided useful sightings for ships sailing down the Melaka Straits.⁶

To the north Kedah flourished and to the south Melaka prospered, but it would appear as if history were passing the intervening regions by. It therefore comes as something of a shock to learn that by the

3. Alistair Lamb, "Penkalan Bujang: An Ancient Port in Kedah," Malaya in History, VII, 1 (1961), 15.

4. Wheatley, The Golden Khersonese, pp. 94, 238 and fig. 40.

5. Ibid., p. 90.

6. Ibid., 241.

middle of the fifteenth century the tiny riverine settlements there had assumed sufficient importance to become a cause of dispute between Melaka and Siam. Pires gives the reason in succinct terms: Selangor, Berman, Manjung, Beruas and Perak, he said, were all "places for tin."⁷

The lure of what the Chinese called "white steel" was great.⁸ Tin had been used for thousands of years to produce alloys such as bronze and pewter and had not been displaced as one of the more valuable metals. It is not clear when the first tin mines on the Malay peninsula were opened, but the deposits in the northern isthmus region had been known to Arab traders at least since the tenth century and three hundred years later Chinese travellers comment on the "high quality tin" found in Ligor, Pahang and Kelantan.⁹ In the fourteenth century China began importing tin from the 'Nanyang,' but, though Ma Huan's account of Cheng Ho's voyages in the early fifteenth century describes two tin mines in the Melaka district, there is still no mention of production in other areas along the west coast.¹⁰ It is possible that it was only during the fifteenth century that the extent of deposits along the Perak, Bernam, Beruas, Dinding and Selangor rivers became apparent.

7. Cortesao, The Suma Oriental, II, 241.

8. J. Needham, The Development of Iron and Steel Technology in China (London, 1958), p. 1.

9. Wheatley, The Golden Khersonese, pp. 77-79, 217-218; Stanley O'Connor, Hindu Gods of Peninsular Siam (Ascona, 1972), p. 12.

10. Wheatley, The Golden Khersonese, pp. 87-91; J. V. G. Mills, ed. and trans., Ying Yai Sheng Lan, "The Overall Survey of the Ocean's Shores" 1433 (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 109-111.

Sovereignty over such areas could bring large revenues to an overlord. During the reign of Sultan Mansur Syah of Melaka (1459-1477) the question of suzerainty over the peninsular west coast became a matter of some importance. According to Pires, Kedah, a vassal of Ayudhia, had asserted its authority here "and Sultan Mansur had been at war with Kedah about this. As [Kedah] was a country of the kingdom of Siam and all the land belonged to the kingdom of Siam, these places were faced with the choice to whom they would be in allegiance. They said to King Marmura, king of Melaka."¹¹

From Melaka's point of view, these scattered settlements were merely fringe areas of its empire, referred to as the rantau barat or western territories.¹² Alluvial tin, however, was readily obtained there and trade and population increased accordingly. Of the settlements named by Pires, Perak was the smallest. It was overshadowed by Beruas, "a trading place" with many people, and by Manjung,¹³ the largest tin-producing area. These two districts vied for preeminence and it was not long before disputes between them led to intervention by the ruler of Melaka, Sultan Mahmud Syah (1488-1528). According to the Shellabear version of the Sejarah Melayu, a force sent from Melaka under the command of the Bendahara attacked and defeated Manjung. The Raja of Beruas accom-

11. Cortesao, The Suma Oriental, II, 248.

12. R. O. Winstedt, "The Malay Annals or Sejarah Melayu. The Earliest Recension from MS No. 18 of the Raffles Collection, in the Library of Royal Asiatic Society, London," JMBRAS, XVI, 3 (1938), p. 206.

13. The actual site of Manjung is uncertain but may be the south point of the Dinding river. Cortesao, The Suma Oriental, I, 107 n. 2.

panied the Bendahara back to Melaka, where Sultan Mahmud appointed him ruler of Manjung. He was also given robes of honour, a nubat or royal orchestra, and the title Tun Aria Bija diraja. Acknowledging allegiance to the ruler of Melaka, he then returned to the rantau barat, taking up his residence in Manjung.¹⁴

This appointment may have been intended to tie the western territories more closely to the central authority in Melaka. Pires reported that Perak, like its neighbours, was required to pay an annual tribute in proportion to its population and revenue.¹⁵ Economically, Perak formed part of Melaka's trading network, its inhabitants bringing jungle products and tin to exchange for foreign goods.¹⁶ They could also buy and sell in the trading settlement of Beruas, a principal port of call for Gujerati ships coming from Siam and Kedah.¹⁷ A Malay legend collected by Maxwell records that in former times a brisk trade had been carried on between Bruas on the coast and the people of the interior. "Imported goods were despatched up the country and native produce brought down from the inland districts."¹⁸

The same legend suggests that the core of Malay settlement was along the coast and that there was little knowledge about the inland

14. W. Shellabear, ed., Sejarah Melayu or the Malay Annals (Singapore, 1960), pp. 167-168.

15. Cortesao, Suma Oriental, II, 260-261.

16. Ibid., I, 243.

17. Ibid., I, 107.

18. Maxwell, "The History of Perak from Native Sources," (1882), p. 89.

areas. According to this account, Perak was "not yet inhabited by Malays." A visitor to Beruas, Nakhoda Kasim,

made inquiries and was told that there was a big river in the interior. His curiosity was now aroused and he penetrated on foot into the interior and discovered the Perak River. Here he traded, like the natives of the country, making trips up and down the river and selling salt and tobacco at the villages by the river-side. On one of these trips he reached Temung in the north of Perak and made fast his boat to the bank. After a few days the Semangs came down from their hills to buy salt. They came loaded with the produce of their gardens--sugar canes, plantains and edible roots--and brought their wives and families with them.¹⁹

Sultan Mahmud's jurisdiction over the rantau barat, though acknowledged, does not appear to have been onerous. Perhaps because the relationship was relatively relaxed, the western rantau areas did not react with shock when Melaka fell to the Portuguese in August, 1511. Like many of Sultan Mahmud's other vassal chiefs, Tun Aria Bija diraja was fully prepared to forget his former vows of allegiance. The author of the Raffles 18 Sejarah Melayu describes how Sultan Mahmud looked towards the peninsula from his new capital on Bentan in the Riau archipelago and complained that the vassal states towards the west had not paid homage for some time. Their overlord, in fact, had not presented himself at court since Melaka had fallen. "That same night he sent for the Bendahara. 'What think you should be done? The rantau barat are slipping from our hands.'" An expedition of twenty ships was despatched to impress on these areas that Melaka's authority should not be forgotten and Tun Aria Bija diraja, the overlord, was summoned to court.

19. Ibid., pp. 89-90.

When he reached Bentan, he went to the palace and presented himself before Sultan Mahmud Syah, who was well pleased to receive this visit from the Raja of the Western Territory and bestowed upon him robes of honour complete with all accessories. At the same time he gave him the drum of sovereignty and ordered that he be installed by beat of drum as ruler in the western territory. Tun Aria Bija di raja, for his part, undertook to bring the men of Manjung and the men of the rantau barat for an attack on Melaka.²⁰

Perak was thus brought under the domination of Melaka once again but in the first decades of the sixteenth century, it remained merely "one of the vassal states towards the west" with little to distinguish it from its neighbours. Overshadowed by Beraus, Manjung and Bernam, Perak might have remained insignificant had it not been for an important development. Sometime after the death of Sultan Mahmud in 1528, Perak received a ruler of its own, not a mere chief, but a prince of noble descent, a son of Sultan Mahmud himself. It is this momentous event which is described at length in the Raffles 18 version of the Sejarah Melayu.

According to this text, Sultan Mahmud had two sons, Raja Muzafar Syah and Raja Alauddin Syah. The former had been designated Raja Muda and named as heir but after the birth of his brother he fell from favour. When Raja Alauddin was forty days old, he was proclaimed successor to the throne with the title of Sultan Muda.²¹ He duly succeeded after Sultan Mahmud's death and the Bendahara and chiefs drove Raja Muzafar away from the palace.

The Raja Muda then took passage in a merchantman and went to Siak. From Siak he went to Kelang. Now there

20. Brown, "Malay Annals," pp. 182-183.

21. Ibid., p. 193.

was a man from Manjung . . . who traded regularly between Perak and Kelang. When he saw the Raja Muda at Kelang, he took him to Perak and had him installed as Raja with the title of Sultan Muzafar Syah.²²

The installation of Sultan Muzafar marked a turning point in Perak's history and heralded the emergence of the neophyte state as a political entity in its own right. As Winstedt has put it, the son of the last ruler of Melaka did not come to Perak without followers or without a tradition.²³ He is said to have established his residence at Tanah Abang, now known as Teluk Bakung, about sixty miles from the mouth (kuala) of the Perak River.²⁴ Here there developed a microcosm of the Melaka court in which Sultan Muzafar had grown up. One of his first actions, for example, was to invite the overlord of Selangor, Sri Agar diraja, to Perak to fill the post of Bendahara.²⁵ Another legend records that a faithful retainer who had accompanied Sultan Muzafar was made Sri Nara di Raja, the guardian of the state secret, the ciri, which is whispered into the ear of each sultan at his installation.²⁶

The founders of this new dynasty appear men of high ambition, not content to rule over a small rantau settlement. It is to Sultan Muzafar

22. Ibid.

23. Winstedt and Wilkinson, "A History of Perak," p. 11.

24. "Telok Bakong: Remembering History in Perak," Malaysia in History, XIII, 1 (1970), p. 9.

25. Winstedt and Wilkinson, "A History of Perak," p. 11; Brown, "Malay Annals," p. 193. This action angered Sultan Muzafar's brother, Sultan Alauddin of Johor-Melaka, and he later summoned the Perak Bendahara back to his court. Ibid., pp. 195-197.

26. RKP SP 9/14, Silsilah Raja-Raja Perak Berhubung dengan Savid-Savid Chendriang, fo. 41. For a description of the Sri Nara di Raja post, see Winstedt and Wilkinson, "A History of Perak," p. 11.

and his son, Sultan Mansur, that Perak legend attributes the organisation of the country under chiefs of various ranks.²⁷ Sultan Mansur was also steeped in the old Melaka traditions, for he had been raised by his uncle, Sultan Alauddin of Johor-Melaka, and had married the latter's daughter.²⁸ Sent to Perak as ruler after his father's death, he is said to have established his capital even further upstream, at Kota Lama Kanan, not far from Kuala Kangsar. From thence he made a trip to the headwaters of the Perak River, claiming suzerainty over hundreds of square miles of mountainous territory and fixing the boundaries between Perak and the neighbouring states.²⁹

The establishment of this new dynasty marked not only the physical expansion of Perak but an equivalent growth in prestige. Sultan Muzafar's successors could claim possession of one of the proudest genealogies in the Malay world, a line which could be traced back through Melaka to the ancestors of all Malay kings, the princes of Bukit Si-Guntang and beyond them to Sultan Iskandar Zulkarnain, Alexander the Great.³⁰ The Misa

27. RKP SP 9/14, Silsilah Raja-Raja Perak, fo. 45; Maxwell, "A History of Perak from Native Sources," (1882), p. 92.

28. Silsilah Raja-Raja Perak I, fo. 28, lines 5-6.

29. Cenderamata (souvenir) for the birthday of Sultan Idris of Perak (Ipoh, 1967), p. 41; Hubert Berkeley, a British administrator who held a number of posts in Upper Perak from 1891 until 1926, mentions an "old document" which gave the boundary lines and was in the possession of the Sultan of Perak. (Office Diary of Hubert Berkeley, no. 2, R.C.S., fo. 85.) The boundaries which these early rulers were said to have established were used as a guide in 1909 when a settlement was drawn up with Siam. They are described in detail in CO 273/115, Weld to Kimberly, 3 June 1882, Syed Alahadin's statement, 4 March 1882, foll. 18-20. See also C. D. Cowan, "Sir Frank Swettenham's Perak Journals, 1874-1876," JMBRAS, XXIV, 4 (1951), 49, n. 50; W. E. Maxwell, "A Journey on Foot to the Patani Border in 1876," JSBRAS, IX (June, 1882), 37.

Melayu, the Silsilah Raja-Raja Perak, and other Perak genealogies all begin by pointing to the noble progenitors of the Perak dynasty. A glorious past and a prestigious line of descent became an integral part of Perak's self-conception. It is significant that when the male line died out in the middle of the seventeenth century, the genealogist emphasises that the connection with Bukit Si Guntang was not lost; rather, it was reinforced by the marriage of the surviving daughter with Raja Sulung, a direct descendent of Sang Sapurba who had appeared on Bukit Siguntang and had later become the first ruler of Pagar Ruyong. Raja Sulung was installed in Perak as Sultan Muzafar Syah (1636?-1654) "and their children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and their descendents are the present kings in Perak."³¹

Throughout Perak history there is evidence that this claim, which a Portuguese account appears to support, was not forgotten.³² Centuries later, in 1818, when Perak was beleaguered on all sides and seemed at its most vulnerable, the ruler refused to send the tribute Siam demanded on grounds that "I am a king of the ancient race. I am he who holds the Dragon Betel Stand and the shellfish which came out of the sea, which

30. This legend is given in Brown, "Malay Annals," pp. 1-31.

31. Silsilah Melaka Kerajaan Negeri Perak, fo. 27^v, lines 30-38; Shellabear, Sejarah Melayu, p. 168. See Winstedt and Wilkinson, "A History of Perak," pp. 7-8 for a comparison of the various genealogies.

32. P. A. Tiele, "De Europeers in den Maleischen Archipel," II, BKI, 27 (1878), 34, quotes Ternao Lopez de Castanheda, who said that in 1533 the Sultan of Johor was sending a fleet to help his brother, the Sultan of Perak. See also Ibid., III BKI, 28 (1879), 301-302 where the Portuguese again refer to the ruler of Perak as the "relative" of the King of Johor.

came down from Bukit Si Guntang. . . . I am the oldest of all the kings in these parts, such as the kings of Siak, Selangor, Riau, Kedah and Terengganu."³³ No matter how low Perak's fortunes might fall, its rulers could always say, as does a character in a Perak folk tale, "Of a certainty I spring from a race of kings."³⁴ The possession of this genealogy gave Perak prestige, cohesion and an identity which linked it to the continuum of Malay history. Only a few decades after Sultan Mahmud had ignored Perak when referring to the western territories, the Bendahara of Johor could say, "Is the Sultan of Pahang or the Sultan of Perak different from our ruler? All of them are our masters when all is well."³⁵ On a number of occasions during the course of the sixteenth century, Perak testified to its new status by assisting the ruler of Johor against the newly emerging state of Aceh and against the harassments of the Portuguese.³⁶

33. SSR G34/57, Raja of Perak to Gov. of Penang, 27 Aug. 1816 (FCCP, 7 Nov. 1816). The royal sword referred to was probably that called curek si mandang kini, said to have belonged to Alexander the Great and to have been shown by the first Prince of Palembang to prove his right to rule. It is still part of the Perak regalia. R. J. Wilkinson, "Some Malay Studies," JMBRAS, X, 1 (1932), 87; Winstedt and Wilkinson, "A History of Perak," p. 163.

Identification of the other items is less certain. In 1907 W. G. Maxwell asked for further information, since he was not sure if the betel stand and sea shell were still part of the Perak regalia. The Dragon Betel Box could well refer to the puan naga taru, the box of the weeping dragon, which was said to have belonged to the first Malay king and is still part of the Perak regalia. W.G.M., Notes and Queries, JSBRAS, XLIX (Dec. 1907), 108; Winstedt and Wilkinson, "A History of Perak," p. 163; Cenderamata for the installation of Sultan Idris, 1963 (Ipoh, 1963), p. 22; RKP SP/14, Silsilah Raja-Raja Perak, fo. 38.

34. G. M. Laidlow, "The Story of Kherudin," JSBRAS, XLVI (Dec. 1906), 34-35.

35. Brown, "Malay Annals," p. 204.

The presence of a royal prince and the prestige which he brought may have been one reason behind the increasing prosperity which came to Perak during the second half of the sixteenth century.³⁷ Gradually it gained an economic advantage over its neighbours and began to supersede surrounding settlements as the most notable tin-exporting area along the west of the peninsula. Apparent changes in the river system may supply another explanation for this development for, according to a modern geographer, the Dinding river estuary silted up and the course of the Perak river shifted southwards. Towards the end of the century, kuala Perak began to supersede the Dinding and Beruas areas and though the name Manjung can be found on maps dated as late as 1600, it declined and eventually disappeared.³⁸ It was natural that Perak, possessed of its own ruler and already noted as an outlet for tin, should eclipse its neighbours and inherit the trade which had formerly gone to them.

A more basic reason for Perak's growth, however, was the increasing demand for tin, which had assumed a new significance with the dis-

36. Antony Reid, "Sixteenth Century Turkish Influence in Western Indonesia," JSEAH, X, 3 (1969), 402; Tiele, "De Europears," BKI, 27 (1878), 34, 66; 28 (1879), 301-302, 321.
37. One Perak text ascribes the growth of Perak directly to the installation of the first ruler. "Then His Majesty was established firmly upon the throne and governed Perak. His government was very strong and its fame reached everywhere. . . . Many foreign traders gathered to trade in the country and its peace and prosperity increased." RKP SP 9/14, Silsilah Raja-Raja Perak, fo. 44.
38. B. N. Koopmans, "Geomorphological and Historical Data of the Lower Course of the Perak River (Dindings)," JMBRAS, XXXVII, 2 (1964), 189; Wheatley, The Golden Khersonese, p. 309 n. 1; The Map of the World, A.D. 1600, to illustrate the voyages of John Davis. Hakluyt Society (London, 1880).

covery of the Cape Route to India and the coming of the Europeans to the Malay world. By 1513 the Portuguese were importing small amounts of tin from the Indies and some of this began to reach the European market.³⁹ In the eyes of the Europeans, tin was also important in the intra-Asian trade, for it could be used instead of bullion. Although it was not in such great demand in India as spices, gold or silver, there was still a ready market there which made Europeans anxious to acquire access to tin supplies.⁴⁰

The reputation of Perak tin began to grow. In 1596, for example, one of the first Dutchmen who visited the Indies noted that tin from Perak was being sold in the great entrepot of Bantam.⁴¹ Indians from the Coromandel Coast came to Perak itself in increasing numbers to exchange cloth for tin and elephants, also greatly desired in India.⁴² The Portuguese captains of Melaka established their own post there in order to gain greater access to the tin mines.⁴³ With the ability to supply this growing demand, Perak began to prosper. In 1613 the Portuguese Godinho de Eredia, who had spent much of his life in Melaka, wrote:

39. E. S. Hedges, Tin in Social and Economic History (London, 1964), p. 16.

40. Dianne Lewis, The Dutch East India Company in the Straits of Malacca, 1700-1784: Trade and Politics in the Eighteenth Century, Ph.D. Thesis, Australian National University, Canberra, 1970, p. 76.

41. J. C. Molema, De Eerste Schipvaart de Hollanders naar Oost Indie, 1595-1597 (Amsterdam, 1935), p. 225.

42. J. A. Mills, trans., "Eredia's description of Malacca, Meridional India and Cathay," JMBRAS, VII, 1 (1930), p. 234.

43. Ibid., and W. G. Maxwell, trans., "Bereto de Resende's Account of Malacca," JSBRAS, LX (Dec. 1911), 11.

Perak is much frequented and is the principal port for the trade in tin or calayn in large slabs . . . here there have been discovered in the ranges and mountains within its jurisdiction such large mines of tin that every year more than three hundred bahara of tin are extracted to supply the factory of the Captain of Melaka and the trade of the merchants from India.⁴⁴

There are no "ranges and mountains" near the Perak river. We can only assume Eredia is referring to the extensive deposits in the northern districts of the ulu over which the first rulers had claimed sovereignty only a few decades before. In less than a century Perak had grown from a small rantau settlement of two hundred people to a state whose population, according to a Dutch account of 1621, numbered at least five thousand.⁴⁵ With the advantages of an established dynasty, a steady supply of tin and a lack of real competition, it might have been assumed that Perak would gradually develop into a state which could dominate its neighbours and make some impact on the course of Malay history. Yet this bright future did not eventuate. Perak remained weak, defenceless and, apart from its tin, relatively unimportant. The inherent weaknesses which prevented its expansion into a state of any power were to remain constants throughout Perak history.

In the first place, Perak could not command the same wealth as could states like Melaka, Aceh, and Johor.⁴⁶ It was never a great trad-

44. Mills, "Eredia's description," p. 234.

45. W. Ph. Coolhaas, Generale Missiven van Gouverneurs-General en Raden aan Heren XVII der Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie (The Hague, 1960), 1, 103.

46. For a discussion of Melaka, see MA.P. Meilink-Roelofs, Asian Trade and European Influence in the Indonesian Archipelago between 1500 and about 1630 (The Hague, 1962), especially chapter 1; for Johor, see

ing emporium and its economy was essentially based on the export of a limited number of commodities, the most important of which were tin and elephants, while some trade was also carried out in rattans,⁴⁷ wax, betelnut, arak (fermented drink), locally made gunpowder and iron. Some rice was also produced for export, but this was not extensive and Perak did not always have enough even for its own needs. In times of rice shortage, Perak's lifeline was the grain shipments from Kedah and Java.⁴⁹

The country was similarly dependant on the outside world for other goods. Those most in demand were cloth, salt, tobacco, gambier, china-ware, tools such as parang,⁵⁰ keris, gold thread, spices and, in the

46. (cont'd.)

Andaya, The Kingdom of Johor, pp. 32-37; for Aceh, Denys Lombard, Le Sultanat d'Atieh au Temos d'Iskandar Muda, 1607-1636 (Paris, 1967), pp. 41-51.

47. Rattans were used for furniture, rigging, canes, cables and house-building. For a list of different varieties, see J. Cameron, Our Tropical Possessions in Malayan India (Kuala Lumpur, 1965), pp. 407-408. Perak rattans were considered famous and in 1816 the ruler, in return for certain concessions, expressed his willingness to allow the British the monopoly of "the tin and rattan produced in my country." SSR G34/57, Raja of Perak to Gov. of Penang, 27 Aug. 1816 (FCCP, 7 Nov. 1816).
48. In 1878 J. F. MacNair noted that saltpetre for gunpowder could be found in Perak and that nitre sulphur was bought from the Bugis to make the final product. Perak and the Malays (London, 1878), p. 254.
49. P. A. Tiele and J. E. Heeres, Bouwstoffen voor de Geschiedenis der Nederlanders in de Maleischen Archipel (The Hague, 1886-1895), II, 101. Such a shortage of rice was a chronic problem for most Malay states except Kedah. As a nineteenth century geographer stated, "The Malays do not cultivate rice in sufficient quantities to meet the demand." D. D. Daly, "Surveys and Explorations in the Native States to the Malayan Peninsula, 1875-1882, JRGS, IV (1882), 409.
50. Cleaver, machete. Lists of "Incoming and Outgoing Private Vessels" were drawn up annually in Melaka and can be found in the OB series.

eighteenth century, opium, but the people of Perak had no maritime tradition and did not go far afield to seek such commodities. The little perahu used by Perak traders, built essentially for travel up and down the rivers, were not equipped for long ocean voyages. In 1761, when Sultan Iskandar made a trip to sea, some time had to be spent making the boats seaworthy.⁵¹ There was never really any reason to sail further than Kedah and Melaka, or across the Straits to Sumatra, for Perak's tin and elephants always provided sufficient lure to attract foreign traders.

The importance of manpower to the strength of traditional South-east Asian states has been emphasised in a study dealing with the organisation of Thai society in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁵²

50. (cont'd.)

From these the volume of the trade between Perak and Melaka can be calculated for any particular year. These lists also provide an itemised account of the products brought from Perak on incoming perahu and those taken back from Melaka.

51. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 140. Although all Malays spent much time in boats and on the water, it is perhaps misleading to refer to them as maritime; "riverine" or "coastal" seems more appropriate. As one author noted at the beginning of this century, despite their reputation as a maritime people, the Malays "have developed no really able type of sea-going boat. European writers have credited the Malays with building boats, the lines of which are unsurpassed by European types; yet, so far as the writer has been able to discover, no specimen answering to such a description is to be met with in the peninsula. The characteristics of build are small displacement, hollow lines, V-shaped sections and sharp floors, shallow draft, lack of beam and consequent want of stability and weatherliness." He goes on to explain that Malay boats were essentially adapted for riverine and coastal traffic but in an area where heavy weather is uncommon, they could also be used in the more open waters of the Straits. When seas were rough, boats simply did not venture out. H. Warington Smyth, "Boats and Boat-Building in the Malay Peninsula," Indian Antiquary, XXXV (1906), 97-101.

52. Akin Rabibhadana, The Organisation of Thai Society in the Early Bang-

21773

Perak, like Siam, had a small population in relation to the area it controlled. The VOC records do not give any estimate regarding the number of inhabitants, but in 1818 a British envoy was told that the population of Perak "was reckoned at ten thousand men, besides women and children."⁵³ The envoy himself considered this figure exaggerated, and we can probably assume that in the preceding centuries the number of Malays in Perak did not exceed twenty thousand, which would mean a population density of about two people per square mile. When this population was decimated by war, epidemic or famine, the effects could be disastrous, for Perak's economy depended on people to work the mines, catch elephants, and sail perahu to trade in neighbouring ports.

In traditional Malay states, as in the rest of Southeast Asia, control over manpower was crucial in building up the military strength which was necessary to establish and maintain a kingdom's supremacy. Johor's leadership of the Malay world in the seventeenth century was due not only to its ability to attract trade but to the fighting men and ships it could command. In 1715, for example, the Dutch reported that Johor had an army of 6,500 men and a fleet of 233 ships which were drawn from all areas of its empire.⁵⁴ Perak's inability to defend itself

52. (cont'd.)

kok Period, 1782-1873, Cornell Southeast Asia Program Data Paper, Number 74 (Ithaca, 1969), pp. 16-18.

53. SSR G34/67, Cracroft to Clubley, 3 Aug. 1818 (FCCP 5 Sept. 1818), fo. 39; Rabibhadana, The Organisation of Thai Society, p. 17. In 1879 the Malay population of Perak was estimated at 59,682 and the official census of 1891 gave the figure as 95,719. Emily Sadka, The Protected Malay States, 1874-1895 (Kuala Lumpur, 1968), p. 3.

54. Andaya, The Kingdom of Johor, Appendix E, pp. 372-373.

stands as a marked contrast to the might of Johor, and reflects the smallness of its population. Perak simply had no real fighting forces. It is true that, when occasion demanded, perahu and baluk⁵⁵ could be manned and equipped for defence, but such fleets were miniscule in comparison with the manpower and ships which could be mobilised by states like Aceh and Johor. VOC administrators never regarded Perak as being of any importance militarily and even in 1778 Perak had no vessels which could have made the relatively short journey to Java.⁵⁶ Three years later, when a Siak prince threatened to invade, the Laksamana of Perak could organise a fleet of only nineteen ships and 160 men from the downstream area.⁵⁷ Perak was always the invaded, never the invader, and throughout the four centuries of its history has never independently attacked another state.⁵⁸

Perak's geography also presented an enduring obstacle to the development of a powerful kingdom. Its main feature was the Perak River, 170 miles long, which stretched the full length of the state and linked together two areas which, in geographical terms, were vastly different.

55. "Baluk: a single-masted lugsail boat. The boat has good gear and fairly flat floors. There are washboards at the quarters and a peculiar slightly outriggered grating or staying over the stern post. The rudder is very small and short." Baluk were commonly used as cargo boats and for trading. Warrington Smyth, "Boats and Boat Building," p. 102.

56. KA 3448, Secret, Gov. de Bruyn to Batavia, 28 Dec. 1778, fo. 300.

57. KA 3491 OB 1782, Res. Meyer to de Bruyn, 18 May 1781. Unless noted, letters between the resident and the Governor are unpaginated.

58. In 1770 Sultan Mahmud, under duress, did contribute ships to the Bugis attack on Kedah. See Chapter VII, p. 464.

The ulu (upstream) areas of the north and northeast were mountainous, individual peaks rising to over five thousand feet. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the ulu was considered to extend down to Pacat, about a hundred miles from Kuala Perak. Below Pacat was termed the hilir, the downstream region, which was dominated by an alluvial plain through which the Perak River flowed.⁵⁹ Low-lying, with some areas marshy and others heavily forested, the hilir had no real natural defences except the jungle itself. Sand bars across the mouth of the Perak River posed a minor barrier to would-be attackers but they were not difficult to navigate, and for thirty miles from the kuala the water was sufficiently deep to permit the passage of large ships.⁶⁰ Should hostile vessels enter, kubu or forts made of earth, about eight or nine feet high and open at one side, were built along the banks of the river,⁶¹ and from these defenders could fire at passing ships. If the kubu themselves fell, the people would simply melt into the jungle or retreat upriver where only small perahu could navigate the shallow waters. The hilir remained particularly vulnerable to attack and it is significant that no Perak capitals were built below present day Teluk Anson, where they would have been easy targets for attacking ships. A prince in a Kedah text rejects one site for his residence because he considers it too far from the sea, but

59. Koopmans, "Geomorphological and Historical Data," p. 175; D. Walker, "Studies in the Quaternary of the Malay Peninsula," FMJ, I and II, N.S. (1954-55), 19.

60. James Low, "Observations on Perak," JIAEA, IV (Sept. 1850), 499.

61. KA 2952 OB 1763, Meyer to Boelen, 20 March 1761; Everard Cramer's Report, 12 June 1761.

for a weak state like Perak distance from the kuala gave added protection.⁶² It was to the regions beyond Pacat that Perak rulers retreated to escape invasions or blockades and even in times of peace the capitals were situated at least fifty miles from the sea. Indeed, it was only with the establishment of a Dutch post in the hilir in 1746 that the royal residences began to move south.⁶³

From their capitals on the Perak River, successive rulers laid claim to over eight thousand square miles of territory, reaching from Patani in the north to Bernam in the south. One can imagine that they had only a vague idea of the topography of the area under their jurisdiction, or of the number and composition of the small Malay rantau settlements scattered along the major river systems. Royal residences were placed at various sites along the Perak River, but there was never any attempt to move to another river basin or to another tributary. Even in 1875 a Malay map of the state saw the Perak River as a broad straight road, dividing the state in half, the tributaries of which could be only dimly envisaged.⁶⁴ Fifty years earlier John Anderson, during a mission to Perak, was told that the state had 999 tributary streams or anak sungai but as he said, "this is merely a figurative way of conveying a vast number."⁶⁵

62. Abdullah Hj. Musa Lubis, Kesah Raja Marong Mahawangsa (Kuala Lumpur, 1965), p. 94. In 1758 a Dutch envoy in Pahang noted that most of the people lived several days travel up the river. KA 2858 OB 1760, Anthony Werndly to Batavia, 25 March 1758, fo. 12.

63. See N. J. Ryan, "Some Reasons for the Siting of the Royal Tombs of Perak," MHL, II, 2 (1955), 119.

64. See Map 3.

Nor did this network of anak sungai mean that there was necessarily easy access into the interior. While it has often been stressed that in traditional Malay society, rivers were the principal means of communication, it is rarely mentioned that navigation of these was not always an easy task. Many were made impassable by mangroves, rapids, and dangerous shallows. The ulu was particularly isolated. Travel upstream by boat was almost as slow as a journey overland. Jambi, for example, was twenty days overland from the confluence of the Perak and Kinta Rivers and two weeks by perahu.⁶⁶ In 1826 a British envoy described his slow trip upstream:

We . . . advanced up the river by help of poles, the current being too strong to admit of oars being used with effect. Four or six men walked rapidly from the prow to about the centre of the boat and by using their bambu poles all at the same time gave an impulse against the stream of about three miles an hour to the canoe.⁶⁷

In their upper reaches this method of poling was impossible, for here the Perak River became narrow and winding, with treacherous rapids that could be negotiated only by skilled oarsmen, even when the water was high. During the dry season, when the level of the water dropped, the ulu was effectively cut off from outside penetration.

Perak rulers were acutely aware of the difficulties posed by the remoteness of the ulu areas because it was in the mountains there that

65. John Anderson, Political and Commercial Considerations Relative to the Malayan Peninsula etc. (Prince of Wales Island, 1824), p. 191.

66. KA 3166 OB 1770, Anthony Werndly's Day Register, 17 Sept. 1768.

67. Low, "Observations on Perak," pp. 500-501.

some of the richest tin veins were located, the source of the alluvial deposits which were washed down to the hilir. According to legend, when Sultan Mansur, the second ruler, fixed the northern boundaries of Perak, he also appointed a representative at the most important mine to collect his taxes.⁶⁸ Nonetheless, it was virtually impossible for a ruler to exert effective control over the little settlements which grew up along the streams where tin deposits were plentiful. The isolation of these districts was heightened by the fact that the origins of many of the inhabitants lay across the borders, in southern Patani or neighbouring Kedah. These people were only two days' travel away from a Kedah port like Kuala Muda and often felt no allegiance to the Perak ruler so many miles away. The ulu thus became an area of swinging loyalties, although it nominally lay within Perak territory.

The difficulties involved in welding Perak into a state which could fully exploit its potential were aggravated by the political system, ill-equipped to tie such a large and geographically disparate area to a central authority. The execution of royal orders in the settlements along the anak sungai depended basically on the loyalty of the hulubalang and penghulu who were appointed as local authorities. They were in turn responsible to their district head, one of the orang besar (literally, big men) and through him to the ruler himself. The loyalty of the orang besar was thus essential for the smooth functioning of government, because they provided a vital link between ruler and subjects. It was the orang besar who were responsible for executing royal commands and for

68. Cenderamata, 1967, 41.

"informing the rakyat (people) of good and ill."⁶⁹ A determining factor in the preservation of this chain of command was the ruler's ability to maintain the loyalty and co-operation of the men beneath him. He could seek to ensure this co-operation by making judicious marriages into the families of orang besar or by taking the daughters of influential lineage groupings as gundik (secondary wives). The system of royal titles made allowance for at least six gundik⁷⁰ and a wise ruler would choose them carefully in order to assure himself of the support of district chiefs and other important orang besar. One genealogy notes that at the end of the eighteenth century the ruler took five wives, one being the daughter of the Laksamana, the second the daughter of a former ruler by a commoner mother, the third a daughter of the Imam (religious head), the fourth a woman of Sungkai in the hilir and the fifth from the ulu, Sungai Siput.⁷¹

Though political marriages could be a means of gaining vital support, some rulers still encountered difficulties in maintaining the loyalty and co-operation of their court, either because of their own personalities or because of the historical circumstances in which they found themselves. The possibility of a breakdown in central authority was ever-present, since without the support of orang besar, hulubalang, and penghulu, there was no way of exerting effective control over their followers.

69. Rigby, The Ninety-Nine Laws, pp. 56, 88.

70. RKP SP 9/15, fo. 2.

71. Silsilah Raja-Raja Perak II, foll. 12-13.

Although the system of territorial chiefs did not always function well in Perak, the fact that it was effective at all was due to the ties most rulers managed to maintain between themselves and the orang besar. This was because of the tradition, hallowed in Malay adat, of muafakat, discussion between the ruler and his officials. "The Raja must speak of all things, whether good or evil, to his orang besar," notes a Perak law-code, "The orang besar should also tell the raja all things."⁷² Perak Malays saw their state as a ship, with the ruler as nakhoda or captain and the chiefs as loyal members of the crew.⁷³ According to this conception, government functioned by consensus. No decision could remain secret from the court and anything which affected the country at large must be discussed in the Assembly.

The Assembly consisted of all the anak raja or princes, the orang besar and the hulubalang and, because it was held publicly in the ruler's balai or audience hall, it was also open to members of the public. Although the latter took no part in the decision-making process, the common man could always bring his grievances and petitions to be discussed in these gatherings.⁷⁴ Little is known about the actual number or composition of the Assembly. A Dutch envoy mentions that it consisted of more than three hundred people⁷⁵ and VOC records suggest that although

72. Rigby, The Ninety-Nine Laws, p. 56.

73. SOAS Ms. 46943, foll. 4-5; see also Map 3.

74. See, for example, KA 3166 OB 1770, Werndly's Day Register, 17 Sept. 1768; KA 3491 OB 1782, Sultan Muda to de Bruyn, 19 March 1761; KA 3858, Secret, Walbeehm to Couperus, 1 June 1792.

75. KA 2885 OB 1761, Jan Visboom's Day Register, 9 July 1759 (under date 2 June).

the presence of all the nobles was not required, there was some kind of unofficial quorum. On occasions when the majority of the orang besar were absent from court, assemblies were postponed until they had been summoned. The name given to these assemblies--mesyuarat bicara or "meetings for discussion"--indicates their deliberative function and the fact that they acted as a forum in which differing views could be put forward.⁷⁶ Rules for correct behaviour guaranteed that speakers were given a fair hearing:

What are the rules where people are talking in the Assembly? . . . Let no one interrupt a conversation between two persons or answer the query of an orang besar or raja if it is addressed to another individual.⁷⁷

The persuasive speaker often had an advantage, for in these sessions he could put his case in such a way that he could sway his fellow members. This frequently led to factions within the Assembly, with a cabal of orang besar opposing even the ruler himself. In 1651, for example, it was the Assembly of Nobles who, under the instigation of the Datuk Bendahara and against the wishes of Sultan Muzafar, decided to murder the VOC representatives in Perak.⁷⁸

76. RKP SP 9/15, fo. 1. Such Assemblies were apparently a normal part of the Malay political system elsewhere. In Kedah, see SSR G34/1, Light to Cornwallis, 12 Sept. 1786 (FWCP, 13 Dec. 1786); in Brunei, D. E. Brown, Socio-Political History of Brunei, a Bornean Malay Sultanate, Ph.D. Thesis, Cornell, p. 190; in Johor, see Andaya, The Kingdom of Johor, p. 39.

77. Rigby, Ninety-Nine Laws, pp. 56, 88.

78. See below, pp. 71-72.

This incident shows the lengths to which a group of strong nobles would go in challenging the ruler's authority, and in matters of government, therefore, it was rare that the Sultan went against the concerted feelings of the orang besar. Even if he should wish to act counter to the wishes of the Assembly, there were only limited means at his disposal. It was not possible to send a private letter because it was customary that all incoming and outgoing correspondence be read publicly before the assembled court and, by the same token, private audiences were also against adat. The medium most often employed to carry out delicate matters of state was that of secretaries and envoys, who were appointed to their post because they were in the ruler's confidence. They might bring a purely verbal message or else an innocuous written letter which they would then expand orally. It was means such as this which were to be employed by Sultan Muzafar in 1752, just before his death, when he signed a secret pact with the Dutch resident, giving the VOC the salt monopoly. When the Company later tried to enforce this, it was roundly rejected by the nobles who said that the pact had been signed without their knowledge and they were therefore not bound to recognise it.⁷⁹ The concept of collective government was an inalienable part of the Perak political system as it was actually practised.

Within the Assembly, there was another even more influential group, the Council, the nature of which can be gleaned only by isolated references. The number of members varied, but it always included the Raja Muda, the second in line to the throne, and the Orang Besar Empat (the

79. See Chapter III, pp. 187-188, 207-208.

Four Great Men)--the Datuk Bendahara, the Orang Kaya Besar, the Temenggong and the Menteri. They were the wazir, the ministers of state who made up the permanent core of the deliberative Council. Other orang besar were appointed according to their status, personal influence, and rank.⁸⁰ The members of the Council comprised a group of advisors whose opinions could be vital in influencing royal decisions and whose position was publicly acknowledged and formalised. Nonetheless, the members of the Council often opposed the Sultan and their hostility was even more threatening than that of other orang besar, for they could have access to a large amount of tin, possess many followers, and wield considerable authority in the Assembly. In short, members of the Council could equal or conceivably outmatch the ruler in everything except possession of the throne, and it was his ability to generate the loyalty of this group, or at least contain its opposition, that ultimately determined the Sultan's strength or weakness. While in theory the orang besar would "support their raja and consider the welfare of the rakyat," in practice an official resembling the faithful Bendahara celebrated in the Sejarah Melayu was rare.⁸¹

Although a ruler with a strong personality could dominate his chiefs, the orang besar, the reverse could also hold, as the common man well knew.

80. Compare the list of the ruler's "Special Council" given by Sultan Abdullah to James Low. Home Miscellaneous 670 Sultan Abdullah to James Low, 25 Oct. 1826. There are also lists available from 1655 and 1680. See J. E. Heeres, ed., "Corpus Diplomaticum Neerlandico Indicum," BKI, 87 (1931), 78 and BKI, 91 (1934), 217-218. See also Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 131-132.

81. Rigby, Ninety Nine Laws, p. 55; for the story of the faithful Bendahara, see Brown, "Malay Annals," p. 133.

The worms may master the tallest tree
 The Dutchman's glass sees far and knows
 That seeming great though our princes be
 They are stately ships that some dinghy tows.⁸²

Was such a ruler then entitled to the loyalty and obedience which custom dictated was his due? There was obviously room for argument, and the views exchanged in a conversation between the Menteri of Larut and a trader, Nakhoda Trang, about 1873, must have been repeated many times in earlier centuries of Perak history.

"The custom in Perak [said the Menteri] is that the most powerful man, no matter what his claims may be according to birth, is always in the end acknowledged Sultan." I [Nakhoda Trang] said, "If that is the case, that whoever is the strongest can become Sultan, there is no longer any Malay adat in Perak and you may as well do away with all such officers as Bendahara, Laksamana and Menteri." The Menteri replied, "According to Perak custom, if I were a common lamplighter and had only men to back me, I might be made Sultan tomorrow. I said, "Menteri, take care. If God Almighty had intended you to be raja, he would have caused you to have spring from the loins of Sultan Ja'afar [then ruler of Perak] and not from the loins of Cik Long Ja'afar."⁸³

In a sense the Menteri was right. Perak history had shown that a man of substance could gain such influence over the ruler that he virtually governed the state or could alternatively undermine royal authority by supporting a rival contender for the throne. Great Perak nobles knew only too well that "the strength of a bird is in its wings, the strength of a crab is in its claws" (Kuat burung kerana sayap, kuat ketam kerana sepit).⁸⁴ Once obtained, power was too valuable a thing to be

82. R. J. Wilkinson, A Malay-English Dictionary (London, 1959), I, 478.

83. Perak Enquiry Papers, II, Series XXII J (Raffles Museum, Singapore).

84. C. C. Brown, Malay Sayings (Singapore, 1951), p. 181.

willingly surrendered and because of this potential or actual opposition of the orang besar, the Perak political system was constantly endangered. When the fragile ties of loyalty broke, the vulnerability of the ruler's position was made plain.

The ruler had one hold over the orang besar. It was he who made appointments and, as a last resort, it was always in his power to dismiss an unsatisfactory official. Such a step was impossible with the other important group within the Assembly, the members of the royal family, whose privileges came as a right of birth.

In Malay states, those of royal birth were termed generically anak raja, the children of princes. This class was numerically large in Perak and although very few held positions of real power, they were always a potential source of discontent and could provide ready fuel for a rebellion. One of the problems in Perak, as in most Malay courts, was that of finding occupation for these young, unattached men with no positive administrative duties to occupy their time. Because a man was entitled to take an unlimited number of women as gundik, there was always a large number of young princes and nobles (anak baik) within the court circle whose fortune depended on maintaining the favour of the ruler. A preferred wife could further the position of her son, even if he were not fully royal (anak gahara) but this dependence on personal favour meant the position of an anak raja was extremely vulnerable. Although a young man who was the favourite of the ruler or a powerful orang besar could gain a position of some importance, the corollary also held. If he fell from grace, or if his patron lost his authority, his future could be

radically affected. "When the tree falls, the woodpeckers that live on it must also perish."⁸⁵ Unless fortune smiled on them, these young men had little or no opportunity of wielding any effective power. Their energies were absorbed by such activities as flirtations, court intrigues, opium smoking, piracy and cock-fighting. Malay literature abounds with illustrations of the preoccupations of such anak raja; the author of the Sejarah Melayu relates how Sultan Mahmud of Melaka ordered his son to be killed because of the latter's association with the young men of the court and their disrespectful behaviour towards the officers and chiefs.⁸⁶ A character in the Malay epic Hang Tuah is criticised for acting like an anak raja, flirting with the women and being disrespectful to his superiors.⁸⁷ Even in 1837 during a visit to Pahang and Terengganu, Abdullah Munshi comments on the lack of education, the cock-fighting, gambling, and opium addiction common among the anak raja there.⁸⁸ Certainly few received the traditional Malay education expounded in such texts as the Mahkota Segala Raja and pursued by the literary heroes of stories like the Hikayat Raja Mida.⁸⁹

85. R. J. Wilkinson, Malay Literature, PMS, III (Kuala Lumpur, 1907), p. 12. "Punggar rebuk, bila tuk menumpang mati."

86. Brown, "Malay Annals," p. 169.

87. Kassim Ahmad, ed., Hikayat Hang Tuah (Kuala Lumpur, 1971), p. 296.

88. Kassim Ahmad, ed., Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah (Kuala Lumpur, 1960), pp. 38, 57.

89. At about ten years of age a literary hero was taught to read the Koran and to write Arabic under the guidance of a learned Kadhi (Muslim teacher). They then studied grammar, logic and analysis after which they studied the military skills under a trained soldier. A

If an anak raja was in line for succession to the throne, or if his claims had been passed over, it was inevitable that he would spend much of his time garnering support in an effort to ensure his rights. With promises of the rich rewards which would come when power had been obtained, such support was relatively easy to find and, because of their tendency to serve as foci for rebellious elements, these princes were often regarded with suspicion. The founder of the Perak line had himself been expelled from Melaka, because of fears that he might try and "wrest the throne" from his younger brother.⁹⁰ Over two centuries later, Sultan Iskandar (1752-1765) when opposed by a Kedah prince, Sultan Berkat, took steps to eradicate his rival; later he found himself challenged once again by another anak raja, his cousin Raja 'Alim.

It was only rarely that efforts by an anak raja to displace a ruler were successful. Most were content to exist on the periphery of politics and for them a major problem was subsistence, since they lacked access to any source of income. If a prince did not possess wealth, his influence was limited, and a poor raja lost status. The legendary Perak hero, Daeng Selili, refused the title of Raja because, he said, his children would be poor and thus publicly shamed (aib) since they would not be

89. (cont'd.)

raja gave them instruction in traditional adat and etiquette and, to complete his education, a young prince learnt the games and pastimes suited to his status--chess, draughts and football. A. J. Sturrock and R. O. Winstedt, eds., Hikayat Awang Sulong Merah Muda (Singapore, 1907), pp. 50-51; R. O. Winstedt, ed., Hikayat Anggun Che Tanggal (Singapore, 1914), pp. 20-21; R. O. Winstedt, ed., Hikayat Raja Muda (Singapore, 1914), p. 3.

90. Brown, "Malay Annals," p. 193.

able to maintain a suitable style of life.⁹¹ For such people, gambling and cock-fighting were a common means of improving their financial position. If Perak had possessed large fleets, if it had been engaged in frequent warfare with other states, or if there had been extensive opportunities for trade as in Johor and Aceh, these anak raja might well have been absorbed into the social and economic life of the country. Failing this, many turned to "seek their fortune" (mencari rezeki) by piracy, a custom which will be discussed in more detail later.⁹² With the imposition of enforced monopolies by the Portuguese and later the Dutch, smuggling became another profitable source of revenue for Perak princes. If they succeeded in bypassing the European factory, and its blockading ships, they could also avoid paying royal tolls and gain a higher price for their tin at a port like Kedah.

It was also possible for an anak raja to seek the patronage of some wealthy man, to become part of his following and thus be guaranteed a living. The number of retainers a rich patron could attract is recorded wryly in Malay proverbs; they are compared to the flotsam deposited on the shores of a bay, or to the kerak, the burnt rice which clings to the inside of a pan. "The larger the cooking pot, the more kerak sticks to the inside."⁹³ Although in some cases a large following could add to the prestige or power of a ruler or orang besar, it was not always possible

91. Personal communication, Cik Gu Ahmad Manjang, Kota Lama Kiri, 31 July 1972. Cik Gu Ahmad is a keen amateur historian who is compiling a study of Daeng Selili, from whom he traces his descent.

92. See Chapter V and below, pp. 98-99.

93. Brown, Malay Sayings, p. 29.

for Malay courts to absorb all these men or to provide them with the excitement and rewards they desired. A ruler with limited resources often deliberately avoided the responsibility of such dependents, especially if they were in any way notorious. Even in the late eighteenth century, when Perak's position in relation to the outside world was certainly stronger than it had been a century earlier, its rulers were reluctant to burden themselves with these elements. Sultan Alauddin (1773-1792) would not grant a vagrant Bugis prince an audience because he was afraid he would be asked for help and he was equally unwilling to grant refuge to a group of anak raja who had fled from Kedah, telling them that Perak had princes enough already.⁹⁴

In Perak the problem of anak raja was made more complex by the waris negeri (heirs of the country) system, which is not found in other states. It is not known when this system was developed but a list of court titles shows that it was well established by the beginning of the eighteenth century.⁹⁵ The waris negeri were the anak raja most closely related to the ruler and in direct line to the throne. Their titles, in order of precedence were:

Raja Kecil Besar
 Raja Kecil Sulung
 Raja Kecil Tengah
 Raja Kecil Muda
 Raja di Hilir
 Raja di Hulu
 Raja di Darat
 Raja di Baruh⁹⁶

94. KA 3474 OB 1781, Res. Meyer to de Bruyn, 18 Dec. 1779.

95. RKP SP 9/15, fo. 5.

This ordering was flexible, however, and on occasion some titles were not held at all. The waris negeri inherited their positions through birth, their status ascriptive rather than achieved, and there was no precedent for the dismissal of anyone holding such a title. It was not so much an office as an indication of royal blood, pretensions to the throne and position in the court hierarchy. The only duty of the waris negeri was to do "whatever the Raja and Raja Muda told them."⁹⁷ Their income came from the ruler's kurnia or bounty, although they were sometimes permitted to trade toll-free.⁹⁸ The absence of territorial power and the lack of any specific duties in the administration meant that the waris negeri were, in a sense, marking time, waiting for the death of the ruler so that they would be promoted to a position closer to that of the sultanate.

Though control of the waris negeri presented a recurring problem, especially in the eighteenth century, the greatest threat to the ruler's authority often came from the Raja Muda, the second in line to the throne. Theoretically the Raja Muda was the pemangku or regent, the support and right hand man of the sultan and his loyal representative (wakil). His duties were to ensure that the commands of the ruler were carried out and he could be described as the executive branch of the government. As W. G. Maxwell pointed out early in this century, the Raja Muda was to govern the country in the name of the sultan, from whose shoulders he was

96. Ibid. This list adds a Raja Kecil Laki which is not mentioned elsewhere.

97. Ibid.

98. Ibid.

expected to take the drudgery of routine administration. "All important matters of state were dealt with by the Sultan. . . . The Raja Muda was merely the deputy."⁹⁹

The Raja Muda's claim to succession was usually unchallenged, although not automatic and an election among the Assembly was conducted on the death of a Sultan. The latter could, if he wished, fix the succession by designating the Raja Muda as heir even in his own lifetime; he could also pass over the claims of the Raja Muda and choose another waris negeri, as Sultan Alauddin did in the late eighteenth century.¹⁰⁰ The confusion over succession in the nineteenth century demonstrates what could happen when the Raja Muda proved unacceptable to the orang besar.

The Raja Muda's position as possible successor and his traditional leadership of the anak raja meant that he could provide a focus around which discontented elements could rally. It has been noted that in the disputes between 1800 and 1871 almost every case involved the Raja Muda and the Sultan in opposing camps.¹⁰¹ While less pronounced, this pattern is also observable in the previous centuries. Naturally, the situation differed according to the particular circumstances and the personalities of the men involved, but the basic problem of the degree to which power should be shared was at the root of many of the disputes which beset Perak politics.

99. Straits Settlements and Federated Malay States Directory, 1912, quoted by J. de Vere Allen, "The Elephant and the Mousedeer--a New Version," JMBRAS, XLI, 1 (1968), 57.

100. KA 3594 OB 1786, Gov. de Bruyn to Batavia, 15 June, 1785, fo. 49.

101. Khoo, The Western Malay States, p. 23.

One other office peculiar to Perak merits a brief description. This is that of the Sultan Muda, a title inherited from Melaka where it had been used to designate a successor to the throne. Although little is known about the history of this title in Perak, it is clear that by the early eighteenth century it carried with it the duties of State Shaman. He was expected to be skilled in magic arts (ilmu pawang) and medicine; he carried out ceremonies to "revive" (memulih) the regalia and had the power to invoke the guardian spirits of the country.¹⁰² The Sultan Muda gave feasts every three, five or seven years, collecting food from all over the country. These feasts were intended to protect Perak from harm, as was another conducted every three years in the ulu at Cegar Galah. Harmful spirits were lured on to a raft which was set loose to make its way downstream and finally out to sea. In times of illness in the royal family, it was the Sultan Muda who conducted the seances aimed at recruiting the help of the spirits.¹⁰³

It is clear that this title gave great power to the holder and, as will be seen later, in the reign of Sultan Alauddin (1773-1792), the Sul-

102. RKP SP 9/15, fo. 1.

103. The position of Sultan Muda is rarely referred to in available sources and little has been learnt about the office since Wilkinson noted the lack of information in 1932. It is not even known if the post was always filled. Both Wilkinson and Winstedt compiled considerable information on the duties of a Sultan Muda. The last Sultan Muda was a keramat (sacred, magical) elder brother of Sultan Idris (1887-1916). There is a book of charms belonging to a former Sultan Muda of Perak in the library of SOAS, as MS 25047/2. See R. J. Wilkinson, "Some Malay Studies," JMBRAS, X, 1 (1932), 133, 93-97; Winstedt and Wilkinson, "History of Perak," pp. 133-135; Winstedt, Count from Alif, pp. 84, 116-117; R. O. Winstedt, Malay Magic (London, 1925), pp. 42, 50; R. O. Winstedt, "The Perak Royal Instruments," JMBRAS, VII, 3 (1929), 451-453.

tan Mada's opposition divided the court into two distinct factions. The Perak ruler continually faced the problem of gaining the support and allegiance of his relatives, whose interests, like those of the orang besar, often conflicted with his own. The problem of royal versus personal interest was most apparent when a ruler sought to control Perak's principal source of revenue, the tin trade.

The ruler not only bought up large supplies of tin himself for sale, but also received duties on mines and tolls on any tin leaving the country. Because tolls comprised an important part of the royal revenue, most rulers were concerned that all tin produced in the state should be duly delivered downstream so that it would pass through legitimate tolling stations. To accomplish this would have entailed the co-operation of every subject, for the extent of the tin deposits made it possible for almost everyone in the state, regardless of where he lived, to engage in mining as a source of income. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, tin was found all along the banks of the Perak River, where it was washed down from the tin bearing veins in the mountains. These areas were much more accessible than the tin-producing districts of the ulu, the most important of which were found around Kuala Kangsar and further north on the Patani border.¹⁰⁴ Even here, however, the tin was not difficult to extract and did not involve complex equipment or a large labour force. Techniques of mining and smelting were still fairly primitive. According to Eridia's account of 1613

the earth is dug out of the mountains and placed on certain tables where the earth is dispersed by water in such

¹⁰⁴. See Appendix B and Maps 5 and 6.

a way that only the tin in the form of grains remains on the tables. It is then melted in certain clay molds and by a process of casting is converted into large slabs of five slabs to the bahara [about 375 lbs.] or into small slabs . . . of 250 slabs to the bahara.¹⁰⁵

Because tin deposits could be found almost anywhere in Perak, there was no way in which the tin production or those participating in it could be effectively controlled or supervised. The difficulty of administering the ulu mines has already been discussed, but some of the river basins along the coast were almost as remote. Usurpation of control there by a group of outsiders--pirates, wandering anak raja, European deserters, or adventurers--was a recurring problem. Perak had no armies or fleets to drive such intruders out and the ruler was therefore unable to guarantee the safety of his subjects in these distant areas. It was equally impossible for him to force them to acknowledge his authority should they choose to display an independent spirit and ignore royal prerogatives in regard to the tin trade. The Kerian, Kurau, Larut, Terong, Beruas and Bernam Rivers all flowed down from tin-bearing highlands and as a result extensive tin deposits could be found along their banks. With outlets to the sea, these rivers became favourite detours for those who wished to avoid the toll stations on the Perak River. From such places tin could be sold to traders sailing down the coast or transported to neighbouring ports. If an anak raja, orang besar, or district official acquired access to tin supplies and made use of these river outlets in order to sell his tin independently, there was no way in which the ruler could compel him to come to Kuala Perak or pay the tolls due on each bahara. Larut

¹⁰⁵. Mills, "Eredia's Description," p. 235.

was particularly isolated because it was cut off from the rest of Perak by a high range of hills, but all the coastal rivers were perpetual trouble spots, over which control could be enforced only by constant patrols that in turn demanded seapower Perak did not have. The ruler's ability to provide an attractive market where both his subjects and foreign traders would come from choice was virtually the only means of retaining royal authority over the tin trade and the tin-producing districts.

The ongoing struggle to ensure the attractiveness of this market was hindered because there was never any lack of outsiders who also wished to draw profits from Perak's tin and, if possible, to control the entire trade. For many reasons--economic, geographic, political--Perak remained weak, vulnerable and therefore a temptation to those who realised the potential wealth which would come from domination of its tin. Realisation of their own weakness forced successive Perak rulers to search for allies who, in return for concessions in the tin trade, would guarantee Perak's peace and security. This search, and the often heavy cost of obtaining the protection of a powerful state, become basic themes in Perak history from its very inception.

Little is known about events during the sixteenth century, but it is clear that for some decades after the coming of the first ruler, Perak lived under the aegis of Johor. Through this relationship, it was caught up in Johor's rivalry with Aceh, now regarded as one of the most prosperous states in the archipelago. After Melaka's fall in 1511, Aceh had attracted traders who went there to avoid Portuguese trading restrictions

and was now prepared to challenge Johor-Melaka as leader of the Malay world. Its rulers gradually extended Acehnese control not only down the coast of Sumatra but also eastwards across the Melaka Straits to the small and vulnerable peninsular negeri whose resources could yield such great profits.¹⁰⁶

In 1575 Perak was attacked by Aceh but, unlike later invasions, it is not remembered in Perak histories as a traumatic event, for it brought the young state great honour. After the death of Sultan Mansur, the second ruler, the Silsilah Raja-Raja Perak relates how "the country was conquered by the men of Aceh and the widow of Marhum di Kota Lama [Sultan Mansur] was taken to Aceh."¹⁰⁷ But she and her children were brought as honoured guests rather than as prisoners of war, and a Queen of Aceh later took Sultan Mansur's eldest son as her husband. In 1579 he succeeded as ruler of Aceh.¹⁰⁸ The new Sultan Alauddin did not forget his homeland, and during his reign he sent his younger brother back to Perak where he was installed as Raja.¹⁰⁹ On another occasion the Acehnese court crossed the Straits to Perak for a pleasure trip.¹¹⁰ It is impossible to imagine that Perak, whose ruler was a brother of Sultan

106. For a brief summary of the rivalry between Johor and Aceh, see Andaya, The Kingdom of Johor, pp. 15-20.

107. A. R. Das Gupta, Acheh in Indonesian Politics, 1600-1641, Ph.D. Thesis, Cornell Univ. 1962, p. 55; Silsilah Raja-Raja Perak, I, fo. 28, lines 12-15.

108. Das Gupta, Acheh, p. 55; Silsilah Raja-Raja Perak, I, fo. 29A, lines 1-3.

109. Silsilah Raja-Raja Perak, I, fo. 29A, line 6.

110. Ibid., line 6.

Alauddin, did not bask in the splendour of Aceh, at this time both a great trading port and a centre for religious studies.¹¹¹

This new relationship served to redirect Perak's allegiance, for it now lay in the ambience of Aceh rather than in that of Johor. Unfortunately, there is almost no published material relating to Perak during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. We can only guess at the relationship which developed between the little peninsular state and the powerful Acehnese court. One source suggests it was not always an easy one. In 1600 an "armada" under the command of the King of Pasai, the youngest son of the King of Aceh, is said to have sailed to Perak, presumably to enforce Aceh's authority.¹¹² Sometime during this period, Perak rulers allowed the Portuguese to establish a factory in Perak, possibly as a counter to Aceh's strength. This factory gave the Portuguese direct access to the tin supplies and in later years it was remembered as the most important source of the Melaka Captain's revenue.¹¹³

The Portuguese Captains may have prospered, but Perak's trade with the Indians of the Coromandel Coast suffered. Traders who tried to avoid Melaka's duties by bringing their cloth directly to Perak were chased away.¹¹⁴ Perak also became involved in the hostility which developed between Sultan Iskandar Muda of Aceh (1607-1636) and Portugal. Sultan

111. Teugku Iskandar, De Hikajat Atjeh, VKI, XXVI (1958), 41.

112. W. S. Unger, De Oudste Reizen van de Zeeuwen naar Oost Indie (1598-1604) (The Hague, 1948), p. 87.

113. Mills, "Eredia's Description," p. 234; Maxwell, "Barreto de Resende's Account," p. 11.

114. William Foster, ed., The Voyage of Thomas Best, Hakluyt Soc. Second Series LXXVI (London, 1934), 166.

Iskandar regarded Perak as his enemy by virtue of its relationship to the Portuguese and severely punished any trader known to have gone there.¹¹⁵ It was during his reign that the well-being of the little Malay kingdoms across the Straits was threatened once more.

Sultan Iskandar is remembered in history as one of the greatest of Indonesian rulers and it is significant that over 160 years later a ruler of Perak styled himself Sultan Alauddin Iskandar Muda.¹¹⁶ During the second and third decades of the seventeenth century, his very name must have struck terror into the hearts of the people of Perak, for he was to impose a new domination more burdensome than any before experienced. Beginning in 1620, Sultan Iskandar launched several attacks against the peninsula states. The Acehnese forces swept up the coast without meeting any real opposition. Kedah was ravaged, the capital demolished and the remaining inhabitants, numbering about seven thousand, captured and taken to Aceh. The King of Kedah fled to Perlis, where he placed himself under the protection of the ruler of Siam.¹¹⁷

In July 1620 another fleet, consisting of three large galleys and about thirty other ships, left Aceh to attack Perak. The conquest was total. The countryside was destroyed, considerable booty taken and over

115. Ibid. and p. 256.

116. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 192. A Malay ruler's choice of his reign name was never accidental. In 1857, for example, the prince who replaced a deposed ruler of Riau-Lingga chose the name Sulaiman Badrulalam Syah and gave his Bugis Raja Muda the title Sultan Alauddin Syah as his forebears had done in 1721. See Netscher, De Nederlanders, p. 306 and Andaya, The Kingdom of Johor, p. 327.

117. Journal of Augustin de Beaulieu in John Harris, Navigantium Atque Itinerarium Bibliotheca (London, 1705), pp. 737-738.

five thousand people deported as prisoners to Aceh. A French naval officer, Augustin de Beaulieu, who was in Aceh at the time, describes Sultan Iskandar's collection of jewels and remarks on "a very old emerald, taken recently in the conquest of Perak, which is one of the most beautiful stones that one could find."¹¹⁸ He also depicted the deplorable condition of the captives taken not only from Perak, but from Johor, Deli, Pahang and Kedah. The original number of prisoners had been set at 22,000 but without food, most starved to death. "At present," said Beaulieu, "there are scarce 1500 left. People . . . died naked in the streets."¹¹⁹

The Silsilah Raja-Raja Perak describes the Acehnese invasions as a time of great upheaval. "All members of the royal family and all the orang besar were taken as prisoners to Aceh."¹²⁰ The country was left completely without government. As late as the nineteenth century stories were told about encounters with the Acehnese in the Larut and Terong districts, while accounts of the wars are still recounted along the Perak River.¹²¹ There was now no ambiguity about Perak's relationship to Aceh.

118. Lombard, Le Sultanat, pp. 131, 71; Harris, Navigantum, p. 733.

119. Harris, Navigantum, p. 748; Lombard, Le Sultanat, p. 73; Coolhaas, Generale Missiven, I, 103.

120. Silsilah Raja-Raja Perak, fo. 30A, lines 9-11.

121. W. E. Maxwell, Miscellaneous Notes, JSBRAS, I, 2 (1878), 236-238; I was also told a story of how the Perak people outwitted the Acehnese by telling them the leaves of a stinging nettle would make them cool. Hj. Muhd. Syariff bin Mat Jalil, Kampung Teluk Bakung, Perak, 14 Oct. 1973. According to legend, Sultan Iskandar Muda attacked Perak because he was angry when his request to marry the daughter of the Perak ruler was refused. Cenderamata, 1967, p. 44. There may

It was a vassal under the complete control of Sultan Iskandar, who directed every aspect of its affairs. According to the Dutch, Sultan Iskandar's victory over Perak had made him "so bold, that he regarded himself as the most powerful monarch in the world."¹²² Perak's tin provided the Acehnese ruler with a lucrative source of income and, years later, Taj-al Alam, Sultan Iskandar's daughter, called Perak her "pleasure ground" while a Dutch official termed it "Aceh's best milk-cow."¹²³

As Aceh's vassal, Perak surrendered not only control of its tin trade, but was forced to accept Sultan Iskandar's nominee as ruler. The Silsilah Raja-Raja Perak recounts the efforts made by one Perak prince to return with the support of Johor but "an army from Aceh arrived," bringing with it one of the royal princes who had been taken captive. He was established in Perak with the title of Sultan Mahmud Syah.¹²⁴

Though the history of Perak in the early seventeenth century is confused and events unclear, one fact emerges; Perak's vulnerability had been openly exposed. In a world of warring factions, Perak must perforce come under the domination of one state or another and its rulers constantly sought to assess the political situation so that they would be allied with the most powerful. The appeal to Johor had failed but when

^{121.} (cont'd.)

be some truth in this, as Beaulieu reported that Sultan Iskandar's last wife was a Queen of Perak "who is said to be very handsome." Harris, Navigantium, p. 744.

^{122.} Coolhaas, Generale Missiven, I, 103.

^{123.} Dagh Register, 1643-44, pp. 133, 203.

^{124.} Silsilah Raja-Raja Perak I, foll. 30A-30.

Acehnese attacks on Melaka in 1627 and 1629 met with complete defeat and Aceh's eclipse appeared certain, Perak, probably not unwillingly, submitted to Portugal once again.¹²⁵ Three years later, however, Goa received news that "the kingdom of Perak has rebelled and is now allied with the former (common) enemy of Aceh."¹²⁶ It was in graphic terms that the ruler of Perak described his plight to the Portuguese Governor.

He refused the tribute, saying that if only His Majesty would deliver him from the King of Acheen he would be His Majesty's vassal and pay tribute. He said that the numerous fleets from Achin which throng these seas frequently attacked his lands, devastating them and taking the people captive. He well knew, he said, how much more important it was to be His Majesty's vassal than to be a vassal of the King of Achin. He said that he had no power, however, to resist the tyrant and his great forces and that if His Majesty did not supply the means, he himself must seek a remedy in his own kingdom by becoming a vassal of the king of Achin and paying him the tribute he had formerly paid to His Majesty.¹²⁷

In this troubled world, many Malay rulers saw the newly formed United Dutch East India Company as an alternative ally. Johor, for example, tried to obtain Dutch support against Aceh,¹²⁸ while Sultan

125. F. C. Danvers, The Portuguese in India (London, 1894), II, 232-233. Danvers says that Perak, promising to pay tribute, made overtures to Portugal after the Acehnese defeat. However, he did not read Portuguese and his sources are of dubious accuracy. C. R. Boxer, "The Achinese Attack on Malacca in 1629, as Described in Contemporary Portuguese Sources," in Bastin and Roolvink, Malayan and Indonesian Studies, p. 107.

From other sources it appears that the reinforcement of dependency was forced on Perak by a Portuguese fleet. Ibid., p. 108. Dates are vague, however, and it is possible that the actual invitation did come from Perak. Personal letter to author from C. R. Boxer, 17 June, 1972.

126. Boxer, "The Achinese Attack," p. 120 n. 1.

127. Maxwell, "Barreto de Resende's Account," p. 11.

128. Andaya, The Kingdom of Johor, p. 20.

Iskandar Muda envisaged an alliance with the VOC which would help him oust the Portuguese and wipe out the shame of his defeats in 1627 and 1629. To obtain this assistance he was prepared to offer a tempting prize. In 1632 he promised the Dutch four years toll-free trade in Perak if the Company would ally with him in an attack on Melaka.¹²⁹ A VOC commission sent to investigate the possibilities of the Perak trade, held in such "great esteem" by the Portuguese, reported favourably. The harbour was good, the river deep and navigable for large ships.¹³⁰ The port was well-frequented, notably by Indian traders, but also by Chinese merchants and people from Makassar, Mataram, Bantam, Java and other areas of the Malay world who came there to buy tin.¹³¹

While Aceh and the VOC were making their own arrangements concerning the tin trade in Perak, the latter was not at all unwilling to acquire a new ally and was eager to strengthen its ties with the emerging Dutch power. Individual Dutch traders had been well received in Perak and had in fact been buying tin there for some years.¹³² Even in 1637, before the VOC had finalised the agreement with Aceh concerning the tin trade,

129. Coolhaas, Generale Missiven, I, 386.

130. Ibid.; Dagh Register, 1631-34, p. 239.

131. Dagh Register, 1631-1634, p. 239, 459; P. A. Tiele and J. E. Heeres, Bouwstoffen voor de Geschiedenis der Nederlanders in den Maleischen Archipel (The Hague, 1886-1895), II, 360. The envoys reported that Perak could deliver six to seven thousand bahara per annum, but this was a gross exaggeration. D. K. Bassett, "Changes in the Pattern of Malay Politics, 1629-1655," JSEAH, X, 3 (1969), 448.

132. Coolhaas, Generale Missiven, I, 129; N. Macleod, De Ooost Indische Compagnie als Zeemogenschap in Asie (Rijswijk, 1927), II, 205-206.

the Perak ruler had indicated his willingness to sign a contract with the Dutch which would exclude the Portuguese.¹³³ Sultan Muzafar's readiness to explore the possibilities of a new alliance is especially significant in view of the fact that negotiations for this contract were made without Aceh's knowledge. Perak might be a vassal, but its ruler showed a greater understanding of the shifting balance of power than did his suzerain, Sultan Iskandar Thani, the new ruler of Aceh, whose intransigence made an alliance between Aceh and either Portugal or the VOC doubtful.¹³⁴ A private arrangement made between Sultan Muzafar Syah of Perak and a VOC representative was disallowed by the Dutch but was replaced in 1639 by an official arrangement which permitted the Company to trade in Perak in competition with other merchants.¹³⁵

The anxiety of Sultan Muzafar to assure himself of Dutch friendship continued to stand in marked contrast to Sultan Iskandar Thani's hesitant attitude. Whereas Aceh did not commit troops for the Dutch attack on Melaka in 1640-41, Perak was quick to perceive that the days of the Portuguese were numbered. Three months after the commencement of the siege, at a time when Sultan Iskandar was still vacillating, Sultan Muzafar sent envoys and a letter to the Dutch commander. "God grant that you

133. Macleod, De Oost Indische Compagnie, II, 207; Bassett, "Changes in the Patterns," p. 437; Coolhaas, Generale Missiven, I, 649.

134. Bassett, "Changes in the Patterns," p. 437.

135. Macleod, De Oost Indische Compagnie, II, 207; G. Irwin, "The Dutch and the Tin Trade of Malaya in the Seventeenth Century," in Jerome Ch'en and Nicholas Tarling, eds., Studies in the Social History of China and Southeast Asia: Essays in Memory of Victor Purcell (Cambridge, 1971), p. 279.

may quickly become masters of Melaka and overcome the proud Portuguese, who are not to be trusted. . . . I hope that the kingdoms of Aceh and Batavia shall enter into greater friendship than before, like a ring with two stones, and even more so Perak and Batavia."¹³⁶

Sultan Muzafar might write letters of support, but it was clear that future relations between Perak and the VOC depended on the attitude of his overlord in Aceh. Sometimes, however, this relationship was invoked merely as a delaying tactic when Dutch demands were found to be unacceptable. Sultan Muzafar refused the VOC request that all other foreign traders in Perak be evicted, for example, maintaining that he could not take such a step without first seeking Acehnese approval.¹³⁷

It was this question of an open versus a monopoly market which first brought about a souring of relations between Perak and the Dutch and it was to remain the dominating issue in their relationship until the fall of Dutch Melaka in 1795. VOC traders found formidable opposition in Perak. Unable to displace their rivals from Aceh, India, China, Kedah and Java, they fell back on legal arguments, claiming that they had inherited what they said were the monopoly rights of the Portuguese.¹³⁸ Friction inevitably resulted following Dutch attempts to proscribe all Indian shipping to Perak and this friction continued throughout the century, even after treaties guaranteed the VOC at least part of the tin produced in Perak.¹³⁹

136. Dagh Register, 1640-41, p. 70.

137. Macleod, De Oost Indische Compagnie, II, 220-221; Tiele and Heeres, Bouwstoffen, II, 37; Dagh Register, 1640-41, pp. 365, 459.

138. Tiele and Heeres, Bouwstoffen, II, 37; 105.

Finding it impossible to ensure their control of the tin trade through diplomacy or treaty, the Dutch resorted to blockades and during 1644-46 and 1647-49 VOC ships patrolled the coast to force Perak inhabitants to deliver tin to the Company.¹⁴⁰ A further effort to consolidate the Dutch position was made in 1650, when another contract was concluded with Sultan Iskandar Thani's widow, Taj-al Alam. The tin in Perak was now to be divided solely between Aceh and the VOC "with the exclusion of all other nations, Europeans as well as Indians."¹⁴¹

The people of Perak were infuriated at this hamstringing of their trade and the wholesale eviction of the Indians, their best customers. Anti-Dutch feeling grew, expressed principally by the nobles under the leadership of the Syahbandar and the Temenggong. This feeling exploded into violence when the rumour spread that the Dutch lodge, in process of construction, was intended to be a fort and that guns had already been brought in.¹⁴² During the eighteenth century feelings towards the Dutch changed and, faced by a threatening world, Perak rulers welcomed such a fort. In 1651, however, its presence was considered a threat to the country's well-being. Who knew to what purpose it might be put? Sultan

139. Basset, "Changes in the Patterns," p. 447-448; Dagh-Register, 1640-41, pp. 83, 86, Dagh Register 1647-48, pp. 6-7; KA 1050 OB 1763, Gov. van Twist to Batavia, 17 Dec. 1642, fol. 23r.

140. Bassett, "Changes in the Patterns," p. 448.

141. J. E. Heeres, "Corpus Diplomaticum Neerlandico Indicum," BKI, 57 (1907), 539.

142. N. Macleod, "De Oost Indische Compagnie op Sumatra in de 17^e Eeuw," Indische Gids, 26, 1 (1904), 624-637 gives a full description of this event and the ensuing difficulties between Perak and the Dutch.

Muzafar himself attempted to resolve the issue by appealing to the Acehese court but, when his request that the Dutch be ousted was ignored, some of his orang besar decided to take matters into their own hands. In April 1651, while a Dutch party was bringing a letter from the Melaka Governor to the Perak court, "the Temenggong called amuk" and the Malays attacked. Thirty Dutchmen were killed and the lodge destroyed.¹⁴³

This incident came as a great shock to the Dutch. Their resentment at what they termed a "horrible event . . . faithless behaviour, the murder of so many innocent souls" was fanned by their inability to bring those involved to justice. From 1651 until 1659 the VOC attempted to gain satisfaction through punitive expeditions to Perak and deputations to the Acehese court but these were unsuccessful and memories of the attack lived on throughout the Company's association with Perak.¹⁴⁴ At the time a Dutch envoy to the court of Aceh told Taj-al Alam outright that "the people of Perak have given us sufficient cause to mistrust them in everything."¹⁴⁵ 1651 established for Perak Malays a reputation for violence which accords ill with their behaviour during the eighteenth cen-

143. Ibid., p. 628; see also Coolhaas, Generale Missiven, II, 512-519.

144. A summary of the Company's relationship with Perak drawn up by Governor Couperus in 1791 stresses the "violent murder" of 1651. KA 3858 Secret, 1793. Diverse papers concerning the Country's Military Commission, 31 Aug. 1791. See also Chapter II, p. 182. As a contrast, it is interesting to note Maxwell's comment. "I have lived in Perak for several years and have sought in vain among natives of the state for any traditional accounts of the attack upon the Dutch [in 1651] and the negotiations which followed. I have never succeeded in meeting a native who could remember having heard that such a thing had happened." W. E. Maxwell, "The Dutch in Perak," JSBRAS, X (Dec. 1882), 246.

145. Coolhaas, Generale Missiven, II, 515.

tury. Despite repeated examples to the contrary, the potential "treachery" of Perak inhabitants became an accepted belief among VOC administrators.

The murder of the VOC representatives in Perak also laid bare the extent to which Aceh's control had weakened under the rule of Sultan Iskandar Thani's widow, Taj-al Alam. The latter had for some time been aware of the decline in her prestige and had earlier refused Dutch inspection of Acehnese ships leaving Perak with tin on the grounds that it would "prejudice her sovereignty and diminish her absolute power in Perak, at least in the eyes of Perak subjects."¹⁴⁶ Now it proved impossible for the Acehnese court to force Sultan Muzafar to surrender the orang besar responsible for the killings; as Taj-al Alam explained to a Dutch envoy, "The land of Perak is indeed mine . . . but the people living there are a coarse, proud nation, full of rebelliousness."¹⁴⁷

This unwillingness to accept Acehnese suzerainty became more pronounced after the death of Sultan Muzafar in 1654.¹⁴⁸ The latter, originally from Siak, had been brought up in the Acehnese court and probably felt some ties of loyalty to the wife of Iskandar Thani, who had placed him on the Perak throne.¹⁴⁹ With his death, however, the internal

146. Ibid., 462-463, 571.

147. Ibid., p. 511. Aceh's waning influence is also attested by the fact that the Queen was receiving little tin from Perak. Dagh Register, 1661, p. 13.

148. Coolhaas, Generale Missiven, II, 751.

149. Silsilah Kerajaan Melaka Negeri Perak, fo. 27^v, lines 6-10. According to this text, the Siak prince, Raja Sulung, had married a Perak princess herself descended from the royal family of Pahang. The

situation in Perak changed markedly. The new ruler, Sultan Muzafar's son, was still a child and, according to the Silsilah Melaka Kerajaan Negeri Perak, an orphan. His mother had died a short time before Sultan Muzafar and the young prince had therefore been adopted by the "Raja of Aceh; Her Majesty had given him a gold keris and other things. Whenever the nubat sounded, he was held on the lap of his aunt" [presumably the regent].¹⁵⁰

This Malay perception of a troubled succession obscures a major development within the Perak court. Now real power in the country lay not with the ruler, but with the orang besar, and especially with the former Temenggong. The latter had not only survived Dutch demands that he be put to death for his complicity in the 1651 incident but had been promoted to Bendahara. By 1655 he was in control of the entire government.¹⁵¹ Probably because of the influence of his uncle, who was a leading member of the Acehnese Council of Nobles, Taj-al Alam refused to take any action against the Perak Bendahara. She and her nobles argued that he could not be deposed at this point since the new ruler was too young and inexperienced, and the Regent too old and weak to manage any affairs of state. Everything devolved on the Bendahara and without him the government would be in confusion.¹⁵²

149. (cont'd.)

Dutch noted that Raja Sulung was also related to Sultan Iskandar Thani and connected to the Pahang royal house. Coolhaas, Generale Missiven, II, 571.

150. Silsilah Raja-Raja Perak, fo. 28, lines 4-7. The Dutch mention the birth of this prince in 1641. He would therefore have been about 13 years old when his father died. KA 1045 OB 1642, Melaka's Dagb Register, 3 April 641, foll. 307-308.

151. Coolhaas, Generale Missiven, III, 47.

In spite of Dutch protests, the Bendahara retained his post and even consolidated his position.¹⁵³ Dominating the Perak Assembly for a number of years, he provides an excellent example of the degree of power an orang besar could attain. He was said to have "the whole government at his fingertips" and, because of his hostility, it was impossible for the Company to compel delivery of its quota of tin.¹⁵⁴ Smuggling continued to the more profitable markets of Aceh and Kedah. This Bendahara even appeared to be exploring the possibility of an alliance with the anti-Dutch ruler of Kedah, possibly in an effort to displace both the Company and Aceh.¹⁵⁵ Indeed, even after Dutch arguments and the prospect of losing the tin trade completely finally pressured Taj-al Alam into dismissing the Bendahara, he turned once more to Kedah in an effort to obtain support against Aceh.¹⁵⁶ Though the latter's threats were sufficient to make plans for a Kedah-Perak alliance "disappear in smoke," the Bendahara himself appeared invincible. In February 1662 the

152. Ibid.; Macleod. "De Oost Indische Compagnie op Sumatra," p. 634.

153. The treaty of 1655 clearly placed him at the head of the nobles and article 7 allowed him to continue in office subject to the approval of the Acehnese court and the Company. Four years later a further contract between Aceh and the VOC was concluded in which the Queen agreed to punish those "most deeply involved in the murder of 1651." The Bendahara, however, would be pardoned "because of his great descent" and was permitted to retain his post. Heeres, "Corpus Diplomaticum," BKI, 87 (1931), 78-81, 152-153.

154. Dagh Register, 1661, p. 242; Coolhaas, Generale Missiven, III, 324.

155. A marriage alliance was planned between the royal families of Kedah and Perak. Dagh Register, 1662, p. 17.

156. Ibid., 242.

Governor of Melaka reported that everything in Perak had returned to "its former state" and the Bendahara, so recently deposed, had now been reinstated. Company affairs in Perak again deteriorated and there seemed no way that the Dutch could control the open smuggling.¹⁵⁷

The following years saw a monotonous pattern of unfulfilled treaties and consequent blockades, but the theme of Perak's search for a powerful friend stands out clearly from the maze of detail, a search for a new relationship which would replace that with Aceh. Vassalage had brought no benefits and now Aceh could no longer enforce its former control. Perak, however, had no desire to merely submit to the domination of another state. Something different was envisaged, a friendship, an alliance which would be maintained by volition rather than force. There was never any thought of casting off all contracts and retreating into isolationism. It would have been unprecedented for Perak to have faced the world without a strong and powerful friend, especially in the shadow of a newly assertive Siam. The only question was the choice of an ally. One faction saw the Company as a possibility, despite the hostilities of past years, and until 1670 the pendulum swung backwards and forwards between the pro-Dutch faction and those who wished to look elsewhere.

After the Bendahara's failure to gain Kedah support and his final downfall in late 1662, the group favouring a VOC alliance gained ascendancy under the leadership of Sultan Mahmud himself, now old enough to assume control of the government.¹⁵⁸ In 1663 he told the Company that

157. KA 1126 OB 1662, Gov. Thyssen to Batavia, 28 Nov. 1661, fo. 705; KA 1130 OB 1663, Gov. Thyssen to Batavia, 28 Feb. 1662, fo. 228.

158. Sultan Mahmud would now have been about 23 years old. See above, note 140.

he would not only sell his tin to the Dutch but would also sever all ties with Aceh if he could be assured that the VOC would protect him against any reprisals.¹⁵⁹ When this effort to recruit Dutch assistance failed, the tide turned again in Aceh's favour and it was also rumoured that the Perak court was considering a approach to Johor.¹⁶⁰ Under a newly appointed Bendahara, however, Perak's attitude towards the Company began to improve. Those who favoured closer relations with the Dutch found their support strengthening in the face of Aceh's growing weakness and obvious inability to protect its former vassals from attack. Perak's need for an ally was particularly pressing in view of a new threat from the north, that of the Thais under their warlike king, Narai.

Since Narai's succession in 1657, Siam had become increasingly belligerent. The new king's policy of expansion was directed not only towards the Burmese but also towards Siam's former vassals, the Malay states to the south. Siamese rulers never forgot that at one time they had controlled much of the Peninsula. Jeremias van Vliet, a Dutchman who lived in Siam from 1634 to 1636 was told that in the reign of Rama T'ibodi (1350-1369) "many princes came to visit him, such as the princes of Patani, Perak, Kedah etc."¹⁶¹ Fifty years later, in 1685, a Johor

159. J. E. Hoffman, "Early Policies in the Malacca Jurisdiction of the United East India Company; the Malay Peninsula and Netherlands East Indies Attachment," JSEAS, III, 1 (1972), 19; Dagh Register, 1663, p. 588.

160. Dagh Register, 1663, p. 697.

161. De Cort Verhaal van 't Nature Sijn der Volbrachten Tijd en de Successie der Coningen van Siam voor soo veel daar bij d'oude Historien Bekent Sijn, Collectie Sweers and Van Vliet, Algemeen Rijksarchief, 7, fo. 70.

envoy to the court of Siam was told that formerly "the King of Siam was Protector over the whole district of Melaka . . . and the further land of Patani as far as Kedah."¹⁶²

Perak rulers, too, were fully aware of the threat posed by the Siamese. As Sultan Abdullah wrote to the British in 1826, "this country of Perak is part of the same continent as Siam."¹⁶³ In the seventeenth century his ancestors would have watched with disquiet the burden of Thai domination in such states as Patani and Kedah. Although vassalage could be enforced only when Siam was strong, this did not make it less onerous and the frequent rebellions by Malay states during the seventeenth century indicate their unwillingness to accept the status of a Siamese dependency. A ruler of Kedah told the Dutch that he was "a friend and inferior of the Siamese, but no vassal" and a Kelantan text relates how the Raja refused to give his wife to the Siamese king "because they are infidels and do not know proper etiquette." (orang Siam bangsa kafir, tiada tahu cara bahasa)¹⁶⁴

King Narai made it clear that he would not tolerate opposition from these states and in 1661 Kedah was forced to send the Bunga Mas dan Perak, the token of subservience, once more.¹⁶⁵ Lacking a powerful ally,

162. Coolhaas, Generale Missiven, IV, 785-786.

163. SSR F 5, Letters from Native Rulers, King of Perak to Gov. of Penang, 10 Sept. 1826, fo. 7.

164. Coolhaas, Generale Missiven, III, 326; Taib Osman, Hikayat Sri Kelantan, M.A. Thesis, Univ. of Malaya, 1961, p. 53.

165. Dagh Register, 1661, p. 381. For a description of the "gold and silver flowers" (bunga mas dan perak), see Bonney, Kedah, pp. 11-12.

Sultan Mahmud feared for his own future. In 1670, as a result of Perak's repeated requests and Dutch desire to safeguard the tin trade against interference from English traders, the VOC established a post on Pangkor Island, opposite the Dinding River. The fear of Siam was so great, however, that the Perak orang besar urged an even closer connection. When an envoy visited the court the following year, Sultan Mahmud asked that the Company re-establish a residence on the Perak River, assuring the Dutch that the country was already "two-thirds theirs."¹⁶⁶ In 1674 and 1677 there were again widespread rumours of an imminent Siamese invasion and, with the final collapse of Acehnese control, Sultan Mahmud was adamant in his decision to maintain a friendship with the Dutch.¹⁶⁷ By 1678 Governor Bort of Melaka could report that, in spite of his earlier suspicions, the people of Perak now appeared to want the Dutch as neighbours and in trading matters "they treat us very fairly."¹⁶⁸

Because of Sultan Mahmud's support, relations between Perak and the VOC had shown a noticeable improvement but the faction which opposed any connection with the Dutch still wielded formidable influence. A new

166. C. O. Blagden, ed., "Report of Governor Balthasar Bort on Melaka, 1678," JMBRAS, V, 1 (1927), 153; KA 1173 OB 1672, Report by Jacob Schagen, 11 Feb. 1671, foll. 1428^r. In later years Dutch officials recalled that Perak had ceased to pay tribute to Aceh after the death of Taj-al Alam in 1675. KA 3858, Secret, 1793, Diverse Papers, 31 Aug. 1791.

The Dutch post on Dinding Island, as the Dutch called Pangkor, was set up on 5 Aug. 1670. The post is described in William Dampier, Voyages and Discoveries (London, 1931), p. 117.

167. KA 1192 OB 1675, Report by Henry Waeker to Gov. Bort, 20 Aug. 1674, fo. 259; Coolhaas, Generale Missiven, IV, 195.

168. Coolhaas, Generale Missiven, IV, 195; Blagden, "Report of Governor Bort," p. 142.

Bendahara was appointed in 1674 and, like his famous predecessor, emerged as leader of the anti-Dutch faction. Once again, resentment erupted into violence. In 1685 the Bendahara was accused of engineering the murder of the Dutch resident and eleven VOC employees were killed. Despite the fact that the attack was totally opposed to Sultan Mahmud's wishes, the Company was never able to obtain the redress it sought.¹⁶⁹ The Bendahara controlled large areas of territory--Larut, Kinta, Kampar, and Sungai Raya--and had a sizeable following within the court. Furthermore, he was married to Sultan Mahmud's sister.¹⁷⁰ The Bendahara's position was rivalled only by the royal merchant (saudagar raja), an Indian named Sedelebe. The latter had managed to survive various fluctuations in his fortune and by 1686 was in charge of virtually the entire tin trade in Perak. Buying tin in the ruler's name, he ordered all the miners in the ulu to deliver their tin to him and even refused to grant a Chinese merchant a pass to trade tin with the Dutch at Pangkor Island.¹⁷¹

169. KA 1304 OB 1686, Gov. Slicher to Batavia, 25 Sept. 1685, foll. 815-816. The Bendahara had also been suspected of involvement in another attack on a Dutch party in 1679. Dagh Register, 1679, p. 216.

170. KA 1388 OB 1692, Slicher to Batavia, 21 April 1691, fo. 362.

171. Irwin, "The Dutch and the Tin Trade of Malaya," p. 274 gives a brief description of Sedelebe. He had originally lived in Melaka and had subsequently taken up residence in Perak. He fell into disgrace in 1674 and 1675, however, because both Dutch and Sultan Mahmud accused him of interfering in the Indian trade. He was also heavily indebted to the Bendahara, who threatened to kill him if the debts were not repaid. He made a rapid recovery from his disgrace and by 1685 was carrying out the duties of saudagar raja. KA 1192 OB 1675, Bort to Batavia, 6 April 1674, fo. 212r; 24 April, fo. 231r; KA 1196 OB 1676, Bort to Batavia, 7 Oct. 1675, fo. 386v; Coolhaas, Generale Missiven, IV, 347; 438; Dagh Register, 1681, pp. 274; Dagh Register, 1682, II, 1463; KA 1318 OB 1687, Gov. Comans to Batavia, 30 March 1686, fo. 736v.

These two men, though themselves rivals, provided the anti-Dutch faction with strong leadership. In December 1689, at a time when Sultan Mahmud was preparing to send an envoy to Melaka, the Bendahara once again resorted to violence against the Dutch. With the support of Sedelebe and the orang besar, he recruited the aid of an orang laut pirate, Panglima Kulup. On December 2, Panglima Kulup and three hundred men attacked the Dutch redoubt on Pangkor Island.¹⁷² As in 1651, this attack was undertaken in complete defiance of the wishes of Sultan Mahmud and his brother, the Raja Muda. In the words of the Melaka Governor, "this clearly shows how great the authority of the Bendahara is."¹⁷³ Even two years later, when the Raja Muda succeeded in deposing the Bendahara, the latter retained such a following among the people that Sultan Mahmud dared not use force against him.¹⁷⁴ The independence of the principal orang besar during the seventeenth century and their lack of co-operation with the ruler form a contrast to their relative compliance a hundred years later, when the ruler's opposition came largely from the waris negeri and anak raja, members of his own family.

Despite the attack on the Pangkor redoubt in 1689 and the withdrawal of the garrison the following year, the Dutch were still prepared to renegotiate a treaty with Perak if certain conditions were met, a tribute to the tremendous value they placed on the tin trade. At the

172. KA 1375 OB 1691, Slicher to Batavia, 23 Feb. 1690, foll. 261^r-262^v.

173. KA 1375 OB 1691, Slicher to Batavia, 23 Feb. 1690, fo. 262^r.

174. KA 1388 OB 1692, Slicher to Batavia, 21 April 1691 fo. 362; 25 Jan. 1692, fo. 432.

same time Sultan Mahmud, the Perak ruler, favoured a renewal of relations with the Company, who could supply patrols to combat the growing piracy along the Perak coastline. In early 1691 it was reported that Sultan Mahmud was in fact seeking the mediation of Johor,¹⁷⁵ and in the following year envoys were sent from Perak to discuss the possibility of a new contract with the Melaka Governor. These discussions were unsuccessful, for the envoys were not given sufficient authority to conclude a treaty which would satisfy the Governor; for his part, Sultan Mahmud expressed annoyance at Dutch failure to pay tolls and at the confiscation of a number of Perak ships.¹⁷⁶ Although the Melaka Governor was anxious to avoid an open break, it was impossible to reach any resolution. A further attack by pirates on Pangkor decided the issue and for the next half-century only polite relations were maintained between Perak and Melaka. Pangkor Island continued to be regarded by the Dutch as Company property and ships were sent regularly to inspect the stone pillar erected to indicate VOC ownership.¹⁷⁷

The seventeenth century does not appear to have been a happy one

175. After 1690 piracy increased in the waters of the Perak coast and in fact became so bad that Dutch burghers of Melaka refused to sail to Perak to trade except in convoys protected by Company ships. Irwin, "The Dutch and the Tin Trade," p. 287; KA 1388 OB 1692, Slicher to Batavia, 21 April 1691, fo. 362.

176. KA 1424 OB 1693, Melaka Day Register, 9-25 Oct. 1692, foll. 45-72.

177. KA 1407 OB 1693, Comans to Batavia, 22 Oct. 1692, foll. 684^{r-v}; 702^{r-v}; KA 1424 OB 1693, Melaka Day Register, 11 Dec. 1692, foll. 144-148; KA 1447 OB 1695, Gov. Vosburgh to Batavia, 11 Feb. 1694; instructions to Lt. Jan Rosdom, Commissioner to Dinding, 14 May 1794, foll. 351V-354V.

for Perak. Virtually depopulated by Sultan Iskandar's raids of 1620, it had recovered only to become a pawn in the disputes between the Dutch East India Company and the court of Aceh. Perak's very weakness had led to an intense involvement in Malay affairs, partly because of its relationship to Aceh and the Dutch and partly because Perak rulers were convinced that they must seek out a powerful friend who would protect them against the threats which seemed to come from all sides. With Aceh's decline and the slow crumbling of the relationship with the VOC, Perak was without an ally, and it was probably this knowledge which prompted Sultan Mahmud to send a mission to Johor, the strongest state in the region, in 1692.¹⁷⁸

Although successive Perak rulers had attempted to strengthen the association with the Dutch, their experiences with the Company had not generally been successful. Efforts by the overlord in Aceh and the Perak ruler himself on behalf of the VOC had repeatedly been opposed by the orang besar, who often saw their interests as conflicting with those of the ruler. Angered by VOC blockades, low prices, and insensitive residents, members of the Perak court had on several occasions retaliated with violence. No ruler had been able to make a pro-Dutch policy acceptable to the Assembly except at times when invasion or attack appeared imminent. It was clear that for most Perak Malays the promise of Dutch friendship did not compensate for the economic disadvantages which a contract with the Company entailed.

¹⁷⁸. KA 1426 OB 1694, Gov. Vosburg to Batavia, 9 May 1693, fo. 182^v. An elephant was sent to Sultan Mahmud of Johor as a gift.

As far as the Dutch themselves were concerned, Perak remained an unknown, hostile land. As Wouter Schouten wrote in 1663:

The country is favoured with tin mines, but everywhere in the interior it is covered with very high mountains, thick forests and frightful wilderness and there are many Rhinoceroses, wild Elephants, Buffaloes, Tigers, Crocodiles, Serpents, and many other monsters to be found.¹⁷⁹

In 1689 an English visitor to the Dutch post on Pangkor, William Dampier, commented on the "continual fear" of the VOC garrison there. Though they traded with the Malays "yet dare they not trust them so far as to be ranging about the island in any work of husbandry or indeed to go far from the Fort for there only they are safe."¹⁸⁰ Panglima Kulup's attack the same year merely reinforced the Dutch stereotype of Perak Malays as faithless and treacherous.

For a short time after the Dutch departure in 1690, Perak basked in the luxury of a freedom from both trading restrictions and outside threats. Only rarely was it jolted out of its isolation. In 1699, Perak, like the rest of the Malay world, was shocked by the murder of Sultan Mahmud of Johor by his nobles.¹⁸¹ Neither Perak nor Palembang had forgotten their family ties with Sultan Mahmud and both states urged the Dutch to join with them in a full scale invasion of Johor.¹⁸² If this

179. Wouter Schouten, Reistogt naar en door Oostindien (Utrecht, 1775), II, 50.

180. Dampier, Voyages and Discoveries, pp. 117-118.

181. See Andaya, The Kingdom of Johor, pp. 203-211.

182. KA 1530 OB 1701, Gov. van Hoorn to Batavia, fo. 42; KA 1515 OB 1700, van Hoorn to Batavia, 30 Nov. 1699, fo. 13.

had eventuated, it would have marked the first occasion in which Perak had been the aggressor rather than the victim and clearly demonstrates the type of issue which Perak rulers considered justified war. The Dutch, however, were unwilling to become involved and Perak, with the rest of the Malay world, watched as the former Bendahara succeeded as ruler of Johor.¹⁸³ As one of Sultan Mahmud's former friends, Perak must have wondered whether it could count on the support of this new dynasty whose inception it had opposed so violently and which now appeared unwilling or unable to control the piratical raidings of its subjects in Perak waters.¹⁸⁴

Perak's lack of powerful allies became an issue of particular importance in 1709. In that year the king of Siam, Prachao Sua, launched a series of attacks to the south, possibly intended to avenge the setbacks Siam had suffered after the death of Narai in 1688. Patani, Terengganu, Perak and even Johor were threatened and though the immediate danger of a Siamese sweep through the northern peninsula was averted by Prachao Sua's death in mid 1709, the threat of continuing campaigns under his successor remained until the next year.¹⁸⁵

Perak lay exposed, and it was almost inevitable, therefore that

183. Andaya, The Kingdom of Johor, pp. 210-215.

184. In 1701 the Dutch were told that Johor had sent fleets to drive away pirates from the Perak river, but the problem continued and in 1709 the Governor of Melaka speculated that hopes of obtaining support against them may have been behind Perak's gestures of friendship. Andaya, The Kingdom of Johor, p. 217; KA 1668 OB 1710, Gov. Rooselaar to Batavia, 16 April 1709, fo. 60.

185. KA 1668 OB 1710, Rooselaar to Batavia, 16 April 1709, foll. 60, 66; 21 June 1709, foll. 177-179; Andaya, The Kingdom of Johor, pp. 236-237. KA 1687 OB 1711, Gov. Six to Batavia, 6 Sept. 1710, fo. 467.

the ruler (Raja Inu, Raja Kecil Besar, named as Regent) should approach the VOC once more. In 1710 he sent a mission to the Governor of Melaka asking for an envoy to be sent to Perak. The Governor decided to wait until a promised mission from Perak had arrived but time went by and no delegation appeared. We can only assume that the need for a renewed alliance was gone. Perak had been freed from any immediate prospect of invasion as Siamese attention was diverted towards Vietnamese incursions in Cambodia.¹⁸⁶ Until 1746 Perak rulers made no further advance towards the Dutch and contact between the two lapsed for over three decades except for occasional ships bringing tin.

Perak's retreat from involvement in the affairs of the outside world during the first half of the eighteenth century may have been due to the internal breakdown of government. Although the dearth of sources makes the establishment of any chronology impossible, it is apparent that later Perak rulers could look back on a period of factionalism and civil war, with the orang besar and the anak raja playing a major role. According to the Silsilah Raja-Raja Perak, Sultan Mahmud had died childless, but during his reign he had adopted three of his nephews, Raja Radin, Raja Inu and Raja Bisnu. Raja Radin was made Raja Muda and Raja Inu was appointed Raja of Bernam with the title Sultan Muzafar Syah "and was honoured with the insignia of royalty and with a following of warriors according to custom."¹⁸⁷

186. KA 1687 OB 1711, Raja Kecil Besar of Perak to Gov. Six (enclosed with Six to Batavia, 12 March 1710) fo. 60, also foll. 12-18; 6 Sept. 1710, foll. 487-493; D. G. E. Hall, A History of Southeast Asia (New York, 1968), p. 455.

After Sultan Mahmud's death, Raja Radin succeeded as Raja of Perak, and was entitled Sultan Alauddin Mughayat Syah, while Raja Bisnu, his brother, became Raja Muda. When Sultan Alauddin had been ruling for some time, his other brother, Sultan Muzafar, came from Bernam and invaded Perak. "And by the decree of God most high, who executes his will upon all his creatures by any means that he may choose, there was dissension among the orang besar. There was war between the Raja of Bernam and the Datuk Bendahara and the orang besar of Perak. All was fighting and confusion with one against another."¹⁸⁸ Sultan Muzafar was defeated and was forced downriver but, drawing support from the Laksamana and various panglima, he launched another attack on the forces of Sultan Alauddin, which were led by the Bendahara. The latter were defeated and forced to retreat upstream.

The Laksamana sent a representative to Sultan Alauddin with the message that the Laksamana had no intention of committing derhaka or treason against any of the three royal brothers. He only wished to meet with the Datuk Bendahara and the other orang besar, who apparently wished to make themselves equal to Sultan Alauddin and his brothers. Sultan Alauddin discussed the matter with the Raja Muda, saying, "If we allow this to take place [i.e., a quarrel between the Laksamana and the Bendahara], the quarrel will spread all over the country." And when Sultan Alauddin had decided what to do he went to meet his brother, Sultan Muzafar, in the elephant yard. The three royal brothers embraced and kissed

187. Silsilah Raja-Raja Perak, fo. 31, lines 1-8.

188. Ibid., foll. 31-32A.

each other and after this Sultan Alauddin went to Sayung in the ulu where he lived for a long time and where his nubat was played.

After a time, the text continues, the Bendahara Megat Iskandar died and was succeeded by Megat Terawis. Matters were discussed (mufakat) and all parties decided to return to the way things were in the past (seperti sedia lama). The ruler of Perak, Sultan Alauddin, went back to Kota Garongong while the ruler of Bernam, Sultan Mazafar, returned to Bernam. Some time later, Sultan Alauddin made a journey to Bernam to amuse himself and to visit his younger brother, Sultan Muzafar. After arriving at Bernam, Sultan Alauddin joined his brother and they amused themselves according to the adat of Malay kings.

Sultan Alauddin returned safely from Bernam to Perak. "And it pleased God, who is ever to be praised, to bestow the blessings of peace upon the rule of the Raja Muda, the king's brother, who administered the government under his elder brother, together with the ministers, the officials, the hulubalang and the bentara [court attendants] who were all organised according to custom."¹⁸⁹

Sultan Alauddin continued to reign, we are told, for seven years. After his death, Sultan Muzafar moved from Bernam to Perak and was made ruler, retaining his title of Sultan Muzafar. Raja Bisnu, the Raja Muda continued to hold this office and to govern the country on behalf of his elder brother. Megat Terawis, the Bendahara, also died and was succeeded by Sri Dewa Raja. "Order was established and the country was at rest and the port [bandar] was populous and frequented by traders."¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁹. Ibid., foll. 32A-33A.

In its celebration of the "blessings of peace," this Malay record remembers the period of the early eighteenth century as one of factionalism and dissension, not only between the orang besar, but between members of the royal family. These three decades, when Perak was freed from the imposition of trading restrictions and from foreign interference, should by rights have led to a greater cohesion and a strengthening of the political structure; instead, they left it weakened and disunited. Although Sultan Muzafar had succeeded to the throne, there must have been many who remembered his opposition to Sultan Alauddin and who felt that the Raja Muda, Raja Bisnu, had a greater claim to rule. Perak was thus ill-equipped to confront yet another threat to its peace and security, a threat which was the more dangerous because it encompassed the entire Malay world. This threat was represented on the one hand by the Minangkabau and on the other, by the Bugis. Through their involvement, these two groups were to change the very course of Malay history.

Whereas Bugis settlers from Sulawesi began arriving in noticeable numbers only after 1700, the Minangkabau were not newcomers to the Malay world, and their cultural heartland of Pagar Ruyong was held in awe by the Malays as the place ruled by the descendents of the princes of Bukit Si Guntang. One of Perak's most famous folk heroes, the Bendahara Megat Terawis, was said to be a son of the Raja of Pagar Ruyong whose origins gave him various kinds of magic powers.¹⁹¹ Even in the nineteenth cen-

190. Ibid., foll. 33-34A.

191. Maxwell, "A History of Perak from Native Sources," (1882), pp. 93-94, 102. In the early eighteenth century, Alexander Hamilton, an

ture a visitor to Perak noted that any Minangkabau coming among the Malays was treated with respect and veneration.¹⁹²

By the seventeenth century Minangkabau rantau settlements were well established along the east coast of Sumatra and in Naning, Rembau and Sungai Ujung on the peninsula.¹⁹³ Their Dutch neighbours regarded the Minangkabau with as much respect as the Malays. In 1695 a visitor to Melaka wrote:

The dominion of the Dutch reaches but three miles round the city because the natives being a wild people living like beasts, they will not easily submit to bear the Holland yoke. They are called Menancavos, very great thieves, Mahometans as to religion and such mortal enemies to the Dutch that they not only refuse to have any commerce with them but cut them in pieces, whenever it is in their power. And this is the reason why the plains of Malaca, abounding in Indian canes, they cannot be cut without much precaution, for the fear of those barbarians. Their king, called Pagariyyon, has his residence at Nani, a village made with mats ill put together in the thickest of the wood. No better account can be had of their country for want of commerce with them.¹⁹⁴

The Minangkabau came into prominence particularly after 1718, when a prince from Pagar Ruyong, calling himself Raja Kecil, appeared in Johor claiming to be the son of the murdered Sultan Mahmud come to avenge his

191. (cont'd.)

English country trader, observed that Malays considered the Minangkabau to "have the character of great sorcerers, who by their spells can tame wild tigers and make them carry them whither they order on their backs." Alexander Hamilton, A New Account of the East Indies (London, 1930), II, 45.

192. MacNair, Perak and the Malays, p. 132.

193. Andaya, The Kingdom of Johor, pp. 112-118.

194. J. J. Sheehan, "A Seventeenth Century Visitor to the Malay Peninsula," JMBRAS, XII, 2 (1934), 103.

father's death.¹⁹⁵ Coming so quickly after the trauma of the regicide in 1699, and the establishment of a new Johor dynasty, this claim had a telling effect. Drawing on the allegiance of the orang laut,¹⁹⁶ other Minangkabau, and Malays who regarded him as the rightful heir to the throne, Raja Kecil was for a brief time able to establish himself in the capital of Riau. Driven out by Bugis troops in 1722, he continued to wage intermittent warfare to regain his position until he became insane sometime in the 1740's.¹⁹⁷ The dynasty he had founded in Siak, however, and the fraternal disputes between his sons, Raja Alam and Raja Muhammad, and grandsons, Raja Muhammad Ali and Raja Ismail, insured that the name of Raja Kecil was not forgotten.

Although Perak was not directly involved, its security was frequently threatened during the eighteenth century by the protracted struggles of the Minangkabau princes. As a weak state, Perak was frequently forced to satisfy demands from one side or another for gunpowder or supplies¹⁹⁸ and its rulers often lived in fear of an attack from roam-

195. Andaya, The Kingdom of Johor, pp. 277-306.

196. The role of the orang laut, or sea people, in the kingdom of Johor has been discussed by Andaya. Ibid., pp. 40-46, 49-51, 208, 294-296, 317-318.

197. For a survey of this period, see Andaya, The Kingdom of Johor, pp. 308-347. In 1743 the Governor of Melaka, Roger de Laver, reported that Raja Kecil was "effectively senseless." KA 2522 OB 1745, de Laver to Batavia, 27 Dec. 1743, fo. 79.

198. In July 1771 Dus Rahim, a Malay of Perak was sent to Siak via Melaka with fifty ganting of gunpowder as a gift for Sultan Mahommad of Siak, Raja Kecil's son. KA 3252 OB 1773, Incoming Ships, under 5 July 1771. In 1777 Sultan Alauddin of Perak (1773-1792) sent three hundred ganting of gunpowder to Raja Ismail, Raja Kecil's grandson,

ing Minangkabau fleets. The Minangkabau also supplied another source of support to which a disgruntled anak raja could appeal for aid. To the north, Perak watched the Minangkabau assist one claimant to the Kedah throne, while the Bugis contributed their forces to support the other.¹⁹⁹ Perak itself had its own Minangkabau population, many of whom had spilled over from Kedah, and the loyalty of this group now became suspect. It was to be severely tested a few years later when Sultan Berkabat, the son of Raja Kecil and a Kedah prince, attempted to press his claim to the throne of Perak. It is significant that the Misa Melayu emphasises that the Minangkabau willingly followed Sultan Iskandar (1752-1765) on his trip to sea and when he reached Larut, Minangkabau villagers in the area came to pay homage.²⁰⁰

Of more direct concern to Perak were the activities of the Bugis. Although they had been in Malay waters for several decades, by the mid-eighteenth century it had become clear that many had come to settle permanently.²⁰¹ Kelang, Linggi and Selangor, previously almost uninhabited rantau areas subject to Johor, had become Bugis strongholds. In the years after 1700 the area to the south of Perak was slowly filling up with either Bugis or Minangkabau and, perhaps predictably, hostility

198. (cont'd.)

in response to a request from the Siak prince. KA 3417 OB 1779, Res. Hensel to Gov. de Bruijn, 7 Feb. 1778; KA 3446 OB 1780, Hensel to de Bruijn, 30 April 1778, de Bruijn to Hensel, 28 Feb. 1778.

199. Andaya, The Kingdom of Johor, pp. 260-262, 333-337.

200. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 127, 173.

201. Andaya, The Kingdom of Johor, pp. 217, 258-259, 266-272.

developed between them. Some of their most bitter struggles took place during the drawn out civil war in Kedah, when one claimant to the throne was supported by the Bugis and the other by the Minangkabau.²⁰² It must have been with some trepidation that Perak watched the great fleets sail north.

Because the Bugis were to become a major factor in Perak politics, it is necessary to bear in mind the ambiguous attitude with which they were regarded, for it was this ambiguity which underlay the changing policies of Perak rulers towards their neighbours in Selangor. Perak and the rest of the Malay world had watched while Sultan Sulaiman of Johor, failing to gain help from either his subjects or from other Malay states against Raja Kecil, turned to outsiders. The Bugis were successful in ousting the Minangkabau forces and placing Sultan Sulaiman on the throne of Johor once more. A price, however, was paid; the Bugis leaders were not only rewarded with titles, but the position of Raja Muda was delegated to them and became a Bugis institution.²⁰³ Until 1784, except for a brief period in the 1750's, the Bugis Yamtuan Muda, as he was generally called, directed the affairs of government.²⁰⁴

Under the new regime, Johor, now centred at Riau, re-emerged as a prosperous trading entrepot, but the nature of the administration had changed. The Malays were gradually forced to take a secondary role and

202. See above, n. 189.

203. Andaya, The Kingdom of Johor, pp. 327, 353-354.

204. After the death of Raja Muda Raja Haji in 1784, the Malay ruler, Sultan Mahmud, assumed greater control over the government.

in 1743 the Dutch termed Sultan Sulaiman (1721-1760) a mere puppet (speelpop) "because he must always dance to the piping of the [Yamtuan Muda] and his Bugis following."²⁰⁵ The relationship between the two positions is depicted clearly by a Bugis chronicler: "The Yang di Pertuan Besar [the Malay ruler] is to be like a woman; when food is given to him, he may eat; and the Yang di Pertuan Muda is like her man. Should any question arise, it is he who is to decide it."²⁰⁶

This relationship and the consequent eclipse of the royal family was widely resented, not only among the Johorese themselves, but among other Malay rulers. The elevated position of the Bugis "these people who have just come" (orang yang baharu datang) aroused bitterness and animosity.²⁰⁷ This was partially due to a heightened Bugis sense of their own origins and cultural differences. Despite the many marriages between leading Bugis and various Malay royal families, absorption into the Malay community was slow and as late as 1875 a visitor to Perak remarked that the Bugis settlements there remained apart from those of the Malays.²⁰⁸ While the Bugis were never the monolithic group that the Dutch considered them, those who migrated to the Malay world did retain a remarkable cohesiveness and continued to maintain a strong connection

205. KA 2522 OB 1745, Rogier de Laver's Report on Melaka, 27 Dec. 1743, fo. 73.

206. Silsilah Melayu dan Bugis (Johor Bahru, 1956), p. 13.

207. Raja Ali Haji, Tuhfat al Nafis, p. 101. This entire text is a justification of the role played by the Bugis in Malay history and an attempt to fix the blame for the disputes which developed on known anti-Bugis leaders such as Sultan Mansur Syah of Terengganu.

208. MacNair, Perak and the Malays, p. 131.

with their homeland in southwest Sulawesi.²⁰⁹ Behind this cohesiveness lay a history of persecution and the knowledge that in a strange land unity was a source of strength.²¹⁰

Basically, however, resentment against the Bugis was grounded on hostility at their refusal to submit to the authority of Malay kings. Instead, they searched out less populated areas and there set up their own small but autonomous states. In 1717, for example, Johor was forced to abandon its claims to Selangor and accept the token submission the Bugis offered.²¹¹ In 1772, a hundred years after the first waves of Bugis migration began reaching the Malay world, the ruler of Kedah expressed the widespread hostility felt by many Malays during the eighteenth century:

Rhio, Johor, Selangor and Calang [were] formerly governed by Malay kings and are inhabited by Malays . . . the Bugis came and settled at Rhio and from thence to Selangor and from Selangor to Calang. From what pretensions the Bugis derive their authority in these areas we know not.²¹²

209. Armed men, for example, were sent from Sulawesi to assist in military expeditions in the Malay world and the ruler of Bone in turn received part of the spoil from these expeditions. In 1765 a prince from Bone came to Riau to ask for Daeng Kemboja's daughter in marriage. In the same years the Bone ruler also wrote to Daeng Kemboja, the Yamtuan Muda, ordering him to live at peace with the Dutch. KA 1853 OB 1722, Gov. van Suchtelen to Batavia, 11 March 1721, fo. 46; Andaya, The Kingdom of Johor, p. 332; KA 3049, Secret, Gov. Schippers to Batavia, 13 Oct. 1765; KA 3075 OB 1767, Daeng Kemboja to Schippers, 3 Sept. 1765.
210. Andaya, The Kingdom of Johor, pp. 121-129 discusses the reasons for the Bugis migrations during this period and the problems many had faced in finding acceptance in other Indonesian states.
211. Ibid., pp. 266, 275.
212. SFR G35/15 King of Kedah to Gov. of Madras (FSGCP) 25 June 1772, foll. 101-102.

A similar attitude is also evident among the Dutch, whose suspicion of the migrant Bugis at times amounted to obsession. When the fort in Perak was set up in 1746, for example, it was specifically stated that there were to be "no Bugis" included in the native militia.²¹³ Ten years later the Governor of Melaka defended his attitude to the migrant Bugis, claiming that Company treaties covering relations with "lawful Bugis" in Sulawesi did not apply to their countrymen in the Melaka area. The latter, he argued, were merely the descendents of robbers who had fled to avoid just retribution for wrongs they had committed in their homeland.²¹⁴

Nonetheless, it is too simplistic to argue that there was implacable opposition from all quarters to the Bugis presence. On the one hand, their hold over the Johor ruler was resented, but on the other hand the skills they had brought were admired by both Malays and Europeans. As merchants and traders, the Bugis, truly a maritime people, sailed to all areas of the archipelago buying and selling, their movements helping to link it in a close commercial network. When Francis Light established a British settlement on Penang in 1786, for instance, he was particularly anxious to attract Bugis traders, whom he regarded as "the best merchants among the eastern islands."²¹⁵ As fighters and mercenaries, the Bugis were recruited on several occasions by Malay rulers, as in Kedah. The

213. W. E. Maxwell, "Dutch Occupation of the Dindings," JSBRAS, XI (June, 1883), 169.

214. E. Netscher, "Twee Belegeringen van Malakka, 1756-7 en 1784," TBC, XII, 4 (1864), 318.

215. SSR G34/6, Light to Shore, 23 Jan. 1794 (FWCP 2 Aug. 1795), fo. 128-129.

Misa Melayu mentions several Bugis and Makassarese among the Perak court in the mid-eighteenth century²¹⁶ and the Tuhfat al Nafis provides a testimony to the role played by various Bugis migrants in a number of power struggles in the Indonesian area. The Dutch themselves depended heavily on Bugis mercenaries for their own armies and in 1756 a Melaka Governor described with respect the tenacity and military expertise of the attacking Bugis forces.²¹⁷ This fighting strength was not always used with discretion, however, and Bugis raids, either independent or under the auspices of a local ruler, gave rise to their stereotype as adventurers and pirates.

It was with mixed feelings, therefore, that Perak watched Selangor evolve into a Bugis state. It was clear that although their neighbours could promise both protection and advantageous trading connections, an alliance with them could mean an unwelcome interference in internal matters or an embroilment in Bugis affairs. While most Malay rulers were at some time concerned with the problem of containing these insistently intrusive elements, Perak could never forget that it shared a common border with a Bugis negeri.

The number of migrant Bugis and wandering Minangkabau with no par-

216. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 144, 147, 165.

217. Netscher, "Twee Belegeringen," pp. 308-309. According to William Marsden, the Malays made frequent allusions to the feats and achievements of the Bugis in their songs. "Their reputation for courage, which certainly surpasses that of all other people in the Eastern Seas, acquires them this flattering distinction." History of Sumatra (London, 1811, Oxford Reprint, 1966), p. 209. At the end of the eighteenth century one observer reported that in the Indonesian archipelago the word Bugis had become synonymous with soldier. J. S. Stavorinus, Voyages in the East Indies (London, 1798, reprinted 1969), II, 185 n.

ticular homeland and no source of subsistence exacerbated the endemic problem of the anak raja. There were now a number of individuals whose loyalty and services could be bought, whose allegiance was not tied to any specific group and who thus provided further sources of instability. Some were able to call on their own sources of power, men, ships, and arms; such adventurers played decisive roles in a situation where so many rulers, the Dutch included, were seeking additional reserves of strength. Others, lacking resources, were forced to rely on their akal (shrewd intelligence) in order to obtain the support or friendship of someone with greater wealth. The loyalties of these men, governed by circumstances, often vascillated and their actions were therefore unpredictable. Throughout this study they can be seen as a distinct and separate element which played an independent but important role in Malay politics. They were crucial in deciding the outcome of a number of issues, their enmity or goodwill or often mere presence determining the manner in which inter-state relations developed.

This was particularly true because many displaced anak raja turned to the oceans for a living, attacking ships and confiscating cargo or raiding coastal settlements. The discussion of piracy absorbed much interest in the nineteenth century and it is certainly true, as Raffles argued, that some courts encouraged young nobles of high rank, especially those whose maintenance would have fallen on the ruler himself, to "seek their fortune" (mencari rezeki) on the high seas.²¹⁸ In 1743 it was claimed that both the ruler of Johor and the Bugis Yamtuan Mida

218. Sophia Raffles, Memoir of the Life of Thomas Raffles, p. 46.

fitted out fleets with "their own folk" and these were then sent out to pirate.²¹⁹ Thirty years later a Dutch envoy in Riau was told that this was a relatively common practice among Malay states and even in the early nineteenth century Sultan Husain Syah of Singapore told Raffles that "piracy is our birthright and so brings no disgrace."²²⁰

While piracy was considered an honourable profession for young men, it was naturally resented by the victims. Piratical raids could thus become a source of disagreement between rulers but punishment was often difficult if those involved were the sons of prominent people. The increase in piracy during the eighteenth century was attributed by Raffles to the Dutch monopoly system and restrictive trade practices but it is also clear that historical circumstances at this time led to the presence of numbers of young, unattached princes with no particular source of income. It was their presence, rather than specific policies of the Dutch, which made Malay waters in the eighteenth century increasingly unsafe.

Although in the preceding discussion a distinction has been drawn between the three groups, Malay, Bugis and Minangkabau, it is misleading to view them as completely separate elements. As Raja Ali Haji pointed out, Sultan Abdul Jalil of Johor (1700-1721) married his daughters to both Minangkabau and Bugis princes. The genealogies demonstrate the

219. KA 2462 OB 1744 (2nd Reg.), de Laver to Batavia, 12 Feb. 1743, fo. 107.

220. KA 3310, Secret. G. L. Velge's report on Mission to Riau in Gov. Crans to Batavia, 31 Jan. 1774, fo. 72; A. H. Hill, Hikayat Abdullah (Kuala Lumpur, 1970), p. 193. For a discussion of the treatment of piracy by nineteenth century writers, see Reber, The Sulu World, pp. 1-31.

extent to which other Malay courts were linked with the Bugis and Minangkabau and the internal links which bound the three groups together. A marriage relationship between two royal families subsumed a whole set of friends and enemies and, according to the dictates of pragmatism, some leaders were willing to form what might appear unlikely alliances in order to strengthen their resources. The ease with which marriages could be dissolved, however, meant that loyalties could quickly change and even the survival of a marriage did not necessarily guarantee a faithful ally. This complex network of constantly shifting relationships is a vital component in Malay politics of the period.

It is from this background that Perak emerged, in the mid-eighteenth century, to face an uncertain and threatening world. The past had taught its rulers a number of hard but valuable lessons. They had very early come to the realisation that their inability to defend themselves, combined with the lure of rich tin deposits made domination of Perak both desirable and easy. There was no way in which a hostile force could be repelled alone; for Perak, the possession of an ally was a necessity dictated by reality. But strong powers were themselves vulnerable and in their fall could bring down their friends as well. A weak state like Perak could never take any situation for granted. There must be constant reassessment, flexibility, readjustment. In seeking the most desirable ally, Perak was not totally without assets, for the desire for tin was great and the competition keen. During the eighteenth century the potentiality of tin as a lever in diplomatic and political bargaining was to become fully apparent. There was one crucial factor: the

ruler must retain control over the tin trade if it was to be of any benefit to him in his relations with the outside world. It was these considerations which were brought to the fore in 1745, when negotiations were begun for the signing of a totally new treaty between the Dutch East India Company and the state of Perak.

Chapter II

PERAK AND THE DUTCH EAST INDIA COMPANY

In 1746, after a lapse of fifty years, the VOC and the ruler of Perak concluded a new treaty, and this alliance, less troubled than that of the previous century, was to endure for nearly five decades. From the Dutch point of view, the underlying motive behind renewed approaches to Perak had been a desire to revive the flagging tin trade, which had previously been such a lucrative source of income. In 1678, for example, 450,000 lbs. of tin had been brought annually from Perak, but after 1700 Melaka was rarely able to fulfil its tin quotas for Batavia "much less obtain any amount over for the Indian trade."¹ Now Perak tin was being diverted to Kedah, where it was eagerly bought by European, Chinese, and Indian merchants. Some traders came to Perak themselves, and a number of Indians established their own agents there so that they could have ready access to the tin supplies.² Melaka offered little competition, for prices there were low and, despite the Governor's constant urging,

1. KA 1787 OB 1718, Gov. Moerman's Report on Melaka to van Suchtelen, quoted in Dianne Lewis, "The Tin Trade in the Malay Peninsula during the Eighteenth Century," New Zealand Journal of History, III, 1 (1909), 57-58.
2. KA 1636 OB 1708, Gov. Bolnar's Report on Melaka to Rooselaar, 22 March 1707, fo. 115; KA 1668 OB 1709, Gov. Rooselaar's Report on Melaka to Six, 26 Dec. 1709, foll. 5, 7.

Batavia was unwilling to take any positive steps to enforce greater deliveries of tin. Melaka was now of little importance in the VOC trading network and its status as an entrepot had been completely undermined by the restrictive policies which sought to divert trade to Batavia. In 1711 an Englishman could describe the town as being "a healthful place, but of no great trade,"³ and his comments were echoed by the laments of VOC officials. "Business in Melaka is wholly fallen into decay with . . . little appearance of a great improvement, let alone a full recovery of the former flourishing trade."⁴ Once "a pearl in Portugal's crown," Melaka was now only "a heavy burden" (last post).⁵

Company administrators, plagued by a high overhead, did not consider Melaka of sufficient importance to warrant the expense which any efforts to increase trade would entail. In 1704, for example, Melaka's suggestion that the price offered for tin be raised and guard ships be sent to patrol the Straits was roundly rejected. VOC officials in Batavia thought it unfeasible to try and compete with Asians and other Europeans in the tin trade, and could not spare ships at a time when the Company was at war in both Java and India.⁶ Conversely, Batavia was un-

3. Charles Lockyer, An Account of Trade in India (London, 1711), p. 66.

4. KA 1583 OB 1707, Councillor de Roo to Batavia, 9 Nov. 1705, foll. 1-3, quoted in J. E. Hoffman, "Early Policies in the Malacca Jurisdiction of the United East Indies Company, the Malay Peninsula and the Netherlands East Indies Attachment," JSEAS, III, 1 (1972), 1.

5. KA Collectie Rademacher, 526. D. Nolthenius, "Copie Project tot Verbetering van den handel op Malacca," 5 Nov. 1739, n.p.

6. Lewis, "The Tin Trade," pp. 58-60.

willing to abandon Melaka, despite the financial burden it represented, because of the town's strategic maritime position on the Straits. As an English visitor remarked, the expenses of maintaining the Melaka fort and two hundred European soldiers were "as much as the profits arising from the Country under this government can defray. However, the Dutch think it a sufficient advantage to keep it as a handle to the Mallayans and a Security for their trade among them."⁷

The early eighteenth century thus found Melaka in economically straightened circumstances, yet still vital to the Company's position in Asia. The attention of VOC officials was therefore focused on a means of increasing the comptoir's profits.⁸ To many, a natural solution appeared to lie in a revival of the tin trade, which had yielded such great profits in the previous century.⁹ These profits had been principally due to deliveries from Perak but as yet there was no great desire to renegotiate past treaties with this state. Among VOC administrators, memories of the Company's previous experiences with these "faithless traders . . . this bloodthirsty nation" were still very much alive.¹⁰ Even an English country trader felt that although "Perak produces more tin than any [other country] in India . . . the inhabitants are so treacherous, faithless and bloody that no European nation can keep factories there with safety."¹¹ Instead, Melaka hoped to see increased profits come through

7. Lockyer, An Account, p. 74.

8. Comptoir was the name given by the VOC to their more important posts.

9. Nolthenius, "Copie Project."

10. KA 1687 OB 1711, Gov. Six to Batavia, 12 March 1710, fo. 62.

greater tin deliveries from other areas as a result of the price rises accorded in 1714 and 1718.¹² For a short time after 1719 Dutch expectations were fulfilled. The dislocation in Johor during the wars with the Burgis and Minangkabau made Riau a less attractive port and Melaka benefited by the resulting diversion of tin supplies, swelled by deliveries from Bugis areas like Selangor.¹³ But with the return of more settled times, and the inclusion of the Bugis in the new Johor which emerged after 1722, trade in Riau flourished and that of Melaka correspondingly dwindled.¹⁴

Dutch hold on any part of the tin trade might have been totally lost had it not been for a gradual change in Batavia's attitude and a consequent modification in policy. The eighteenth century saw a considerable increase in the demand for tin and a parallel rise in value. The market in India was well-established, and tin was being generally used as a substitute for bullion there as well as ballast on ships bound for Europe, where it could be sold for a good profit.¹⁵ Now it had become even more important because of the expanding China trade. The VOC, like other European trading companies, was beginning to realise the potentiality of commercial relations with China, especially with the grow-

11. Alexander Hamilton, A New Account of the East Indies (Edinburgh, 1727), II, 44.

12. Lewis, "The Tin Trade," pp. 59-60.

13. Ibid., pp. 60-61.

14. Ibid., p. 62.

15. Ibid., pp. 55-56; Kristoff Glamann, Dutch-Asiatic Trade (The Hague, 1958), p. 25.

ing European demand for tea. By the 1720's Europeans had come to regard tea not as an "expensive--and much debated--drug" but as a "popular drink . . . the twin sister of coffee."¹⁶

The European market for tea was apparently insatiable, but tea could be obtained only from China, and the Chinese showed a marked indifference to the products Europe could offer. Virtually the only items which the Chinese would accept were spices and metals, notably silver and tin.¹⁷ The latter was used in China in a variety of ways: to manufacture cooking and domestic utensils, both for export and home use; to make tutenague, a white metal similar to aluminum, which was then re-exported and used throughout the east in the same way as pewter; for tin foil, which was employed widely in religious ceremonies and also used to line tea chests.¹⁸ Although China had tin deposits of its own, these were insufficient to supply the heavy demand and at any rate Malayan tin was preferred for the manufacture of tin foil, since it was more malleable and could be beaten finer.¹⁹ Yet at a time when the ability to

16. Glamann, Dutch-Asiatic Trade, pp. 212-213.

17. Earl H. Pritchard, Anglo-Chinese Relations During the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries (New York, 1970), p. 123; E. C. G. Molsbergen, De Nederlandsch Oost Indische Compagnie in de Achttiende Eeuw in F. W. Stapel, ed., Geschiedenis van Nederlandsch Indie (Amsterdam, 1939), IV. 139.

18. Sophia Raffles, Memoir of the Life of Thomas Raffles, p. 44; C. N. Parkinson, Trade in the Eastern Seas (London, 1966), p. 338; E. S. Hedges, Tin in Social and Economic History (London, 1964), pp. 94-95. Ernest Watson, The Principal Articles of Chinese Commerce (Shanghai, 1930), p. 284. In religious ceremonies beaten tin was pasted on paper cards and then burnt.

19. Hedges, Tin in Social and Economic History, p. 94; Parkinson, Trade

ensure a steady flow of tin to China guaranteed large returns, the VOC was unable even to meet the demand in The Netherlands. By the 1730's, therefore, Batavia was willing to approve several price rises in order to strengthen the Company's position in the trade.²⁰

In response to Batavia's orders, Melaka not only offered higher prices but made deliberate efforts to court merchants. They were cleared through formalities quickly, treated fairly, and paid promptly in the currency they requested, rather than in that which best suited the Company's finances. These measures, however, had little effect, and in 1743 the Governor of Melaka, Roger de Laver, bemoaned his lack of success. "Notwithstanding the fact that we have used our utmost power to encourage the tin trade and thus be in a position to satisfy the demands of the Fatherland and of India, our expectations were not answered." From November 1741 until February 1743 he had been able to obtain only 31,887 lbs. and did not expect to see any improvement.²¹

According to de Laver, the reason for Melaka's lack of success was basically the intense competition from other buyers. The Indian traders from Surat and Coromandel did not come directly to Melaka with their goods, but sailed first to Aceh, Kedah and Perak, as well as other

19. (cont'd.)

in the Eastern Seas, pp. 355-356. In 1951 a German visitor to Kedah noted that Malay tin "is reckoned better than English tin, at least the Chinese think so." Peter Osbeck, A Voyage to China and the East (London, 1771), II, 220.

20. Lewis, The Tin Trade, p. 62.

21. Ibid., p. 63; KA 2462 OB 1744, 2nd register de Laver to Batavia, 12 Feb. 1743, foll. 50-52; KA 2542 OB 1746, Extract, Heeren XVII to Batavia, 3 sept. 1743, foll. 38-39.

tin areas, glutting them with cloth and buying up the tin supplies. Their domination of the trade in Perak was also due to the fact that they were willing to purchase large numbers of elephants, Perak's other important product.²² The demand for tin in China had encouraged other Europeans beside the Dutch to seek increased deliveries. The Portuguese from Macao, for example, sailed yearly to Goa, Malabar and Coromandel, and would call at places like Perak on the outward trip. They left money or goods there on credit, and picked up the tin on their return journey.²³ De Laver complained most bitterly about the incursions of the English, who had made great inroads on Dutch profits with their "continued trade in the tin quarters" and their willingness to deliver goods and accept payment many months later.²⁴

The English threat to the Dutch position had become more serious in the first decades of the eighteenth century, though they had previously shown little interest in the peninsula ports, except for a short-lived factory in Kedah.²⁵ Now independent "country" traders were plying the route from India to China in ever-growing numbers, carrying cloth and opium and returning with chinaware, silks, velvets and other products of the east. At the beginning of the eighteenth century they rarely visited Perak and Selangor, and traded their goods at ports in Kedah,

22. KA 2462 OB 1744, 2nd Reg. de Laver to Batavia, 12 Feb. 1743, fo. 73.

23. Ibid., foll. 52-53.

24. Ibid., foll. 51-52; KA 2275 OB 1738, Report by Achermans to de Laver, 12 Nov. 1737, fo. 271.

25. D. G. E. Hall, A History of Southeast Asia (London, 1968), p. 489.

Ujung Salang, Aceh and other areas in Sumatra.²⁶ The temporary lowering of Melaka's tin prices in 1723 on Batavia's orders meant that the English became even more welcome as customers. During this period, Melaka's tin sales fell markedly and, as an observer pointed out some years later, English traders were given the opportunity to move into areas traditionally regarded by Melaka as a VOC preserve.²⁷ In 1737, for example, when a Dutch official arrived in Linggi to buy tin, he found that an English ship had been there two weeks before and had bought up all available supplies.²⁸ By the 1740's English country traders were well established in Selangor, and the influence they wielded suggests their numbers were much larger than official figures indicate.²⁹ Their boldness infuriated the Dutch and made them an object of Company hostility, but there was no way in which the English could be dislodged.

The problem of foreign competition, continued de Laver, was exacerbated by the growing unsafety of the Straits, where piracy was now a matter of real concern. Even those Malays willing to sell tin to the Dutch were reluctant to undertake the voyage to Melaka and thus risk the loss not only of their goods, but of "liberty and sometimes life." People

26. D. K. Bassett, "British Commercial and Strategic Interest in the Malay Peninsula during the late Eighteenth Century," in Malayan and Indonesian Studies, eds., J. Bastin and R. Roolvink (Oxford, 1964), p. 122.

27. Lewis, "The Tin Trade," p. 62; Nolthenius, "Copie Project."

28. KA 2275 OB 1738, Achermans' Report, 12 Nov. 1737 fo. 268.

29. Bassett, "British Commercial and Strategic Interest," p. 123 and D. K. Bassett, "The British Country Trader and Sea Captain in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," Journal of the Historical Society, Univ. of Malaya, I, 2 (1961), 13. These give only those cases cited in official records.

from Rembau, for instance, were now coming overland with their tin. By the same token, the Governor found it almost impossible to persuade Melaka residents to embark on the dangerous journey via sea to the tin areas.³⁰

By the end of 1743, when the directors of the VOC, the Heeren XVII, wrote to Batavia, they made clear their anxiety at Melaka's failure to stimulate a greater tin delivery. They pointed out that "the Company could not be without tin" at this point, especially in China.³¹ The situation was especially critical because the VOC had lost access to Siamese tin. In 1740, after some years of indecision, Batavia had finally decided to close the comptoir in Siam when it became obvious that the King would not renew the VOC treaty.³² Although Bangka tin was available to the Dutch through a contract made with the Sultan of Palembang in 1722, the supplies were not sufficient to fulfil the Company's needs.³³

Amsterdam's obvious concern struck a quick response from the newly-appointed Governor-General of Batavia, Baron Gustaaf van Imhoff. He proceeded to introduce a number of measures aimed at stimulating the Company's economic position, especially in regard to acquisition of tin

30. KA 2462 OB 1744, 2nd Reg. de Laver to Batavia, 12 Feb. 1743, foll. 55-56.

31. KA 2542 OB 1746, Extract from Missive, Heeren XVII to Batavia, 3 Sept. 1743, foll. 40-42.

32. Realia Register op de General Resolution van het Casteel Batavia, 1635-1805 (The Hague, 1886), III, 204.

33. Heeres, Corpus Diplomaticum, IV, BKI, 93 (1938), 539; KA 2542 OB 1746, Extract, Heeren XVII to Batavia, 3 Sept. 1743, fo. 42.

supplies.³⁴ Governor Wilhelm Albinus of Melaka was ordered to send a commissioner to Kedah to investigate the extent of the cloth trade there, and stop at Perak and Selangor en route to buy tin.³⁵ The results of this expedition whetted Dutch appetites, and when it became apparent that existing contracts with Johor, Naning and Rembau would not satisfy the rising demand for tin, van Imhoff decided to strike out in new directions.³⁶

In November 1745, van Imhoff wrote to Albinus with more instructions aimed specifically at stimulating the delivery of tin. A further commission was to be sent to the tin producing states on the peninsula and the VOC fort on Pangkor Island was to be rebuilt in order to protect shipping and facilitate Company trade in the area. A garrison would be set up there "with 25 to 30 Europeans and as many natives . . . under a suitable head."³⁷ Accordingly, in the following month, the Melaka Council decided to send a representative, Ary Verbrugge, to the tin areas of Perak, Selangor, Kelang and Linggi in order to establish the amount of tin each place could deliver per annum. As a preliminary to further

34. Lewis, "The Tin Trade," p. 63; see also F. W. Stapel, Gouverneurs-Generaal van Nederlansch Indie in Beeld en Woord (The Hague, 1941), p. 59 and van Imhoff's own monumental work, "Consideratiens over den tegenwoordig staat van de Nederlandsche Oostindische Maatschappij," ed., J. E. Heeres, BKI, 66 (1912), 441-621.

35. KA 2522 OB 1745, Melaka Ministers to Batavia, 6 March 1744, fo. 287.

36. Realia, II, 181. It is unfortunate that Claas de Wind's Day Register, included in the papers sent to Batavia, is no longer in existence. See KA 2542 OB 1746, Register of Papers, fo. 8; Melaka's notes on Missive from Heeren XVII, 26 Feb. 1745, foll. 37-40.

37. KA 902, van Imhoff to Albinus, 20 Nov. 1745, fo. 752; Realia, II, 181.

negotiations concerning the tin, Verbrugge was also entrusted with letters and gifts "for the King and Laksamana of Perak, and the heads of Selangor and Kelang."³⁸

At the same time that Melaka was moving slowly towards a strengthening of its relations with the tin producing states, Sultan Muzafar of Perak was himself seeking an ally, not so much as a buyer for his tin but as a buttress against the Bugis of Selangor.³⁹ Although the latter had been established in the Selangor-Linggi area since 1701, their attention during the first years of the eighteenth century was absorbed by factional fighting and Perak was apparently left in peace. The first reference to a Bugis attack on Perak in Dutch sources occurs in Governor de Laver's missive of December 1749. The previous May, a large number of Malay perahu had sailed past Melaka, and, when challenged, those aboard said that they were subject to a certain Encik Unuk, who had various "claims" in Perak which the ruler had refused to honour. No hint is given of the nature of these claims, but Encik Unuk was obviously resentful of Sultan Muzafar's attitude and had organised an armed force, hoping to force Perak's compliance. When this was unsuccessful, he decided to send an envoy to Riau to ask for assistance.⁴⁰

The implications of this report are made apparent by an examination of Encik Unuk's genealogy. He was, in fact, none other than the

38. KA 2567 OB 1747, Melaka Resolutions, 14 Dec. 1745, fo. 327.

39. For a description of the Bugis in the Selangor-Linggi area, see Andaya, The Kingdom of Johor, pp. 258, 269-271 and passim.

40. KA 2360 OB 1740, de Laver to Batavia, 30 Dec. 1739, foll. 71-72.

son of Daeng Marewa, the first Yamtuan Muda of Riau, who had died in 1727, and was thus the nephew of Daeng Cellak, the present occupant of the Yamtuan Muda office.⁴¹ According to the Silsilah Melayu dan Bugis, Encik Unuk had settled in Selangor and the chronicler remarks that "his name was famous."⁴² He was thus a man of some standing and, with his connections in Riau, had no difficulty in gaining assistance against Perak. In the following November Melaka noted a fleet of ships sailing northwards, which the Governor assumed would be used to carry out a campaign on behalf of Encik Unuk.⁴³ Nothing more is recorded until June, 1740, when news was received that Daeng Cellak had sailed to Perak to investigate the murder of his nephew, Encik Unuk, who had died there by poisoning. While in Perak, the Yamtuan Muda seized four perahu as well as two hundred bahara of tin.⁴⁴

This laconic report in the Company records gives no further details and conveys little idea of the importance of the attacks of 1739 and 1740 in Perak history. If the murder of Encik Unuk was the result of a Perak conspiracy, as seems probable, it was apparently undertaken without regard to the possible consequences. The ruler of Perak, Sultan Muzafar, had now discovered what it meant to arouse Bugis anger. As the sequel will show, the Bugis had made their presence felt in Perak.

41. Raja Ali, Tuhfat al Nafis, p. 22.

42. Silsilah Melayu dan Bugis (Johor Bahru, 1956), p. 56.

43. KA 2360 OB 1740, de Laver to Batavia, 30 Dec. 1739, fo. 72.

44. KA 2394 OB 1741, 2nd Reg. de Laver to Batavia, 27 Dec. 1740 (Resolutions, 14 June 1740), fo. 100.

Selangor could no longer be dismissed as a community of outsiders whose existence had little relevance for its neighbours to the north. They had shown that, given cause, they could call on their powerful friends in Riau to bring down retribution. Something of the shock of this discovery breaks through the conventional language of the Silsilah Raja-Raja Perak.

About this time, by the will of God, the country was thrown into confusion and tumult was caused among the people by the invasion of a Bugis named Kelana [a common honorific for Bugis chiefs]. This, however, by the help of God and the blessing and intercession of the Prophet, came to nothing and the enemy departed.⁴⁵

The potential threat to Perak's security represented by the Bugis presence was demonstrated more forcibly in 1743 when Daeng Cellak, after ousting a rival Bugis chief, Daeng Matekko, temporarily settled in Selangor.⁴⁶ In a short time disputes again developed between him and Sultan Muzafar which, though ignored in Dutch sources, receive extensive treatment in Perak and Bugis texts. According to the Tuhfat al-Nafis, after Daeng Cellak arrived in Selangor, quarrels broke out because of a "lack of understanding and disagreements in purpose." The ruler of Perak refused to comply with the demands of Daeng Cellak and prepared his country's defences, constructing a number of kubu along the banks of the river. Daeng Cellak was angry and attacked Perak with a fleet of well-armed ships. "Whenever they found a kubu, the Bugis took it, and they

45. Silsilah Raja-Raja Perak (Maxwell 105, R.A.S.), fo. 34A, lines 9-10.

46. Raja Ali, Tuhfat al Nafis, p. 95; KA 2522 OB 1744, de Laver's Report on Melaka to Albinus, 27 Dec. 1743, fo. 84; KA 2462 OB 1743, 2nd Reg. de Laver to Batavia, 12 Feb. 1743, fo. 100.

overcame two or three kubu a day. . . . Some Bugis assisted by coming overland to attack the kubu, and Perak was defeated."⁴⁷ The text goes on to say that the Yamtuan Muda took up residence in Perak, making new arrangements concerning the raja and orang besar there, according to an agreement reached between him and the head of Selangor. Daeng Cellak also took two Perak women as his gundik, but shortly afterwards returned to Riau because of a summons from Sultan Sulaiman. When the Yamtuan Muda informed the Johor ruler of what had happened in Perak, "His Majesty was very pleased with his younger brother and happy to see that he had returned safely."⁴⁸

The glorification of the Bugis role and the part played by Daeng Cellak obscures what was for Perak a time not only of invasion from without but of civil war within. The Bugis did not find Perak Malays united behind their ruler; instead, many orang besar welcomed their arrival and used the situation to turn against Sultan Muzafar. The results of this are described at length in the Silsiah Raja-Raja Perak:

There came another Bugis invasion under Daeng Cellak. All the orang besar were at enmity with each other, so that there was more confusion and commotion in the country and it was impossible to tell friends from foes. Even the regalia was endangered, and as for the Yang di Pertuan [Sultan Muzafar Syah], his condition was indescribable, not so much on account of the fighting as on account of the lack of unanimity, everyone working against everyone else.

At last some of the orang besar joined the Bugis, and destruction was near at hand, for the Bugis took possession of the regalia as a result of the quarrels

47. Raja Ali, Tuhfat al Nafis, pp. 95-96.

48. Ibid., p. 96.

between the orang besar of the country. Then the Datuk Bendahara and the orang besar made the Raja Muda [Sultan Muhammad Syah, Sultan Muzafar's brother] Sultan. And the ruler did not know what to think because of the confusion resulting from the conduct of the orang besar which had led to the loss of the regalia. The installation of the Raja Muda with the nubat was performed by the orang besar and hulubalang of Perak, and by the will of God, the reign of Sultan Muzafar ceased and his brother the Raja Muda became raja and was installed by the orang besar under the title of Sultan Muhammad Syah.⁴⁹

Another Malay text, the Misa Melayu, speaks of this period as one of complete confusion (huru-hara). Sultan Muzafar moved upstream to Kuala Kangsar, while his brother stayed downstream at Pualu Tiga. Raja Iskandar, Sultan Muhammad's son, became Raja Muda and managed all affairs of government for his father, being followed loyally by all the anak raja, the officials and people. Sultan Muhammad ruled the area from the kuala to Pacat, and from his new capital at Kuala Kangsar, Sultan Muzafar ruled over the ulu district.⁵⁰

The perception of events as given in these three sources varies, and it is significant that in the Perak texts there is no reference to any alliance between the royal family itself and the Bugis invaders. Yet despite varying emphases, the texts clearly show that a radical change had taken place in the government of Perak, a change in which the Bugis participated. The Misa Melayu continues by describing the reconciliation between the two royal brothers and the consequent reunification of the country under Sultan Muzafar, who moved his capital downstream once

49. Silsilah Raja-Raja Perak, foll. 34A-34.

50. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 22-23.

more.⁵¹ It was at this point, in early 1746, that Ary Verbrugge arrived in Perak as commissioner to the tin states.

Although the country was once more at peace, Verbrugge found that the atmosphere was one of hostility and tension. The Captain of the Indians in Perak, a confidant of Sultan Muzafar, came to Verbrugge in secret as an envoy from the old ruler. He told the Melaka representative that a prince named Raja Iskandar, a nephew of Sultan Muzafar, had allied with the Bugis of Selangor. Hoping to wrest the throne from his uncle and gain control of the tin trade, he had promised the Bugis leader, Daeng Cellak, fifty bahara of tin a year for his assistance.⁵² Years later, it was also learnt that Daeng Cellak had adopted Raja Iskandar as his son as a token of the new relationship between them.⁵³ Sultan Muzafar, unable to defend himself against this combined attack, had retreated to the mountains where he governed only "a small negeri where elephants roam."⁵⁴ But contrary to Raja Iskandar's expectations, Sultan Muzafar was not prepared simply to resign his throne, and he used his strategic position in the ulu to good purpose. He was able to forestall Raja Iskandar's plan of controlling tin deliveries by blocking routes leading downstream and thus preventing any tin from reaching Kuala Perak.⁵⁵

51. Ibid., pp. 24-26.

52. KA 2567 OB 1747, Gov. Albinus to Batavia, 18 Aug. 1746, foll. 411-412; KA 2592 OB 1748, Albinus to Batavia (Resolutions, 30 March 1746), foll. 209, 296.

53. KA 3104 OB 1768, King of Perak to King of Selangor, rec'd at Melaka, 28 Oct. 1766.

54. KA 2567 OB 1747, Albinus to Batavia, 18 Aug. 1746, fo. 413.

55. Ibid.

Faced with economic collapse, Raja Iskandar was compelled to ask his uncle's forgiveness. At first Sultan Muzafar had continued to live upstream but, though he was distrustful of his nephew, he was forced to maintain the appearance of friendship. The Bugis threat was still present and he needed Raja Iskandar's support to resist any further Bugis demands. Daeng Cellak had been won over to the new situation with the gift of a hundred bahara of tin, but he still insisted on being paid the fifty bahara Raja Iskandar had previously promised in return for Bugis assistance.⁵⁶ As a result of the modus vivendi between Sultan Muzafar and Raja Iskandar, the Bugis had finally withdrawn. Although Sultan Muzafar remained suspicious of his nephew, he hoped that the new relationship between them would provide some insurance against any further Bugis-supported uprising. Perak was in desperate need of peace, for the country had been torn and ravaged by the protracted battle of the preceding years.⁵⁷

In his secret meeting with Verbrugge, the Indian Captain also explained that the old ruler was anxious about the future for other reasons. He could not forgive Raja Iskandar's former alliance with the Bugis and though his nephew held the position of Raja Muda, Sultan Muzafar did not wish him to succeed to the throne. Instead, he had decided to follow a precedent established in the previous century. The succession would pass through his only child, a daughter, and her husband would

⁵⁶. KA 2592 OB 1748, Albinus to Batavia, 3 March 1747, foll. 296-297.

⁵⁷. Ibid.

then rule. Her husband would be no ordinary anak raja, but "Sultan Cabo, son of Siak's Radja Ketjil."⁵⁸

Although the latter remains a somewhat shadowy figure, he was well known at the time. The Misa Melayu describes him as "Sultan Berkabat, the son of Raja Kecil, the Minangkabau raja" and, according to a Siak history, "the famous Sultan Berkabat" was born in Kedah, where his father had assisted one of the contenders to the throne and had taken several wives.⁵⁹ One of these, a Dutch governor noted, was the daughter of the Kedah ruler himself, and she was presumably Sultan Berkabat's mother, who was no gundik, but a "lawful wife" of Raja Kecil.⁶⁰ By Malay standards, Sultan Berkabat would have been a worthy successor to the throne, and Sultan Muzafar may also have felt that his Minangkabau connections would provide a counter to the growing Bugis threat in Selangor. There were two major obstacles; Raja Budak Rasul was still young and Sultan Muzafar knew that his own death was imminent. He would not be able to ensure that his plans reached fruition and that his chosen heir succeeded peacefully. For this he needed outside support, and the Indian Captain told Verbrugge that the old ruler had decided to invite the Dutch to build a lodge in Perak. The riches to which his daughter was entitled could be placed there to keep them from Raja Iskandar and, in case he

58. Ibid., fo. 301; KA 2567 OB 1747, Albinus to Batavia, 18 Aug. 1746, fo. 413. See also Chapter I, pp. 32, 73.

59. Leiden Uni. Library, Cod. Or. 7304, fo. 443, lines 9-16; fo. 446, line 6; Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 27.

60. KA 2592 OB 1748, Verbrugge's Report in Resolutions of 9 Dec. 1746, fo. 302; KA 1872 OB 1724, 3rd Reg. van Suchtelen to Batavia, 27. Jan. 1723, fo. 7.

himself should die, Sultan Muzafar asked that the Company arrange his daughter's marriage to Sultan Berkabat. The latter would then rule over Perak and would deliver all its tin to the VOC.⁶¹

There were other reasons behind his appeal to the Dutch. Perak's economy had been hard hit in recent years, and this was especially apparent in the elephant trade. Indians were no longer anxious to come to Perak because of English hostility. In an attempt to gain control of the tin, the English had tried all possible means to hinder Indian trade and had even incited the Selangorese to murder the crew of an Indian ship. Hoping to capitalise on the declining number of Indian merchants in Perak, the English had offered 20,000 reals for the tin monopoly but had refused to have anything to do with the elephant trade. They had also specified that their rivals in the cloth market, the Indians, must pay in cash, not linen, if they bought the animals. Sultan Muzafar's refusal of this offer was prompted not only by the unattractive conditions, but also by his desire to gain the favour of the Indians, whose cloth in any case was cheaper than that sold by the English.⁶²

The Bugis of Selangor had seized this opportunity to press their claim and since then most of the tin had been taken to Selangor. The remainder was transported to Kedah, where Portuguese and Chinese merchants were prepared to pay up to forty reals the bahara. This did not solve the problem of the elephant trade, however, and the Indian Captain told

61. KA 2567 OB 1747, Albinus to Batavia, 18 Aug. 1746, fo. 413; KA 2592 OB 1748, Albinus to Batavia, 3 March 1737, fo. 301.

62. KA 2592 OB 1748, Verbrugge's Report, 9 Dec. 1747, foll. 297-298.

Verbrugge that about two years later, Sultan Muzafar had himself approached the English in Selangor. This time the English showed no eagerness to accept the offer of the Perak tin monopoly. They said that they were well-treated in Selangor, where there was less smuggling and credit was repaid. Trading was faster and easier and, if anyone failed to deliver promised tin, payment was less difficult to enforce than in Perak, where the people could retreat to the mountains. Besides, the English argued, they did not have sufficient strength to control the traffic in cloth, which in Perak was carried out not only by Indians but by people from Kedah, Patani, Selangor and Makassar.⁶³

In his present circumstances, therefore, Sultan Muzafar had no alternative apart from the Dutch, and Verbrugge's arrival in Perak was most opportune. At a time when the VOC was seeking new sources of tin supplies, Sultan Muzafar was convinced that an alliance with a European power was the only solution for the problems facing his government. He was to find, however, that, while disposal of his tin presented no problems, the Dutch were not at all anxious to become involved in the elephant trade, for their experiences in this regard had not been happy. In the previous century the sale of elephants in India and Ceylon had been a source of considerable profit for those willing to import them, and traditionally this had been almost as great a lure to the merchants of Bengal and Coromandel as Perak's tin. The Malay elephant, differing in build from that of India, was said to be "of a race highly esteemed and thought to be not inferior to the boasted breed of Siam itself."⁶⁴

63. *Ibid.*, foll. 298-300.

In the seventeenth century Thomas Bowrey noted that an elephant of 5½ cubits (about eight feet) bought in Kedah for two hundred Spanish reals could be sold in India for three thousand.⁶⁵ Initially the Dutch were attracted by this seemingly lucrative traffic, and in 1641 Governor van Twist of Melaka wrote to Batavia of his hopes for Company participation in a trade which, like that in tin, "brought great profits . . . in Bengal and Coromandel."⁶⁶ A preliminary expedition sent to India a few years later, however, failed completely. The eight elephants captured in the Melaka area could not be sold in India, and the Dutch accused Indian traders of scheming against them. Further efforts were equally unsuccessful, for the animals fell ill, refused to eat or "died of sorrow" when in captivity. Eventually, though the VOC remained active in the elephant trade in Bengal and Ceylon, they withdrew from any efforts in the Malay peninsula.⁶⁷ Although Indians were forbidden to buy tin in

64. J. Crawford, History of the Indian Archipelago (Edinburgh, 1820), III, 199.
65. Thomas Bowrey, A Geographical Account of the Countries around the Bay of Bengal, 1669-1679, ed., Sir Richard Temple, Hakluyt Society Second Series XII (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1903), 273. Elephants were also highly valued in Java. In the seventeenth century the Siamese organised elephant trapping in north-east Malaya and exported the animals to Java. J. H. Burkill, A Dictionary of the Economic Products of the Malay Peninsula (London, 1935), p. 908.
66. Tiele and Heeres, Bouwstoffen, II, 36.
67. Dagh Register 1641-1642, pp. 81, 156; Dagh Register 1643-1644, pp. 75, 128; Tiele and Heeres, Bouwstoffen, III, p. 233; Coolhaas, Generale Missiven, II, 241. See also G. Irwin, "The Dutch and the Tin Trade of Malaya in the Seventeenth Century," in Studies in the Social History of China and Southeast Asia, eds., J. Ch'en and Nicholas Tarling (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1970), p. 275 and S. Arasaratnam, Dutch Power in Ceylon, 1658-1687 (Amsterdam, 1958), p. 152.

Perak, after 1677 the Company finally agreed to allow them to purchase elephants there, on condition they paid ten per cent of the value of those exported in tolls.⁶⁸

Since 1700, the Dutch had been even less inclined to become involved in the purchase of elephants, especially as the disintegration of the Moghul Empire and the disturbances in north and central India meant that there were fewer rich buyers.⁶⁹ Despite this decline, Perak rulers continued to draw a large part of their income from the sale of elephants, which were a royal monopoly, and Sultan Muzafar was naturally anxious to persuade the VOC to buy these as well as his tin.⁷⁰ Even if the Dutch did not agree, however, he appeared willing to conclude a treaty. With this message Verbrugge returned to Melaka, and on March 27, 1746, presented his report.⁷¹ Governor Albinus summed up the position in a letter to Governor-General van Imhoff: "From every point of view, the king's aim seems to be the obtaining of protection against the Bugis of Selangor by the building of a fort and a new alliance."⁷² He was convinced that circumstances favoured the conclusion of a contract and, if this opportunity were ignored, either the Bugis, under their new leader,

68. Blagden, "Report of Governor Bort," p. 145; Coolhaas, Generale Mispiven III, 174.

69. S. Arasaratnam, "Dutch Commercial Policy in Ceylon and Its Effects on the Indo-Ceylon Trade (1690-1750)," The Indian Social and Economic Review, IV (1967), 120, 123.

70. KA 2592 OB 1748, Verbrugge's Report, 7 Dec. 1746, fo. 305.

71. KA 2567 OB 1747, Albinus to Batavia, 18 Aug. 1746, fo. 412.

72. Ibid., fo. 414.

Daeng Kemboja, or the English would seize their chance to gain control of the tin trade.⁷³

In the following May, therefore, Ary Verbrugge was sent back to Perak to "prepare matters" and to assure Sultan Muzafar that the Company was not only willing to sign a treaty but, in order to protect him against the Bugis threat, had already decided to re-establish a garrison on Pangkor Island.⁷⁴ Although the matter of the elephant trade was as yet unsolved, and there was some conflict over the terms, Sultan Muzafar's fear of the Bugis pressured him into accepting the Company's conditions. News of these negotiations travelled quickly and, predictably, Selangor traders resented the imminent loss of a lucrative market. Even during the preliminary meetings there were rumours of an assault on the Dutch, and on July 1 the Laksamana informed Ary Verbrugge and the commander of the garrison that Daeng Kemboja, the leader of the Selangor Bugis, planned to attack the newly-established post on Pangkor Island.⁷⁵ Melaka, fearing that the Raja Muda, Raja Iskandar, was in league with the Bugis at first contemplated abandoning the projected residency in Perak, but the Governor's fears were allayed by a letter from Raja Iskandar professing his friendship.⁷⁶ At the same time, Sultan Muzafar, seeing these Bugis preparations as a further threat to his own security,

73. Ibid., fo. 415.

74. KA 2567 OB 1747, Albinus to Batavia, 29 May 1746, fo. 401.

75. KA 2592 OB 1748, Resolutions, 29 April 1746, fo. 226; KA 2567 OB 1747, Albinus to Batavia, 18 Aug. 1746, fo. 421.

76. KA 2567 OB 1747, Albinus to Batavia, 18 Aug. 1746, foll. 417-420.

was more than anxious to obtain an alliance, despite the fact that the Company was not willing to meet him on every point. On July 25, during a further trip to Perak, Verbrugge concluded a new treaty with the Perak court.

By this treaty the Dutch were given possession of the island called Tanjung Putus, about thirty miles from Kuala Perak, together with the tract of land on the opposite bank. The strategic advantages of this site are indicated by the fact that Sultan Muzafar had already built a kubu not far away, and the Laksamana, who supervised all river traffic, maintained his residence nearby. Tanjung Putus was thus an ideal spot to control tin deliveries and guarantee the monopoly which had been accorded in the treaty terms. The VOC would buy all tin at 26 ducatoons the bahara of 375 lbs., as well as paying two reals toll to Sultan Muzafar on each bahara it exported. All ships leaving Perak must first anchor at the Company lodge to be inspected, as a safeguard against smuggling, and, if any tin should be discovered, half would go to the Company and half to Sultan Muzafar.⁷⁷

Although the treaty of 1746 was expanded several times, it can be regarded as the prototype for those which were to follow during the rest of the century. In itself, it marks a turning point in Perak's dealings with the outside world. No ruler had entered into such relations with any state for over fifty years, but this treaty was also the first signed by an independent Perak ruler for over a century, and probably the first in Perak's entire history. For most of the seventeenth century Perak had

77. Ibid., foll. 416-417; for the complete treaty, see Appendix E.

been regarded as an Acehnese vassal and negotiations concerned with the tin trade had always been made via the court of Aceh. In 1650, for example, the preamble to the treaty reads, "Contract and agreement between the dominion of Perak, dependent on the high court of Aceh, on the one side and the United Netherlands Chartered East Indies Company on the other side." It was concluded in Perak between the Governor-General's envoys "and His Majesty Yang di Pertuan, Sultan in Perak and his closest councillors, in the presence of the Acehnese envoys named below."⁷⁸ Even in 1670, when Aceh's power was waning, an English captain who came to Perak was told "unless we had the Queen of Acheen's order [the ruler] durst not trade with us, he and all the rest that lived there being her slaves."⁷⁹ The conclusion of the 1746 treaty, on the other hand, was clearly an agreement between equals, namely "the King of Pera, named Sultan Malpasa Johan Berdollat Peer Allam" and the Dutch East India Company.⁸⁰ It was thus a public demonstration of Perak's autonomy.

This new relationship between the VOC and Perak had no precedent in Perak's history. The treaty to which Sultan Muzafar and Raja Iskandar agreed in 1746, like those which were to follow, appears a straightforward statement of a commercial arrangement. Yet the connection between

78. Heeres, Corpus Diplomaticum, BKI, 57 (1907), 538-541.

79. Surat Factory Records G36/105, George Davis and John Portman's letter, 16 Nov. 1670, fo. 108. See also L. W. Alders, International Rechtspraak Tussen Indonesische Rijken en de V.O.C. tot 1700 (Nijmegen, 1955), p. 46. There was a so-called "acte" in 1680, but this was not a treaty as such, but merely a letter authorising the Dutch to inspect ships. Heeres, Corpus Diplomaticum, BKI, 91 (1934), 217-219.

80. See Appendix E.

Perak and the Company was never as simple as the treaty terms would imply and many of the problems which later arose can be traced to differing interpretations of the nature and purpose of their alliance. As Albinus pointed out in 1746, Sultan Muzafar had concluded the treaty with the Dutch not primarily for economic gain, but to provide Perak with a strong friend and ally. The Misa Melayu speaks of the Company as coming "to guard Kuala Perak,"⁸¹ and the view of the Dutch as the guardians of Perak's security is reiterated throughout the course of the century. For over a hundred years Malays had seen the Company at war throughout the Indonesian archipelago, in the Spice Islands, Makassar and Java, but they had learnt that Dutch military strength was not used indiscriminantly. Even though the Governors-General at Batavia were usually more aggressive than the Heeren XVII, they were not willing to be drawn into local conflicts until Dutch interests were directly threatened. It was the hope of arousing Dutch concern sufficiently to obtain an alliance and thus gain the support of VOC strength which had led Sultan Muzafar to seek a treaty. This, he felt, would guarantee him against outside invasion and shore up his position against the challenge presented by Raja Iskandar. The treaty of 1746 was for him a personal triumph, but he and his successors were to find that the Dutch definition of a "true, upright and indissoluble friendship" was much narrower than that of the Malays.

Difficulties also arose because of the ambiguous Dutch attitude towards the Perak alliance. In theory, the Company had no political interests in Perak and its presence there was merely to facilitate "the

81. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 29.

collection of tin."⁸² In 1777 Melaka specifically stated that "the Company does not possess the kingdom [of Perak], but only has a post at the mouth of the river."⁸³ Individual governors, however, often defined their duties of protecting VOC trading interests in Perak very broadly. On a number of occasions they attempted to impose upon the court their own interpretation of the treaty terms or the position of the ruler, attempts which generally met strong resistance. Another sensitive matter was the Dutch role in Perak's relations with other states, for Melaka governors consistently sought to woo Perak away from any involvement, especially with the Bugis, which they felt might threaten the Dutch position there. Perak rulers found that Melaka's "advice" on non-commercial affairs was often heavy-handed to the point of being menacing, especially as the century progressed and Dutch fear of the Bugis grew greater. Despite these varying interpretations, there is no evidence that Sultan Muzafar or the Melaka Governor saw Perak as anything other than a sovereign state. Even in 1765, after the Company had been in Perak for two decades, Governor Schippers urged strongly that a new resident should seek to dissipate the idea then current in the court that the Dutch were trying to dominate the government. "It is well known how obsessive these people are concerning that point."⁸⁴

The adat or custom regarding the conclusion of a treaty was clear-

82. KA 3045 OB 1766, Boelen's Report on Melaka to Schippers, 25 Jan. 1765, fo. 10.

83. KA 3392 OB 1778, Melaka Secret Resolutions, 4 Sept. 1777, fo. 25.

84. KA 3075 OB 1767, Schippers' Instructions to Cramer, 26 Sept. 1765.

ly demonstrated in 1746. Then, as in later years, the Company took the initiative in the drafting of the contract, and an envoy was sent to the Perak court with an outline of the proposed agreement.⁸⁵ This was discussed in the Assembly and was accepted only if the chief and anak raja, or at least those most senior, gave their approval.⁸⁶ It was then written out in Dutch and Malay with any necessary modifications added. Only on one occasion, in 1759, did a ruler draw up a separate clause for discussion, but this was rejected by the Governor.⁸⁷ After the new contract had been copied out satisfactorily, the seals were applied, that of the Company in red and of the Perak ruler in black.⁸⁸ Provided the

85. C. H. Alexandrowicz, An Introduction to the History of the Law of Nations in the East Indies (Oxford, 1967), p. 163, notes that the VOC usually had the advantage in the drafting of a treaty. An exception to this general rule in Perak occurred in 1752 when the Resident and Sultan Muzafar concluded an agreement in Malay which was then sent to Melaka and translated there. See below, pp. 187-188.
86. See below, pp. 187-188, also Dagh Register 1641-1642, p. 83, when the ruler of Perak said he must discuss any treaty with his orang kaya before he made an agreement with the VOC.
87. On this occasion, Sultan Iskandar's scribe came to the envoy requesting that a separate article be inserted in the contract, providing for the recall and replacement of a resident who was found to be unsatisfactory by the court. Although the Dutch were never anxious to retain an unpopular resident, they refused this request on the grounds that it was simply a pretext to gain greater control over the Company employees. KA 2885 OB 1761, Visboom's Report, 9 July 1759.
88. The custom of using a black seal was regarded by the Siamese as uniquely Malay. In 1829 the Chau Pya of Ligor wrote to the Governor of Penang:
- From the commencement of the Kedah kingdom its rulers from generation to generation were tributary to the Siamese. The first Raja of Kedah were Siamese who used red chaps (seals) and after their dynasty was finished the Malays became lords of the country and continued to use the red chap instead of a black one, contrary to the custom of all other Malay rulers.

Assembly had already given its assent, this seal was sufficient to ratify the treaty. The presence of the principal nobles was usually mentioned in the conclusion of the text, and this was considered evidence enough of their agreement.⁸⁹ Four copies were made, two in Malay and two in Dutch, and a duplicate set was exchanged by each signatory. These documents were accorded great honour in traditional Malay society, and in the following reign it was recorded that Sultan Iskandar himself took possession of all treaties, refusing to allow them out of his hands.⁹⁰ His brother, Sultan Mahmud, had a similar attitude towards the tangible representation of the alliance, that is, his copy of the treaty. He constantly referred to it as "an inheritance," as something which he had received in trust from his predecessors.⁹¹ The document itself symbolised the relationship between Perak and Melaka and as long as each party held its copy, the treaty remained intact.⁹²

88. (cont'd.)

SSR F5, Letters from Native Rulers, Chau Pya of Ligor to Gov. of Penang, n.d., fo. 170.

89. The treaties made in the eighteenth century bore only one seal, that of the ruler. In 1818 the Laksamana informed a British envoy that the ruler's seal was sufficient. SSR G34/67 Cracroft to Clubley, 3 Aug. 1818 (FCCP 5 Sept. 1818), fo. 35. During the course of the nineteenth century it became common for the Raja Muda and Raja Bendahara to affix their seals as well.

90. KA 2885 OB 1761, Visboom's Report, 9 July 1759.

91. KA 3075 OB 1767, King of Perak to Schippers, 4 Nov. 1765; KA 3252 OB 1773, King of Perak to Schippers, rec'd. at Melaka 18 June 1771; KA 3278 OB 1774, King of Perak to Schippers, rec'd. at Melaka, 21 Aug 1772.

92. KA 3306 OB 1775, Hensel to Schippers, 12 Feb. 1773.

The negotiations and successful conclusion of the treaty in 1746 showed that although it was a small, weak state, Perak could conduct its diplomatic relations with the same aplomb and according to the same standards that had characterised the courts of Melaka, Aceh and Johor.⁹³ Each time the treaty was renewed, Perak reaffirmed its ability to deal with the Europeans in terms of time-honoured Malay tradition. The manner in which diplomacy was carried out was thus of absorbing interest to the Perak court. Custom was always strictly observed, for the slightest deviation from accepted practice could not only cause great insult, but would openly display a ruler's ill-breeding.

This concern is best illustrated in the approach to the letters exchanged between the Company authorities and the Perak court, since among the Malays letter-writing was regarded as the basis on which diplomacy rested. Perak rulers made full use of the system to submit complaints or requests to the Governor, and it was also an important medium for maintaining relations with other states. As the major expression of both the ambitions and resentments of successive rulers, these letters remain a fundamental source for providing some insight into the way Perak rulers saw themselves in relation to the outside world.

The art of letter-writing was called ilmu terasul, and the conventions which governed it were set forth in various treaties or kitab terasul.⁹⁴ As one traveller noted the following century:

93. For descriptions of the reception of foreign envoys, see Brown "Malay Annals," pp. 89, 54-56; Andaya, The Kingdom of Johor, pp. 92-94; Lombard, Le Sultanat d'Atjeh, pp. 139-144.

94. Raffles 79 in the R.A.S. provides an example of such a work, foll. 46, 49.

The Malays . . . have a most rigid epistolary etiquette and set forms for letter-writing. Letters must consist of six parts and are so highly elaborate that the scribes who indite them are almost looked upon as litterateurs. There is an etiquette of envelopes and wafers, the number and colour of which vary with the relative positions of the correspondents, and any error in these details is regarded as an insult.⁹⁵

In 1778, for example, Raja Ali of Riau sent a letter to Sultan Alauddin of Perak (1773-1792), asking him to discharge a cargo, but because it was not folded, "in a kingly way," Sultan Alauddin was angry. Only the arguments of the other raja kept him from sending the ship away.⁹⁶ An incorrectly placed seal on a letter was regarded as a studied insult, and, when this was done by the Dutch Governor in 1765, the resident of Perak reported that he had "work enough to dissipate all the suspicion and imagined evil" that this error had caused.⁹⁷

The language in which a letter was couched and the manner in which

95. Isabella Bird, The Golden Chersonese and the Way Thither (Oxford Reprint, 1967), p. 25; Wilkinson, Malay English Dictionary, II, 1139, gives only four parts: the address (selamat surat), the contents (isi surat), the heading (kepala surat) and the preamble (puji-puji surat).

96. KA 3446 OB 1780, Hensel to de Bruijn, 16 March 1778. As Munshi Abdullah noted, a letter should be folded "in the proper way" (lipat seperti ada-nya). A. H. Hill, ed., Hikayat Abdullah (Oxford, 1970), p. 187.

Munshi Abdullah noted that a torn letter sent to Raffles by the ruler of Siam was a deliberate slight. Ibid., p. 184.

Abdullah's son, Ibrahim, also criticised the disorganisation and dirtiness of a letter sent to an English representative by Raja Abdullah of Perak in 1873. Kisah Pelayaran Muhammad Ibrahim Munshi, ed., Muhammad Syed bin Haji Sulaiman (Johor, 1956), p. 68.

97. KA 3075 OB 1767, Wiederbolt to Schippers, 20 Aug. 1765. The seal of the writer was normally in the middle of the page on one side of the text. In 1666 a ruler of Jambi, writing to the Sultan of Johor, placed his seal at the top of the page, this indicating that he was superior. Andaya, The Kingdom of Johor, p. 87.

it was received were also of great importance. Letters themselves were accorded almost the same respect as that given to the person who had dictated them. Umbrellas were held over them as they were brought in procession to the recipient, and they were carried on a salver covered with a cloth of the royal colours, yellow or white. This was because the letter was regarded as a representative of the sender, and in the words of one Perak ruler, "I felt as if I spoke with my friend himself, whose words are as sweet as honey and as cool as the dew that falls in the morning, refreshing all the flowers in the field, the colour of which is as pleasing as saffron, words that have the power to make the contract more binding."⁹⁸ When a reply was sent to any letter, assurances were always made that the contents had been pleasing and that the letter itself had been received with all due honour. "I received my friend's letter and derived a great deal of pleasure from it;"⁹⁹ "I write to tell my friend that I have received the letter and have brought it in with all possible honour;"¹⁰⁰ "I opened the seal and unfolded the envelope and the letters glittered like morning stars."¹⁰¹ In 1709 Sultan Muhammad Syah had expressed his doubts that a letter received from Melaka could indeed be from the Governor "since it was contrary to custom, handed over to us in an unsuitable fashion."¹⁰²

98. KA 3252 OB 1773, King of Perak to Schippers, rec'd. 18 June 1771.

99. SSR G34/67, Raja of Perak to Gov. of Penang, 27 Aug. 1816 (FCCP 7 Nov. 1816).

100. KA 2885 OB 1761, King of Perak to Boelen, 10 July 1759.

101. SSR F5, Letters from Native Rulers, Sultan Abdullah to Gov. of Penang, 15 Nov. 1826, fo. 28.

It was also essential that the contents of the letter be phrased in a fitting manner, for failure to follow the dictates of convention would be regarded as a gross insult. The Tuhfat al Nafis, for example, records that when a Dutch admiral sent a letter to the ruler of Terengganu in 1784, its contents were so shocking and ill-phrased that it was torn up and its fragments thrown to the dogs, but even they would not lick them.¹⁰³ A well-written letter should be pleasing to the ear when read aloud, for "words used in the proper place make for euphony and clarity; used in impossible places, they sound awkward, like a rice-pounding rod used to draw out a thorn."¹⁰⁴ Even a beautifully phrased letter could, however, be spoilt by a bad reader, and in 1761, when Sultan Iskandar was annoyed by the language used in a Dutch letter, the envoy claimed this was due to either faulty construction or a bad reading.¹⁰⁵

102. KA 1668 OB 1710, Sultan Muhammad Syah to Rooselaar, enclosed with Rooselaar to van Hoorn, 16 April 1709, fo. 60. The Governor explained that the letter concerned was from private individuals, not from the Company. KA 1668 OB 1710, Rooselaar to van Hoorn, 21 June 1709, fo. 225.
103. Raja Ali, Tuhfat al Nafis, p. 231. The Sejarah Melayu records how a quarrel broke out between Haru and Pasai because when a letter from Haru was read, the reader consistently substituted obeisance (sembah) instead of greetings (salam). Brown, "Malay Annals," p. 120; R. O. Winstedt, "The Malay Annals or Sejarah Melayu," JMBRAS, XVI, 3 (1938), 146.
104. Hill, Hikayat Abdullah, p. 105. In another work Abdullah complained that with few exceptions, the letters of Malay rulers were badly constructed and poorly spelt, the letters wrongly joined and misplaced, all of which he felt contributed to the loss of the beauty and force in the Malay language. Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah, ed., Kassim Ahmad (Kuala Lumpur, 1960), p. 37.
105. KA 2954 OB 1763, Cramer's Report, 12 June 1761; KA 3075 OB 1767, Wiederholt to Schippers, 20 Aug. 1765.

Correspondence between rulers, like other state administration, was a public matter. Normally it was not possible for any communication to be private, and this gave added importance to the terms employed, since all letters were read out in front of the entire court assembly.¹⁰⁶ The arrival of a letter from Melaka became a great occasion, and people would often come to court specifically to hear the contents.¹⁰⁷ A private letter was in fact so rare that Malay texts find it worthy of comment. Sultan Muzafar despatched a letter to the Dutch Captain "but no one knew the contents of it."¹⁰⁸ When Admiral van Braam sent two letters to Terengganu, "the smaller one was read under the umbrella, but the longer letter was read by the Yang di Pertuan himself."¹⁰⁹ Any insult in the letter was thus intensified because of the public nature of the communication. When the Company addressed Sultan Iskandar's brother as Datuk rather than Raja Bendahara, the Dutch envoy found it necessary to give a full explanation and apology to the assembly.¹¹⁰ Open criticism, such as the public denunciation of the Sultan Muda in 1778, could cause great offense because it was seen as deliberate humiliation.¹¹¹

106. KA 2885 OB 1761, Meyer to Boelen, 7 Feb. 1759. On another occasion, when an envoy wrote a private letter of complaint to each member of the council, none of his grievances were answered in the reply, which would, of course, have been public. KA 3166 OB 1770, Cramer's Report, under 19 and 21 Sept. 1768.

107. KA 3803 OB 1791, Secret, Walbeehm to Couperus, 6 March 1791.

108. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 31.

109. Raja Ali, Tuhfat al Nafis, p. 231.

110. KA 2954 OB 1763, Cramer's Report, 12 June 1761.

111. KA 3446 OB 1780, Meyer to de Bruijn, 9 Dec. 1778.

The role that letters and written documents played in Malay politics placed great importance on the position of court scribes and interpreters. While the Dutch representatives in Perak usually spoke Malay, it was important to have an expert in language, a jurubahasa, to clarify fine points and to translate documents. These middlemen supplied the sinews of the diplomatic body, and were recognised as such by both Malays and Europeans. The Misa Melayu records that Encik Tadung, the court jurubahasa, was one of those entrusted with the delicate mission of buying cannon from an English trader.¹¹² An interpreter was also expected to act as a scribe (jurutulis), translating and writing letters, and both scribes and interpreters received the respect and prestige given by a largely non-literate society towards those who were skilled in ilmu terasul.¹¹³ They held a position of great trust, acting as the ruler's confidant and mediator with the world beyond the court. Raja Culan tells us that, under Sultan Iskandar, the scribe Sri Dewa Raja was greatly trusted and also served as treasurer, and during a mission to the court in 1761, Everard Cramer praised the scribe's honesty and sincerity.¹¹⁴ Knowing that their reputation depended on maintaining the ruler's confidence, these men were careful never to jeopardise their standing. In

112. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 106; KA 2885 OB 1761, Visboom's Day Register, 9 July 1759; Meyer to Boelen, 3 Jan. 1760.

113. The Tai us Salatin, like many Islamic texts, devotes a chapter to the power wielded by the pen. Tai us Salatin, ed., Khalid Hussain (Kuala Lumpur, 1966), pp. 138-140, 141-145. Gullick, The Indigenous Systems, p. 52, describes the position of such men in nineteenth century Malay society.

114. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 165; KA 2954 OB 1763, Cramer's Report, 12 June, 1761.

1776, when a new tin weight was introduced the scribe told Resident Hensel that he would not dare to use it without the ruler's knowledge, as the resident had suggested.¹¹⁵ It was men of honour such as this who were frequently bearers of messages so sensitive that they could not be committed to paper, and by the same token it was through them that the Dutch were able to gain a deeper understanding of court politics.¹¹⁶

A disproportionate number were of Indian origin, for in Perak there was a small but influential Indian community, mostly Moslem, who had married local women. Raja Culan, for example, notes that "in Sayung [near Kuala Kangsar] there was a woman, Siti Sara, the daughter of a Keling man, Lebai Hanap. She married another Keling, Seri Raja Khan."¹¹⁷ A man sent to India on a royal mission had "one wife in Perak and another in India."¹¹⁸ The Indian community contributed to the entertainment during court celebrations, and several attained prominent positions within the court. According to Raja Culan, one of Sultan Iskandar's bravest panglima was an orang Keling, and that the retinue of the Orang Kaya Besar included a large number of people from Malabar.¹¹⁹ Indians moved easily into the court circle, for their skills were in high demand. In

115. KA 3387 OB 1778, Hensel to de Bruijn, 18 Jan. 1776.

116. For example, in 1766 the scribe warned the resident of possible repercussions against the fort if the Dutch tried to interfere in relations between Perak and Selangor. KA 3104 OB 1768, Wiederholt to Schippers, 3 Nov. 1766.

117. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 100.

118. Ibid., p. 78.

119. Ibid., pp. 86, 90, 131.

1663 the ruler of Perak wrote to Melaka asking specifically that a "Hindustan goldsmith" might be sent to Perak for two years to make "beautiful things" for him, and almost a century later the Misa Melayu records that the Temenggong's perahu was carved most skilfully by a man from Bengal.¹²⁰

It was, however, for their trading ability that the Indians were most respected. Their reputation for acute business acumen was not unearned, especially in Perak, where Indians had always been valued customers. Their skill in this regard was rewarded in Perak society by the positions they attained, and the responsibilities given to them. Because of their cosmopolitan experience, their ability to communicate with other Indian traders in Perak, and their ties in centres like Melaka, they were entirely suited to the position of royal merchant or saudagar raja, who was in charge of the ruler's own trade.¹²¹ Such men often exerted great

120. Dagh Register, 1663, p. 202; Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 132.

121. An Indian saudagar raja was common among Malay courts in the eighteenth century. In Aceh, a man from Malabar was succeeded by "a certain chuliah, Poh Saleh." Thomas Forrest, A Voyage from Calcutta to the Mergui Archipelago (London, 1792), pp. 51, 56; Lee Kam Heng, Aceh's Relations with the British, M.A. Thesis, Univ. of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, 1969, pp. 73-76; SFR G35/15 Desvoeux to du Pre, 15 April 1772 (FSGGP 25 June 1772); 9 April 1772 (FSGGP 15 June 1772).

In 1770 Light, arriving in Kedah, noted that the ruler's trading matters "were always handled by a Malabar." BM, Add. Ms. 29133, Light to Hastings, 17 Jan. 1770, fo. 9. In 1786, when Light returned to Kedah, he described the saudagar raja as a "deep, cunning and villainous chooliar," who had formerly been only a "common cooly." SSR G34/2 Light to Cornwallis, 12 Sept. 1786 (FWCP 13 Dec. 1786), fo. 166.

A "Moor servant" in Terengganu, Sultan Mansur Syah's saudagar raja, also exerted a great deal of influence over political decisions. KA 3802 Secret, Couperus to Alting, 10 Feb. 1789, fo. 202.

Compare these examples with the activities of similar figures in southern India. S. Arasaratnam, "Aspects of the role and activ-

influence over the ruler and his nobles; an excellent example is seen in the Indian called by the Dutch *Sedelebe*, who had played such a prominent role in the seventeenth century.¹²²

Because the scribes, interpreters and the saudagar raja all dealt with outsiders, especially in matters relating to trade, the three functions were often filled by the same man. Again the Indians had an advantage, for certain groups among them made writing an occupation. The reputation for "intelligence and language ability" that characterised the Jawi Peranakan community over a hundred years later was also prevalent in the eighteenth century.¹²³ Munshi Abdullah notes the eagerness with which Tamil traders in Melaka during his boyhood had encouraged their children to study their mother tongue, because it was widely used in trading circles.¹²⁴ He also records that in early nineteenth century Melaka there were only four or five letter writers, mostly Indian. They were all "diligent in study . . . their word held high in councils."¹²⁵ This prestige could mean advancement for themselves and their families. In Perak, during the reign of Sultan Alauddin, the scribe, an Indian

121. (cont'd.)

ities of South India merchants c. 1650-1750," Proceedings of the First International Conference of Tamil Studies (Kuala Lumpur, 1966), pp. 582-596.

122. See Chapter I, p. 81. In 1747 Gov. Albinus sent the Perak saudagar raja "a piece of red cloth" in return for his help. KA 2592 OB 1748, Albinus to Orang Kaya Saudagar Raja in Perak, 29 July 1747, fo. 685.

123. William Roff, The Origins of Malay Nationalism (New Haven, 1967), pp. 48-49.

124. Hill, Hikayat Abdullah, pp. 45-46.

125. Ibid., p. 52.

entitled Megat Raja and his son were great favourites of the ruler, and in 1787 Megat Raja was appointed Laksamana.¹²⁶ On other occasions he was sent as an ambassador to Kedah, to India with a cargo of elephants, and, like others who held this post, functioned as a mediator between the court and the Dutch resident.¹²⁷

Because of the influence of the Indian community in Perak, it is not unexpected that "the Captain of the Moors" acted as Sultan Muzafar's representative in the negotiations with Verbrugge. Envoys, too, were a vital component in the diplomatic framework and, as Alexandrowicz has emphasised, they had long held an important place in Asian diplomacy. "In principle, all envoys sent from sovereign to sovereign . . . enjoyed, subject to certain exceptions, the customary privileges and immunities, such as personal inviolability, immunity from jurisdiction, and freedom from interference with their function."¹²⁸ No matter what relations existed between the two states, their envoys were supposed to be accorded the treatment due their position.¹²⁹ Like the scribes, envoys were frequently entrusted with more delicate information than that actually committed to paper, and it was their duty to clarify any point which the ruler did not wish to be made public.

126. KA 3446 OB 1780, Meyer to de Bruijn, 9 Dec. 1778; KA 3704 OB 1789, Diederhoveer to de Bruijn, 15 Feb. 1787.

127. KA 3491 OB 1782, Meyer to de Bruijn, 17 April 1780; 20 March 1781; KA 3594 OB 1786, Wilner to de Bruijn, 30 Jan. 1785.

128. Alexandrowicz, The Law of Nations, p. 205.

129. Thus, when the ruler of Kedah detained two Perak envoys for five months in 1816, it was considered a great outrage. SSR G34/67 Raja to Perak to Gov. of Penang, 27 Aug. 1816 (FCCP 7 Nov. 1816).

Because of the trust placed in them by the ruler, and because the manner in which they presented a case could influence its outcome, envoys were a corner-stone of interstate relations. Texts on statecraft in the Malay world stress that such people must be of good appearance, behave in a fitting manner, and speak well.¹³⁰ Envoys were given very specific instructions and were not authorised to go beyond these, a practice which was frequently employed by Malay rulers to their own advantage.¹³¹ Normally envoys acquitted themselves satisfactorily, being men of some standing in the court, but there were cases in which the ruler's wakil (representative) disgraced himself. In 1769, when an envoy to Patani behaved badly, he knew that he had incurred Sultan Mahmud's anger and hid for several months before he dared make an appearance.¹³² To cite another example, in 1776 Sri Rama Pahlawan, who had been entrusted with previous missions, was sent to Melaka to enquire about a Perak perahu captured in Siak. In Melaka, however, he fell into disgrace, roaming around with other bad folk, fighting cocks" and gambling away

130. Khalid Hussain, Taj us Salatin, pp. 141-145.

131. Between 1687 and 1692, for example, Melaka received several missions from the ruler of Perak, but the envoys were never authorised to deal with "weighty matters." KA 1342 OB 1689, Slicher to Sri Sultan, Magmut of Perak, 12 April 1689, fo. 368^r; KA 1348 OB 1690, Meun to Slicher, 23 Feb. 1689, fo. 260^r; KA 1375 OB 1691, Slicher to Sri Sultan Mahmoet, 27 July 1690, foll. 307^{r-v}; KA 1424 Melaka Day Register, 10 Oct. 1692, foll. 48-49, 25 Oct. 1692, fo. 72.

By this means the Perak ruler was able to maintain friendly relations with Melaka while avoiding dealing with a number of sensitive issues such as his indebtedness to the Company. A similar policy was followed by Sultan Mansur Syah of Terengganu a hundred years later.

132. KA 3196 OB 1771, de Wind to Schippers, 15 Oct. 1769; KA 3226 OB 1772, de Wind to Schippers, 4 Jan. 1770.

all his possessions. Governor Crans requested not only that Sri Rama Pahlawan should be recalled, but that he should not be employed as messenger again, since he was considered to be "unfit for the envoy of a king."¹³³ The penalties for inefficiency or failure were high; at best, an envoy risked losing the ruler's favour, and at worst his life. In 1688 Sultan Muhammad said that an envoy who failed to carry out his task effectively should be killed.¹³⁴ On the other hand, an envoy who performed his duties well should be praised. Of a Dutch commissioner, Abraham Werndly, Sultan Mahmud wrote in 1768:

The fiscal Abraham Werndly has given me my friend's greetings. My friend places much trust in him, therefore I trust him also, because I found that his actions were very good, his speech is very suitable, sweet as honey and sugar. Because of this my heart was opened, as when dew in the morning falls on all the flowers in the fields to freshen them. Thus our friendship is increased. . . .¹³⁵

An examination of the activities of scribes, interpreters and envoys shows that most of them fulfilled a variety of duties for the ruler. Though not possessing formal power, they could exert great in-

133. KA 3387 OB 1778, King of Perak to Crans, 19 Feb. 1776, 15 April 1776; Crans to King of Perak, 25 March 1776, 23 May 1776.

134. KA 1348 OB 1690, Meun to Slicher, 2 Nov. 1688, foll. 215^r-216^r.

135. KA 3166 OB 1770, King of Perak to Schippers, 18 Sept. 1768. Such qualities continued to be valued, as seen in the Sultan of Perak's comments on Frank Swettenham, made over a century later:

We are much obliged to our friend for the officer whom our friend has chosen. He is very clever; he is also very clever in the customs of Malay government and he is very clever at gaining the hearts of Rajas with soft words, delicate and sweet, so that all men rejoice in him as in the perfume of an opened flower.

R. O. Winstedt, A History of Malaya, JMBRAS, XIII, 1 (1935), 241.

fluence over his personal decisions because of the trust he placed in them. The confidants of kings and princes, their favour too was courted. It is noteworthy that in March 1746, when the Melaka Council was attempting to pave the way for negotiations regarding the Perak tin trade, presents were sent not only to Sultan Muzafar, Raja Muda Iskandar, and the Laksamana Nakhoda Pumah, but to the "Captain of the Moors."¹³⁶ Although the latter was not originally from Perak, he had gained a position of responsibility within the court through his competency and shrewdness. Able to maintain his standing with both the ruler and the Dutch, this envoy, like many others, became a pipeline between the court and the Company, the interpreters of one world to another.

This personal contact was of particular importance because of the ease with which rumours spread. Malay courts had traditionally relied on news brought by traders coming from neighbouring ports. One of the duties of the Perak Syahbandar was to escort traders from other countries to the ruler so that they could personally "report on news from other countries."¹³⁷ While this allowed for the acquisition of information not included in letters or conveyed by envoys, the accounts received from traders were often contradictory, distorted, or completely

136. KA 2592 OB 1748, Melaka Resolutions, 30 March 1746, fo. 223. On another occasion, for example, Cramer presented the scribe with a silver box and a piece of linen. KA 2954 OB 1763, Cramer's Report, 12 June 1761.

137. Raja Kamaralzaman Papers, SP 9 no. 15, fo. 11. This is also found in a seventeenth century legal digest which was drawn up for use in Perak, Pahang and Johor. The Syahbandar, among other duties, was also required to "collect foreign news." J. E. Kempe and R. O. Winstedt, "A Malay Legal Digest," JMBRAS, XXI, 1 (1948), 28.

false. Yet in the rumour-ridden world of Malay courts, reports conveyed through unofficial sources frequently offered the only explanation for Dutch policy or the activities of other rulers. The very Malay word for rumours, "wind-news" (khobar angin), conveys something of the way in which whispers of conspiracy or attack swept through the archipelago.

The Dutch in Melaka themselves adopted the system of interviewing those arriving from other areas in order to obtain intelligence, but the Governor was forced to treat every report with suspicion until it was verified by further information. His judgement was often crucial in influencing Batavia's attitude and thus determining the nature of Company relations with Malay states. As Professor Boxer has pointed out, however, it was not easy for the VOC Directors to find capable individuals to fill such high-ranking posts. Educated men found Company service unattractive because of the low pay, the hardship of the long voyage out to the Indies and the dangers of life in a tropical country. In general, only men from the middle and lower ranks of the burgher class sought employment with the VOC in an administrative capacity, and then only as a last resort. The majority of those who came were lured by the prospect of making a quick fortune through bypassing the Company ban on private trading.¹³⁸ The activities of the Melaka Governor Rogier de Laver (1736-43), for example, became so scandalous that he was recalled and demoted.¹³⁹

On the other hand, there were some Governors who were not merely

138. Boxer, The Dutch Seaborne Empire, pp. 50-53, 201-205.

139. W. Wijnaendts van Resandt, De Gezaghebbers der Ooost Indische Compagnie, op Hare Buiten Comptoiren in Azie (Amsterdam, 1944), p. 219.

interested in making money. For those who demonstrated administrative ability and relative honesty, promotion was rapid. David Boelen, Governor of Melaka from 1758 to 1764, came to the Indies as a common seaman but rose quickly through the ranks and ended his life as a member of the prestigious Council of the Indies.¹⁴⁰ He was one of those who showed some understanding of the nature of Malay diplomacy and it was during the administration of men such as Boelen that relations with Malay rulers were at their best.

One of the Governor's principal duties in relation to Perak was the appointment of the resident. Once again, the calibre of people available was not high. In the eighteenth century the VOC was increasingly unable to attract sufficient men to the lower ranks of Company service. While they may not have been "the dregs of the Dutch nation," the soldiers, sailors and clerks who came to the Indies were not usually promising VOC representatives.¹⁴¹ Some Perak residents had previously been in the Company's civil service as scribes or accountants, but most were soldiers, drawn from the VOC's ill-trained and corrupt army. As one Dutch observer wrote in 1778:

The European soldiers . . . arrive as the Company send them: they are given a bad coat and bad musket and--lo, they are soldiers! The officers are no better; it is almost degrading to be one of them and they are completely excluded from good society. The other day a halbardier of the general's escort was drunk and fell off his horse. He was summoned before

140. Ibid., pp. 223-224.

141. Boxer, The Dutch Sea-Borne Empire, pp. 55-83 gives a sympathetic description of the lives of these men.

the general who reprimanded him with the words: "You villain, if this happens again, I shall forthwith make you a lieutenant" [a promotion]. How I thank God that I have not accepted the brevet of captain of these noble troops.¹⁴²

Despite the limited choice of men available, the VOC residents in Perak general acquitted themselves satisfactorily, probably because they were hand-picked by the Governor. The Dutch Company fully realised the tenuousness of their position in Perak and the importance of the resident as an intermediary between Melaka and the Perak court. Repeatedly Governors spoke of the need for a man "well-versed in the customs of the country and of a commanding yet accommodating nature" who should be appointed as Perak resident.¹⁴³ The favour of the people should be won by "soft words and a friendly manner" so that they would trade with the Company not from fear, but from preference.¹⁴⁴ The Dutch did not easily forget their experiences with a hostile Perak in the previous century, and, on occasions when a Company employee angered the ruler, he was immediately recalled or punished; on others, his stay was extended when he had met with approval from the court.¹⁴⁵

142. P. C. Hoyneck van Papendracht, "Some old Private Letters from the Cape, Batavia and Malacca," JMBRAS, II, 1 (1924), 13.

143. KA 2654 OB 1751, Albinus' Report on Melaka to van Heemskirk, 15 Feb. 1750, fo. 361.

144. KA 3104 OB 1768, Schippers' Instructions to de Wind, 18 Nov. 1766; KA 2592 OB 1748, Albinus to Batavia, 13 Oct. 1747; KA 2827 OB 1759, Dekker to Meyer, 20 March 1758; KA 908, Mossel to van Heemskirk, 7 Nov. 1751, fo. 726.

145. J. Wiederholt was recalled in 1766 after two years and J. Fliesholt was summoned before the Council in 1750 because he had annoyed Sultan Mazafar. KA 3104 OB 1768, Schippers to Batavia, 31 Jan.

The position of Perak resident was not always an enviable one, however, and those who filled it did not always do so willingly.¹⁴⁶ Theoretically sent for three years, they were often asked to remain longer; Claas de Wind, for example, spent five years in Perak before his final replacement in 1772.¹⁴⁷ The climate was hot, the wages low, the work hard; the only break in the monotony came from the arrival of a Company ship or an occasional visit to court.¹⁴⁸

The duties of the resident, the Governor's representative, were varied. He was responsible for the general condition of the fort and for the maintenance of discipline among the forty to sixty men under his command. This demanded a person of strong character, for the garrison, a mixed group of Europeans and Malays, was not always amenable and often objected to carrying out the Governor's instructions. A letter from the Governor to the Perak resident in 1791 gives some idea of the work expected of the Company employees there:

Should it be necessary, the ditches around the fort should be dug out by the garrison. All men, including

^{145.} (cont'd.)

1767, fo. 14; KA 2654 OB 1751, van Heemskirk to Batavia, 6 Oct. 1750, fo. 399.

B. Meyer's stay was extended in 1759 because he had met with the approval of the Raja Muda. KA 2858 OB 1760, Dekker and Boelen to Batavia, 10 March, 1759.

^{146.} When one Perak Resident, Johan Essche, requested a release from Perak, complaining of "weakness of the eyes" the Governor-General, in rejecting the request, specifically stated that it was not good to change residents too often. Essche had been in Perak less than a year. KA 2673 OB 1751, van Heemskerk to Batavia, 20 Feb. 1751, fo. 42; KA 908, Møssel to van Heemskerk, fo. 729.

^{147.} See Chapter VII, pp. 481-482.

the native cannon assistants, should work together and no one should be excused. If everyone goes [to work] in the woods, then the Corporal and six militia should remain on watch in the fort. A sentry should be posted outside the fort door--the sickest people can be used for this during the day but at night everyone must [share the duty of] sentry, native assistants as well as Europeans. In all, five sentries should be posted at night and if there is no Company ship on hand, a Corporal and five militia must be posted in a perahu or boat . . . on the other side of the river to watch for smuggling. . . .

The men do not have to serve out their time in Perak, but if they have served a year or more, they can ask for their release to return to Melaka and serve out their time there. . . .

In Perak the men do not have to be clothed like the militia in Melaka and it is not possible to fit them out properly because of the hard work they do every day. They can manage with a jacket and underdrawers, since they always work in mud. They must cut the long grass and small trees around the fort twice a year, generally in June or July and December or January. The VOC will supply the tools for all this work.¹⁴⁹

The severity of the climate, the monotony of the diet, the heaviness of the work demanded not surprisingly resulted in drunkenness, chronic illness, frequent death, and desertion.¹⁵⁰ The garrison was commonly undermanned and in 1761 the Governor received a complaint that the men had no time for anything except "receiving, weighing, smelting, digging and delivery of tin."¹⁵¹

148. Resandt, De Gezaghebbers, p. 17.

149. KA 3858, Secret, de Bruyn to Walbeehm, 31 Aug. 1791.

150. For example, between 15 Sept. and 17 Oct. 1758, three men died and the Resident said he needed eleven or twelve replacements to man the fort properly. KA 2827 OB 1759, Meyer to Dekker, 17 Oct. 1758. In almost every letter the resident mentions the illness or desertion of some members of the garrison.

151. KA 2954 OB 1763, Cramer's Report, 12 June 1761.

Besides supervising the fort and its occupants, the Perak resident was expected to act as the "eyes and ears" of the Governor by keeping the Melaka Council abreast of events not only in Perak but in surrounding areas. Like the Malay Syahbandar, the Dutch resident also gathered information from the crews of perahu which arrived in Perak from Riau, Sumatra and other peninsular states. He was similarly expected to be constantly attuned to any changes of attitudes towards the Dutch or shifts of loyalty within the Perak court circle. This involved the cultivation of reliable informants and influential people in the Assembly. An efficient resident could usually manage to obtain duplicates of incoming correspondence, since such letters were always read aloud at a public gathering. It was more difficult to collect information about letters sent by the Perak ruler to other states, but generally the resident could learn the nature of the contents and on rare occasions obtain an actual copy, perhaps through an arrangement with the scribe.¹⁵²

The resident was also required to placate the court when the Dutch had unwittingly given cause for insult. A seal misplaced, a title ignored, presents forgotten, would lead to much speculation about Dutch intentions, but could usually be explained in terms of Dutch misunderstanding about Malay adat. In 1755, for example, Sultan Iskandar sent a letter to Melaka covered with a white, rather than a yellow, cloth. The Governor was very suspicious, since he thought this was "contrary to the

¹⁵². When the resident obtained the copy of a letter from the ruler of Perak to the ruler of Selangor in 1766, the Melaka Council remarked that they did not know how he had obtained it. KA 3166, OB 1768 Melaka Resolutions, 5 Nov. 1766, fo. 287.

custom of eastern kings," and was intended as an insult. While he agreed to accept the letter, he ordered that no cannon shots be fired as it was brought in "to stress our sensitivity over this [supposed insult] to the king."¹⁵³ In fact, the use of a white cloth was by no means unprecedented, and indeed, "white was more strictly a royal colour than yellow."¹⁵⁴ The anak raja, were also permitted to use yellow umbrellas, but only the ruler himself could use white.¹⁵⁵

The resident's ability to explain such incidents could have crucial effects on the Dutch position in Perak, and for this reason the governors always tried to send men of some discernment. Generally their choices were successful, since all the residents without exception knew Malay and had had some experience in the Malay world. Some, however, were better-liked, building up closer ties within the court circle and were therefore more adept at persuading the court to agree to changes in VOC policy. But even they could not know everything. The Dutch fort at Tanjung Putus was several miles downstream from the royal residence, which meant that the Company's employees lived essentially outside the mainstream of court life. They were also forbidden to take Malay wives,

153. Ka 2753 OB 1756, van Heemskerck to Batavia, 30 April 1755, fo. 183.

154. Brown, "Malay Annals," p. 54.

155. Ibid.; see also Adat Lembaga didalam Negeri Perak Darulridzwan (Kuala Kangsar, 1936?), p. 12. In official Councils the ruler wore white or light yellow. Teh Zakariah binte Jahidin, Bahasa Istana di Negeri Perak, Academic Exercise, Univ. of Malaya, 1966, p. 10.

In 1721 the Melaka Governor noted that the head of Selangor, Daeng Marewa, had sent him one letter in yellow cloth and another in white. KA 1853 OB 1722, van Suchtelen to Batavia, 11 March 1721, fo. 46.

and throughout these fifty years there is no record of any incident involving Dutch men and Malay women.¹⁵⁶ Most of what they learned came through informants, who sometimes misled them, either unknowingly or deliberately. On several occasions the resident was totally unaware of an important happening until long after the event.¹⁵⁷ Despite the presence of the resident, the Dutch often found that the atmosphere in the Perak court became so hostile that it was necessary to despatch a personal emissary from the Governor himself in order to dispel suspicion. Such missions were also an integral part of the diplomatic system, for it was during these visits that vital information was gathered, and it was then that the ruler could display his ability to deal with the VOC in a dignified and fitting manner.

When a mission arrived in Perak, the Company envoy would usually go first to the fort and inspect it.¹⁵⁸ Here a formal ceremony of wel-

156. Such incidents could have disastrous results. For example, in November 1772 a Dutchman coming from Kedah informed the Melaka Governor that the English there had been forced to leave. One of the reasons for their expulsion was Malay annoyance at the behaviour of the English who "had lived familiarly and wildly with the native women, against the custom of that country." KA 3281 OB 1774, Schippers to Batavia, 9 Jan. 1773, fo. 192. A text from Siak ascribes Sultan Muhammad's attack on the garrison at Pulau Gontong in 1759 to his anger at the way the Dutch treated Siak women. Cod. Or. 7304, fo. 462, lines 3-4.
157. For example, the arrival of a Kedah prince about 1762 and the nature of the agreement between Perak and Selangor in 1766. See Chapters V and VI, pp. 391, 417.
158. This general discussion has been drawn from the reports of several missions: KA 2885 OB 1761, J. J. Visboom's Report, 9 July 1759; KA 2954 OB 1763, E. Cramer's Report, 12 June 1761; KA 3075 OB 1767, Cramer's Report, 4 Sept. 1765; KA 3166 OB 1770, A. Werndly's Report, 19 Sept. 1768; KA 3306 OB 1775, Werndly's Report, 22 Dec. 1773; KA 3704 OB 1787, E. Lucas' Report, 22 Dec. 1786.

come was normally held, aimed at impressing the Malays. The Laksamana and Syahbandar were informed of the envoy's arrival, and as soon as possible a message would be sent upstream to court. This message, and the Dutch request for an audience, were sent through the medium of the scribe, who continued to act as intermediary during the Dutch visit.¹⁵⁹ Preliminary negotiations were frequently conducted between him and the envoy before the latter went to court so that the position of both sides would be quite clear. It was during these preliminary interviews that the envoy from Melaka familiarised himself with court politics and court personalities. A special balai penghadapan would be prepared and, when the ruler was ready to receive the envoy, word would be sent downstream. The Dutch party, together with the Governor's letters and presents, were accompanied upstream by the Laksamana and Syahbandar. The perahu which carried them were decorated with pennants, flags and the royal emblem, the umbrella, while other perahu transported musicians.

A temporary residence was assigned to the emissary and, when the court was assembled, two or more notable personages were sent to escort him to the balai. It was considered an insult if these officials were not of a status commensurate with that of the envoy himself, and in 1759 Jan Visboom refused to be escorted by two minor officials. He sent a

158. (cont'd.)

Although Verbrugge's Report from 1746 and Schippers from 1753 are missing, these are treated in the Misa Melayu, pp. 62-64, 106-113.

159. In 1788 Lucas enquired as to the method he should use to obtain an audience, and he was told that this had always been done through the scribe. KA 3704 OB 1789, Lucas to Silvester, 12 June 1788.

message to Sultan Iskandar informing him that, in order to avoid complaints to the Governor, he should be received according to custom. It was not long before the Temenggong and Menteri appeared to accompany him.¹⁶⁰

On arriving at the bali penghadapan, the envoy was ushered in and seated, usually facing the Yang di Pertuan.¹⁶¹ The anak raja sat on one side, the orang besar on the other, and behind them were the court officials, placed according to rank. Greetings were exchanged and the letters read out in order, corresponding to the status of the recipient. These were then passed around to the principal anak raja and orang besar for their perusal, again according to their rank in the court hierarchy. Compliments were repeated and presents exchanged, for the success of a mission could depend on whether they were considered satisfactory.¹⁶² It

160. KA 2885 Ob 1761, Visboom's Report, 9 July 1759. See also Brown, "Malay Annals," p. 56 where the chronicler notes the court custom that the status of the person to be received by the ruler determined the rank of those who escorted him.

161. On his second mission in 1765, Cramer brought his own chair, possibly to give himself more dignity. KA 3075 OB 1767, Cramer's Report, 4 Sept. 1765.

162. Alexandrowicz, The Law of Nations, p. 208. There was a running controversy within the VOC hierarchy about the value of presents. A Governor like Jan Crans (1773-1777) delayed the despatch of a commission to Perak so that suitable gifts could be purchased, and in the same year, when requesting a lowering of the tin price, he remarked outright that the presents sent from Batavia (two pairs of blunderbusses, two flintlocks and two pairs of pistols) were insufficient. "If one desires something of importance," he wrote, "it is not only necessary to present gifts of an unusual kind to the King and Young King, but also to the nobles, as this is not only customary from olden times, but can also be disadvantageous or advantageous for the achievement of our aims." KA 3306 OB 1775, Melaka Resolutions, 25 Oct. 1773, fo. 329; Crans to Hensel, 27 Sept. 1773. See also KA 2634 OB 1750, Albinus to Batavia, 3 March 1749.

is relevant to note that the Malay word bingkisan refers specifically to the gifts accompanying a letter. It was said of Sultan Iskandar that he was very reluctant to grant any request unless presents were also given, and Raja Culan relates how he refused to receive a letter brought by Piro Muhammad, the VOC interpreter, because there were no bingkisan.¹⁶³ On the other hand, an attractive and unusual gift could do much to gain his favour, and the Misa Melayu records that he was delighted with the rare and exotic gifts brought him by a trader from India.¹⁶⁴ In 1759, when Visboom presented him with a Japanese screen, Sultan Iskandar told the envoy that he had never seen anything so beautiful.¹⁶⁵ Cloth was high valued, especially velvet in brilliant colours, while gold and silver thread, rosewater and spices were also acceptable. Each of the principal court dignitaries received gifts in proportion to his rank,¹⁶⁶ and

162. (cont'd.)

Some governors, on the other hand, felt that such expense was unjustified. In 1754 Gov. Dekker expressed the view that although the favour of the ruler's confidants should be courted, this should be done without giving gifts, since this was likely to cause jealousy. KA 2731 OB 1755, Dekker to Batavia, 25 March 1754. In 1792, when the VOC was in difficult financial straits, no mission was sent to acknowledge the change of government in Perak, and the usual presents were "somewhat reduced." OIE 89, Couperus to Walbeehm, 5 Dec. 1792.

163. KA 2954 OB 1763, Cramer's Report, 12 June 1761; Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 61. The failure of the Company to send gifts to the Sultan Muda after his appointment in 1773 was regarded as a breach of court etiquette. KA 3359 OB 1777, Melaka resolutions, 4 Dec. 1775, fo. 373; Crans to King of Perak, 7 Dec. 1775.

164. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 81.

165. KA 2885 OB 1761, Visboom's Report, 9 July 1759.

166. A typical list reads: For Sultan Iskandar, three ells of dark blue velvet, two lbs. nutmeg, 1 lb. cinnamon; for the Raja Muda, three

apart from these official gifts, other tokens of Company esteem were presented to influential people in private interviews.¹⁶⁷

Once begun, audiences were frequently adjourned until the following day, although they were not granted during religious holidays or during the fasting month (bulan puasa).¹⁶⁸ They were always public and, when Cramer sought a private discussion with the ruler, Sultan Iskandar refused, for this would be "against custom, and would only cause scandal and angry objections."¹⁶⁹ Because of the public nature of audiences, some limitation was placed on the ruler's freedom to discuss matters. Similarly, he would not make a public or written request unless he had first made sure that it would be granted. Any refusal would mean great personal shame, and it was in affairs such as this that the ruler leant heavily on the services of his scribe.¹⁷⁰ When all the discussions and

166. (cont'd.)

ells dark blue velvet, 1 lb. nuts; for the Raja Bendahara, three ells dark blue velvet; for the Orang Kaya Besar, three ells dark blue velvet.

On one occasion when the list of gifts did not tally with those delivered, the ruler, Sultan Mahmud, was most upset. Wiederholt, the resident, attributed the omission to an error made in the latter by the Company's translator. KA 3104 OB 1768, King of Perak to Schippers, 18 Aug. 1766; Wiederholt to Schippers, 18 Oct. 1766.

167. For example, the gifts of linen given to the Temenggong and "tobacco to a few penghulu" in 1760. KA 2885 OB 1761, Meyer to Beelen, 3 Jan. 1760.

168. KA 3306 OB 1775, Werndly's Report, 22 Dec. 1773; KA 2954 OB 1763, Cramer's Report, 12 June 1761.

169. KA 2885 OB 1761, Visboom's Report, 9 July 1759; KA 2954 OB 1763, Cramer's Report, 12 June 1761; KA 3166 OB 1770, Werndly's Report, 19 Sept. 1768. This general rule was not absolutely invariable, for in 1768 Werndly, to his surprise, was able to obtain a private interview with the Raja Muda. KA 3166 OB 1770, Werndly's Report, 19 Sept. 1768 (under dates 11 and 12 Sept.).

arrangements were finally concluded, the envoy took his departure, again in great state. If a treaty was to be drawn up, the scribe usually came to the envoy's residence on the evening of the same day or the next morning to prepare the text and deliver the return letters and presents for the Governor of Melaka.¹⁷¹

The lengthy descriptions of Dutch missions to Perak in the Misa Melayu suggest the prestige a court acquired by entertaining the representatives of the Raja of Melaka, and Raja Culan takes care to assure his audience that they "were welcomed according to adat."¹⁷² With the signing of the treaty in 1746, a new relationship was established between the VOC and the Perak court which was upheld and supported by the diplomatic ceremony that Malays held dear. The Dutch showed that they were willing to deal with Perak within the framework of an already established idiom. Court hierarchy was strictly observed in such matters as the phrasing of letters, the value of presents, and the cannon fired when the ruler or his nobles visited the fort. The ruler, for example, received eleven cannon shots, the Raja Muda nine, and the Orang Kaya Besar only five.¹⁷³

170. KA 2885 OB 1761, Meyer to Boelen, 7 Feb. 1759.

171. These presents were usually tin, but sometimes more unusual items. In 1749 Sultan Iskandar sent two books and three cocks. KA 2654 OB 1751, letter from Paduka Sri Sultan Camar Chah to Fliesholt, enclosed in missive Albinus to Batavia, 15 Feb. 1750, fo. 149. The following year Sultan Muzafar sent "519 lbs. of tin and a male slave." KA 2673 OB 1752, Resolutions, 29 June 1750, fo. 228.

172. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 106.

173. KA 3446 OB 1780, Meyer to de Bruijn, 9 Dec. 1779; KA 3474 OB 1781, Meyer to de Bruijn, 4 Sept. 1779. Governor Dekker, who had been concerned about unnecessary expenditure on gifts, was also annoyed

When envoys brought a letter to Melaka from the new ruler of Perak in 1765, it was received with great pomp. The envoys bore the letters from Sultan Mahmud and his nobles into the Council Room on a silver salvar covered with a yellow damask cloth. As they walked in, three musket and thirteen cannon shots were fired from the bulwarks of the fort. The envoys were then seated on the Governor's left hand on "three suitable chairs," and the letters were read.

A few unimportant remarks were then exchanged, after which the envoys stood up and were conducted by Licencemaster Cramer to the steps of the balcony.¹⁷⁴

On the morning of their departure, the envoys were once more received by the Melaka Council, "the same ceremonial being observed as when they came."¹⁷⁵

173. (cont'd.)

with Meyer in 1758, when he felt that the resident had been excessively enthusiastic in the welcome he had given to the royal party. The total supply of gunpowder in the fort had been expended, and Meyer had been forced to buy up two hundred lbs. of locally produced gunpowder.

We have nothing against your honouring the king and principal nobles with a few marks of respect when they come downstream in the future; on the contrary, we specifically want this, so that by courteous and friendly treatment we can incline the hearts of the Perakese more and more towards the Company, but showing your respect to this extent is going too far, and is reckless, because the Perakese are fully conscious of your request [for gunpowder] and with similar behaviour a second time, you might find yourself without any means of defence . . . one must mistrust the natives in every respect.

KA 2827 OB 1759, Dekker to Meyer, 20 March 1758.

174. KA 3075 OB 1767, Melaka Resolutions, 30 Aug. 1765, fo. 233.

175. KA 3075 OB 1767, Melaka Resolutions, 12 Sept. 1765, fo. 254. Normally letters from the ruler were simply enclosed with those of the resident, and naturally on these occasions there was no ceremony.

The treaty signed in 1746 was seen by the Malays not as a passing flirtation with a minor princeling, but as a grand alliance with the most important European power in the area. Centuries before, Malay overlords had looked to China with hopes of beneficial results,¹⁷⁶ and Sultan Muza- far approached the VOC with the same expectations. He was fortunate in that his advances to the Dutch came at a time when the normal policy of non-interference had been somewhat modified under van Imhoff's adminis- tration. Melaka was encouraged to take a more active part in the poli- tics of the area, since van Imhoff did not stress neutrality as much as his predecessors had done.¹⁷⁷ As a result of the policies of Governor Albinus and his successors, the Dutch were drawn "more closely into the web of political rivalry in the Straits."¹⁷⁸ The treaty signed with Sultan Muza- far in 1746 was done so on the understanding that the Dutch would ensure the succession of Sultan Berkabat and oppose the claims of the Bugis-backed Raja Iskandar. This alliance, and the tangible evi- dence of Company support represented by the fort on Pangkor Island made Sultan Muza- far a formidable opponent.

For a time it appeared as if Raja Iskandar and his Bugis allies had been outmanoeuvred, and indeed, had it not been for a fortuitous

175. (cont'd.)

One notes merely the terse statement "Three Malay letters were read. . . ." KA 2592 OB 1748, Melaka Resolutions, 30 March 1746, fo. 208.

176. Wolters, The Fall of Srivijaya, pp. 37, 57.

177. Lewis, The Dutch East India Company, pp. 175, 181.

178. Ibid., p. 190.

event, the course of Perak history might well have been quite different. Raja Iskandar could well have disappeared into oblivion and have been remembered as simply one of a number of anak raja whose attempts to challenge the status quo were short-lived and unsuccessful. In October 1746, two months after the signing of the treaty, Verbrugge returned to Melaka unexpectedly to report that the old ruler's plans for the future had been completely undermined. His daughter's betrothed, Sultan Berkabat, the prince selected to rule Perak after Sultan Muzafar's death had murdered an Indian trader in Larut.¹⁷⁹ At a time when Sultan Muzafar was doing everything in his power to encourage Indians to come to Perak, this action was inexcusable, since it could well mean a real setback for the elephant trade. Without any equivocation, Sultan Muzafar broke off the betrothal and sent back the tanda pinang, the betrothal gifts.¹⁸⁰

As a result, the succession once more lay open. There were two possible choices for heir, both Sultan Muzafar's nephews. On the one side was Raja Iskandar, whom Sultan Muzafar disliked and on the other, Raja 'Alim, son of Sultan Muzafar's sister and a Kedah raja. According to the Misa Melayu, the latter had been a favourite with Sultan Muzafar in the court at Kuala Kangsar, and the rivalry between him and Raja Iskandar was strong.¹⁸¹ Both men, noted Albinus, had equal claims to

179. KA 2567 OB 1747, Albinus to Batavia, 9 Nov. 1746, fo. 450; KA 2592 OB 1748, Verbrugge's Report, 7 Dec. 1746, foll. 302-303.

180. Sultan Berkabat had given a gold-plated pending (an embossed plate of metal worn by a bride and bridegroom at weddings) and also a gold-mounted keris. Sultan Muzafar also demanded the return of the money and tin he had given Sultan Berkabat. KA 2592 OB 1748, Verbrugge's Report, 7 Dec. 1746, fo. 301.

the throne,¹⁸² but Raja Iskandar had already succeeded in banishing his cousin from the court and had already been named Raja Muda. His greatest advantage lay in the potential support he could command among the Selangor Bugis.¹⁸³ Sultan Mazafar, old and sick, knew his end was near, and was only too aware of the factionalism and even civil war which could arise if a ruler died with the succession uncertain. It was essential that Sultan Berkabat's place be filled. Raja Iskandar, seeing his uncle's predicament, did not hesitate to capitalise on his position, and a bargain was struck between the old ruler and his Raja Muda. Raja Iskandar would marry Raja Budak Rasul and be proclaimed as heir to the Perak throne; in return, he agreed to ensure that the Bugis left hilir Perak so that the elephant trade with the Indians could be carried out in peace.¹⁸⁴

1746, therefore, is a crucial year in Raja Iskandar's career. It is unfortunate that the available Dutch sources are not only incomplete but are in many places vague and confused, often raising more questions than they answer.¹⁸⁵ This is not really surprising, for Verbrugge had

181. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 29-30.

182. KA 2654 OB 1751, Albinus' Report on Melaka to van Heemskerck, 15 Feb. 1750, fo. 359.

183. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 30; KA 2567 OB 1747, Albinus to Batavia, 18 Aug. 1746, fo. 419.

184. KA 2592 OB 1748, Verbrugge's Report, 7 Dec. 1746, foll. 301-302; KA 2567 OB 1747, Albinus to van Imhoff, 9 Nov. 1746, fo. 450-451.

185. The Register of Papers sent to Batavia in 1746-7 to Batavia gives some idea of the gaps in the present collection in The Hague. KA 2567 OB 1747, Register of Papers.

found himself thrust into the midst of an extremely complex situation, the details of which he did not fully understand. This confusion is reflected in the missives sent to Melaka from Batavia, and even four years later, Governor Albinus was still uncertain about the internal relationships within the Perak royal family.¹⁸⁶ Yet it is clear that by the end of 1746, Raja Iskandar had consolidated his position. He had been promised the daughter of Sultan Muzafar in marriage and had been designated heir to the throne, a step only rarely taken in Malay states.¹⁸⁷ He appeared so totally in control of affairs that the Dutch began to refer to him as "the King of Perak, Raja Aschandhaer."¹⁸⁸ His reconciliation with Sultan Muzafar had transformed him into the heir to the throne, future son-in-law to the ruler, to whom the court should give unquestioning loyalty. Some members of Sultan Muzafar's following who had gone upstream with him to Kuala Kangsar found this volte face impossible, and the Misa Melayu hints at drastic changes in the composition of the court. All those who refused to reconcile themselves to the new regime under the domination of the Raja Muda were dismissed. Among these individuals were such notable figures as the Orang Empat Besar, including the Bendahara who was descended from the royal house of Kedah and who would therefore have had connections with the Minangkabau and Sultan Berkabat.¹⁸⁹ The

186. KA 2654 OB 1751, Albinus' Report to van Heemskerck, 15 Feb. 1750, foll. 358-359.

187. Although the Raja Muda was normally elected as successor, the actual choice was not usually made until after the ruler's death.

188. KA 2567 OB 1747, Albinus to Batavia, 6 Nov. 1746, fo. 440.

189. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 23, 26; see below, p. 119.

Bendahara, Orang Kaya Besar, Temenggong and Menteri were all replaced by new appointees.¹⁹⁰ Dutch sources reinforce the view of a court dominated by "this Bugis-inclined prince," who had gradually won the entire assembly over to his side, with the exception of the Bendahara, who had in consequence been dismissed.¹⁹¹

In his new position, Raja Iskandar assumed a more prominent role in relations with the Dutch, directing many administrative matters on behalf of his ailing uncle. As a result, Perak policy towards the VOC underwent a marked change. This change was so pronounced that in December 1746, Verbrugge reported that there now appeared to be little likelihood of holding the court to the recently concluded treaty.¹⁹² Raja Iskandar's hostility towards the Dutch had been openly expressed on a number of occasions. At one point he declared that the entire contract would be cancelled unless Verbrugge credit the ruler with the delivery of one hundred bahara of tin, although the Dutch claimed only seventy had been bought.¹⁹³ On another occasion, Raja Iskandar argued that the Company itself should pay for the transportation of tin from the ulu down to the VOC post.¹⁹⁴ Even more than his uncle he pressed for the continuation of Indian trade, and when Verbrugge asked if he intended to answer

190. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 26.

191. KA 2567 OB 1747, Albinus to Batavia, 18 Aug. 1746, fo. 419; KA 2592 OB 1748, Albinus to Batavia, 9 Jan. 1747, fo. 10; 3 March 1747, fo. 302.

192. KA 2592 OB 1748, Albinus to Batavia, 9 Jan. 1747, foll. 9-10.

193. KA 2592 OB 1748, Verbrugge's Report, 7 Dec. 1746, fo. 302.

194. Ibid., foll. 304, 307.

the Governor's letter, the Raja Muda gave a "proud answer . . . saying that this was not necessary."¹⁹⁵ Little tin was being delivered, and in Verbrugge's opinion, Raja Iskandar had adopted this policy of obstructionism in a deliberate effort to discourage the Dutch from building the proposed fort on Tanjung Putus.¹⁹⁶

Raja Iskandar's conviction that the VOC treaty was a mistake was shared by a considerable number of prominent people within Perak. Firstly, the contract had brought about a drastic change in a well-established trading pattern. Although perahu from the neighbouring areas--Riau, Selangor, Kedah, and the east coast of Sumatra--continued to come to Perak, the Dutch monopoly of tin meant that there had been a marked decline in the number of foreign traders. After July 1746, "legal trade" (that is, trade dealing in goods approved by the VOC) was limited to opium, cloth, small goods and household necessities.¹⁹⁷ Much of this

195. Ibid., fo. 304.

196. Ibid., fo. 305-306.

197. A typical example of the goods sold and bought by the people of Perak (apart from tin) is seen in the cargo of a Nakhoda Assan, who arrived in Melaka on June 2, 1774 in a pencalang (trading ship). His crew consisted of sixteen men, and his brought 3½ koyan unhusked rice, 300 ganting of husked rice, 600 bundles of rattans, 1100 pieces of cane. He left on the 10 July with 3 koyan of salt, 4 pikul of powdered sugar, 5 pikul of gambier, 3 pieces of cloth, 13 pieces of Chinese cloth, two iron cannon, 10 parang and 1½ pikul of Javanese tobacco. KA 3335 OB 1776, Incoming and departing ships, 1774, under dates 2 June and 10 July.

Another example of the kind of local transactions made by Perak traders is seen in a trading trip made by the nephew of the Laksamana in 1793. He left for Penang in a perahu with five men, carrying a cargo of betelnut and salted fish, which he sold in Penang. With the money thus obtained, he bought sugar cane in Kuala Muda, which was re-sold in Penang. The Nakhoda then bought a cargo of pots and jars in Kedah, with which he returned home. SSR G34/6 FWCP 1 Aug. 1794 (Court case, 21 Jan. 1794).

was now paid for in cash, since the Dutch monopoly removed the article of barter which was most in demand. In the words of Raja Culan, "After this, people could no longer take tin out of the river for export, but all was given to the Dutch and traders took reals with them on their voyages."¹⁹⁸ Many resented the restrictions on trade implicit in the treaty, and felt that the Dutch emphasis on their own profits was completely at variance with Malay interests.

Secondly, the Dutch contract had severely damaged Perak's trading links with Indians from the Coromandel coast, who for generations had come with cloth and had taken away tin and elephants. Sultan Muzafar himself had continued to press for Dutch agreement to his proposal that Indian merchants should be allowed to exchange cloth for elephants, and Verbrugge reported that, even at the signing of the contract, "nothing else was heard than that the king would gladly see the Moors come again to buy elephants."¹⁹⁹ Attempts by Sultan Muzafar to encourage some of the Indian ships docking in Kedah to come to Perak had been of no avail. Without the possibility of obtaining tin, Perak's attraction was considerably lessened.²⁰⁰

Thirdly, many Perak Malays objected strongly to selling their tin for ducatoons, as specified in the treaty, for they realised this form of payment was dictated by the Company's own interests. When the Dutch

198. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 29.

199. KA 2592 OB 1748, Verbrugge's Report, 7 Dec. 1746, fo. 305; Albinus to Batavia, 5 March 1747, fo. 91.

200. KA 2592 OB 1748, Albinus to Batavia, 13 Oct. 1747, fo. 471.

had first begun trading in the Indonesian archipelago, they found that the most popular currency was the Spanish real, which had been customarily used by the Portuguese. The Dutch adopted the real as a form of payment, but, because of its popularity, faced the endemic problem of maintaining a sufficient supply. The VOC struck no coins of its own in the archipelago during the seventeenth century, although some were imported from Holland. To counter the growing shortage of reals, however, the Company later minted its own coinage and introduced ducats, lion dollars, rijksdaalders, Dutch shillings, double and single stuivers, Indian rupees, and ducatoons as alternative payment.²⁰¹ The reputation of these currencies was not high. In 1711 an Englishman in Melaka remarked that Dutch "liondollars" were sometimes found to be unacceptable in China, and he complained that other coinage circulating in Melaka was also of little value. "To carry [them] from that place would be a great disadvantage, for they are base silver and not worth near what they pass for."²⁰² The ducatoon, though of silver, was one of those currencies minted by the VOC for the Company's own use, and was thus of limited value outside the Dutch sphere of influence. On the other hand, the Spanish real, of Mexican or Spanish American silver, was highly esteemed not only throughout Asia, but in Europe.²⁰³ Naturally the Dutch were

201. Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch-Indie (The Hague, n.d.), II, 588-619; C. Scholten, The Coins of the Dutch Overseas Territories, 1601-1948 (Amsterdam, 1953), pp. 33, 36, 44, 58-59.

202. Lockyer, An Account, p. 69.

203. V. T. Harlow, The Founding of the Second British Empire, 1763-1793 (London, 1952), I, 4, 65-67.

anxious to see ducatoons accepted by Perak tin suppliers rather than the precious reals, but the Malays were perfectly aware of the relative value of the different coins. On any important occasion in the Perak court, for example, such as a wedding or a funeral, gifts or alms were always given in the form of reals rather than the other currencies available.²⁰⁴

There was also a strong faction at court which resented the loss of trading connections in Selangor and Kedah which had resulted from the Dutch treaty. An arrangement with Selangor, they argued, would mean renewed traffic not only with the Bugis themselves, but with the English country traders who were so numerous there. The price of their cloth was much cheaper than that delivered by the Company, and they were willing to sell on credit.²⁰⁵ Other members of the Assembly wished to see the trading ties with Kedah re-established, for the ports to the north opened the doors to all the trade of the east. In Malay texts from Kedah, this period is remembered as one in which Indian, Arabic, Portuguese, Dutch and English vessels crowded in the Kedah harbour to trade.²⁰⁶ Dutch records reinforce this, and describe how ships from Amoy, Siam, Cambodia, Coromandel, Bengal and Surat came there to sell salt, cloth, and other goods for the tin which was now in such high demand.²⁰⁷

204. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 95.

205. KA 2592 OB 1748, Verbrugge's Report, 7 Dec. 1746, foll. 297-300; KA 2445, Batavia to Heeren XVII, 5 April 1743, fo. 1737.

206. Wan Yahya bin Muhammad Taib, Salasilah atau Tawarikh Kerajaan Kedah (Penang, 1913), p. 5.

207. KA 2634 OB 1750, Albinus to Batavia, 10 Aug. 1749, foll. 315-316.

This resentment was shared by the rulers of Selangor and Kedah, who were openly hostile at the loss of a lucrative market. For the Bugis, access to Perak's tin had been "the aorta of their trade with the English," and the signing of the treaty in July had merely served to fan their resentment.²⁰⁸ Their response to the Dutch trading threat was quick. Rumours had already circulated of Bugis plans for an attack, and by August it was reported that in Selangor Bugis ships were lying in readiness for an expedition which would drive the Dutch away from Pangkor. It was also rumoured that Sultan Muhammad Jiwa of Kedah was involved.²⁰⁹ He was angry because two hundred bahara of tin he had bought previously had been seized by Daeng Cellak, and he now claimed recompense from Sultan Muzafar. Sultan Muhammad was also suffering economically because Perak tin was no longer reaching the Kedah market, where it had formerly been a principal attraction to foreign traders.²¹⁰

In his December report, Verbrugge told the Melaka Council that Dutch difficulties in Perak were compounded by Sultan Muzafar's change of attitude. Only a few months before he had been an ardent supporter of the VOC alliance, but he now saw little reason for maintaining it. The modus vivendi between himself and Raja Iskandar had brought about a more stable political situation in Perak and had led to the withdrawal of the Bugis from the hilir area. Yet much to the Governor's relief, the treaty survived for several reasons. In the first place, a group of

208. KA 2567 OB 1747, Albinus to Batavia, 18 Aug. 1746, fo. 422.

209. KA 2592 OB 1748, Melaka Resolutions, 10 Sept. 1746, fo. 282.

210. KA 2567 OB 1747, Albinus to Batavia, 18 Aug. 1747, fo. 422.

orang besar within the assembly actively advocated retention of the alliance, despite the undoubted restrictions it entailed. These were the men who had access to large supplies of tin, and depended on a peaceful and settled climate in which they could bring their tin downstream and trade unhindered. Among this group it was generally believed that a contract with the VOC and a Dutch lodge in Perak would serve as a stabilising influence in the country's economy and lead to an improvement in the trade which the Dutch were told had been disturbed in recent years.²¹¹ A fort near kuala Perak, they argued, would ensure that all the tin, except that produced in and around the Larut area, would have no other outlet than through the Perak River, especially if patrols were instituted. In an effort to shore up Dutch resolve, this group furnished Verbrugge with a list of goods which the Dutch would be able to sell in Perak, and they themselves guaranteed that, after the fort was established and the traders from Selangor and Kedah excluded from the Perak market, the Company would be able to dispose of a hundred corgie of cloth per annum.²¹² It was this group which finally gained ascendancy in the Assembly, and with the argument that the VOC was an asset, persuaded Sultan Muzafar and Raja Iskandar to agree to the continuation of the treaty.

In the second place, the Company itself was prepared to bend on several issues. On Verbrugge's recommendation, it was agreed that Indian merchants should be allowed to come to Perak to trade cloth for elephants without any hindrance whatever and, perhaps more importantly, the Dutch

211. KA 2592 OB 1748, Verbrugge's Report, 6 Dec. 1746, foll. 304-305.

212. Ibid., foll. 305-306. Pack or corgie = 20-22 pieces of cloth.

would henceforth pay for the tin only with Spanish reals. The Perak ruler had also asked that the Dutch bring down the tin at their own expense, although Verbrugge did not agree with this, regarding the trip upstream as dangerous. As far as Indian trade and the reals were concerned, however, he advocated compromise, because "tin is needed so much that everything they propose must be observed."²¹³

In the third place, both Sultan Muzafar and Raja Iskandar had come to realise the potentiality of this new alliance with the Europeans. It could not only serve as a prop to the ruler's authority, as the most powerful weapon in his arsenal, but also as a means of guaranteeing a frequently threatened revenue. Between 1747 and 1749 the advantages of the VOC treaty from the ruler's viewpoint were made patently clear.

In early 1747 Perak's security was threatened by the disgraced and humiliated Sultan Berkabat, who was not prepared to relinquish his claims to the Perak throne without a struggle. When Raja Iskandar threatened him with death, Sultan Berkabat fled to Larut, which had previously been given to him as a fief.²¹⁴ Far from the centre of control at Pulau Tiga, with access to his own supplies of tin, he made preparations to attack Perak, finding a ready ally in the notorious Bugis adventurers, Daeng Matekko and his son Daeng Mencilak.²¹⁵ His open chal-

213. KA 2592 OB 1748, Verbrugge's Report, 7 Dec. 1746, foll. 307-308.

214. *Ibid.*, fo. 302. R. J. Wilkinson, The Incidents of Malay Life (Kuala Lumpur, 1908), p. 22, notes that betrothal was one occasion on which Malays would brook no insult, and broken engagements off too often led to bloodshed.

215. KA 2592 OB 1748, Albinus to Batavia, 3 March 1747, foll. 90-91.

lence to Raja Iskandar could not be ignored, for Sultan Berkabat was no mean enemy and he was allied with experienced fighters. Further, he was contending for what he saw as an established right, his succession to the throne, which he claimed by virtue of his betrothal and his previous adoption as Sultan Muzafar's son. The Dutch records mention little about the composition of his following within Perak, but it appears from the Misa Melayu that he enjoyed extensive support among the chiefs of the ulu, many of whom would have remembered him from former days when he had been a favourite at Kuala Kangsar.²¹⁶ As son of the great hero Raja Kecil, Sultan Berkabat was able to call on the loyalty of the Minangkabau community in Perak, especially as his ally, Daeng Matekko, had himself been a close supporter of Raja Kecil and was father-in-law to Raja Muhammad of Siak, another son of Raja Kecil.²¹⁷

215. (cont'd.)

Matekko was somewhat of an outsider among the Bugis in the Malay world, being from Wajo' rather than Bone. His enmities towards those migrants from Bone and Soppeng stemmed from quarrels between the two states in their homeland, and accounts for his alliances with the Minangkabau. For some time he had been established in Selangor and Linggi, but being driven out, withdrew to Siak where he married his daughter to Raja Muhammad, son of Raja Kecil. With his Minangkabau allies he embarked on an unsuccessful attack on Selangor and Linggi, prior to his alliance with Sultan Berkabat. Siak Chronicle, fo. 453, line 2; KA 2086 OB 1732, du Quesne to Batavia, 12 March 1731, fo. 2; 9 Nov. 1731, foll. 19-20; and Reg. 28 Jan. 1732, foll. 7-8; KA 2427 OB 1742, de Laver to Batavia, 14 Nov. 1741, fo. 102; KA 2462 OB 1743, de Laver to Batavia, 18 March 1741, foll. 10-11; 24 Feb. 1742, foll. 49-51.

216. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 27-28.

217. Raja Culan refers briefly to Minangkabau living in Perak. Ibid., p. 173. The Megat family in Perak claim descent from the Pagar Ruyong dynasty of Minangkabau, and Cik Gu'Ahmad Manjang of Kota Lama Kiri, Perak, himself an amateur historian and descended from

Both Sultan Berkabat and Raja Iskandar realised the potential role that the Dutch could play in this situation, and the former attempted to safeguard his position by asking the Company to remain neutral in any conflict. With promises of future favour in the tin trade should he be victorious, Sultan Berkabat also asked for assistance with gunpowder and shot.²¹⁸ Raja Iskandar, too, saw the Dutch as a source of possible help, and he requested that a ship be sent for use against the attackers.²¹⁹ When Albinus did not respond, Sultan Muzafar also wrote to Melaka, stressing the economic implications of Sultan Berkabat's presence in Larut; and his desire for Dutch protection:

. . . a letter from the King of Perak, Paduka Sri Sultan Muzafar, written to the Governor assuring him that he will hold to the treaty concluded with the Honourable Company in every way. To ensure this he asked not only that a ship might be sent over there to remain anchored, while another carries tin backwards and forwards to Melaka, but also that the Company will send from here Chinese, Moors etc. to live over there and to carry out trade. He also asks that the Europeans once again take possession of and built a house on the spot previously designated [at Tanjung Putus] with the aim of blockading all the tributaries of the river so that no tin can be taken out any more and bad people cannot cause any difficulties.²²⁰

Now, he said, it was said everywhere that the Company had come to "take

217. (cont'd.)

the Megats, told me that his ancestors supported Sultan Berkabat against Raja Iskandar. Personal conversation, 26 Nov. 1973. It is also possible that Raja Kecil's supposed descent from Sultan Mahmud of Johor could have won his son some adherents.

218. KA 2592 OB 1748, Albinus to Batavia, 9 Jan. 1747, foll. 9-11.

219. Ibid.

220. Ibid., 5 March 1747, foll. 90-91.

care" of Perak (voeden), and without its aid he was helpless. He requested that assistance be sent against Sultan Berkabat and his Bugis allies who were now attacking upper Perak from Larut, in the area where Sultan Muzafar had previously gathered "a thousand bahara of tin."²²¹

The fears of Raja Iskandar and Sultan Muzafar were borne out, for on February 24, 1747, Sultan Berkabat attacked the Dutch fort on Pulau Pangkor, striking at the principal source of the ruler's new strength, the VOC alliance. Without Dutch support, Perak would be defenceless. Backed by a varied force of Minangkabau, Bugis and Orang Laut, Sultan Berkabat was confident of success, but he underestimated Dutch strength. His followers, unsuccessful in their attempt to capture the post, were driven off.²²² Sultan Berkabat's accurate reading of the ability of Perak forces, however, was attested by his victory over Raja Iskandar. The latter had been sent to attack the invaders at the kuala, but in the ensuing battle was roundly defeated and lost thirty men and several cannon.²²³ On the other hand, the Dutch garrison at Pangkor, only sixty strong, had stood fast and had succeeded in killing three of the enemy.²²⁴

The defeat of the Perak force was in marked contrast to the rout

221. Ibid., fo. 91. The Misa Melayu also refers to an attack by Sultan Berkabat in the ulu, but in this battle Raja Iskandar was victorious. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 28.

222. KA 2592 OB 1748, Albinus to Batavia, 14 April 1747, foll. 443-444.

223. Ibid., 13 Oct. 1747, fo. 470.

224. Ibid., 14 April 1747, fo. 444.

of Sultan Berkabat's men at Pangkor, and the entire episode served to reinforce Sultan Muzafar's resolve to maintain the alliance at all costs. With the realisation that it was an added resource on which they could draw, both he and Raja Iskandar attempted to persuade the Governor to join with them in a campaign to evict Sultan Berkabat from his stronghold in Larut. In a letter received in Melaka in October, Sultan Muzafar once again requested that the Company patrol the area to prevent Sultan Berkabat's smuggling. Indeed, he added, this prince could be ousted from Larut altogether if the Dutch would attack from the seaward side while Perak forces fell upon him from the land.²²⁵

Governor Albinus was naturally averse to becoming involved in an affair of this nature, but he showed that the Company was fully prepared to protect their interests in Perak. In July 1747 he had sent two ships to patrol Kuala Perak. These, he said, would openly demonstrate that, should any attempt be made to disturb Perak's peace and security, its enemies "shall encounter the might of the VOC, which is always ready to ward off any violence that might threaten its allies."²²⁶ Sultan Muzafar obviously regarded this as a guarantee of protection, and was even more pleased with Albinus' agreement to commit six ships and a contingent of men to patrols around Larut, whence Sultan Berkabat had retreated. With a force of about seventy men, he made continuous raids into Perak territory, capturing tin deliveries which were then sent on to Kedah.²²⁷

225. *Ibid.*, 13 Oct. 1747, fo. 470.

226. *Ibid.*, Albinus to King of Perak, 31 July 1747, fo. 688-689.

227. KA 2610 OB 1749, Albinus to Batavia, 30 Jan. 1748, fo. 15.

In 1750 Governor van Heemskerck noted that "the king has learnt with singular pleasure of the blockade of the River Larut and is now certain that no tin from his country will go elsewhere." Indeed, the old ruler had intended to go himself and inspect the situation there, had it not been for fear of involvement with Kedah traders in the area.²²⁸

As far as Sultan Muzafar was concerned, the Dutch patrols provided an insurance against smuggling and the loss of royal revenue this involved. Furthermore, Perak now seemed completely safe from any Bugis attack. In January 1748, Albinus decided to move the garrison from the post on Pangkor to the site at Tanjung Putus which had been given to the Company in 1746. Once again, Sultan Muzafar was delighted, and in 1750 he told the resident that "now he feared no one, while the Company keeps such a great strength and maintained such a close watch over the river."²²⁹ There were even hopes for the elephant trade. Albinus had urged his superiors to find some solution, and in February 1751 Batavia issued an order to the Ministers at Nagapatnam, directing them to encourage local traders to go to Perak and buy elephants there. As a further inducement, it was announced that no tolls would be levied on these animals.²³⁰

228. KA 2654 OB 1751, van Heemskerck to Batavia, 6 Oct. 1750, fo. 398.

229. KA 2673 OB 1752, Fliesholt's Report, 7 May 1750, fo. 211. The decision to move the fort was made partly as a result of the attack in 1747, and partly as a result of the endemic sickness among the men there, resulting from the bad water. KA 2592 OB 1748, Albinus to Batavia, 14 April 1747, fo. 446; KA 2610 OB 1749, Albinus to Batavia, 30 Jan. 1748, foll. 18-21, 29.

230. KA 2567 OB 1747, Albinus to Batavia, 18 Aug. 1746, fo. 415; KA 2673 OB 1752, van Heemskerck to Batavia, 20 Feb. 1751, fo. 24; KA 2712 OB 1754, van Heemskerck to Batavia, 14 July 1753, fo. 276.

Raja Iskandar had also become convinced of the necessity of maintaining the Dutch alliance. His rival, Sultan Berkabat, was still in evidence in Larut, where Dutch patrols had been only partially successful in controlling Sultan Berkabat's activities. The tiny inlets, bays and mangroves made effective patrols impossible, and to avoid the Dutch cruisers, the people of Larut also cut a path through the jungle to the ulu tin mines. Buffalos and elephants brought the tin down to the headwaters of the Larut tributaries, where small perahu brought it to the kuala. From thence it was transported to Kedah, only fifteen miles away.²³¹ Sultan Berkabat, meanwhile, had strengthened his position by marrying a Kedah princess and had thus allied himself with one of the most outspoken opponents of the VOC alliance, Sultan Muhammad Jiwa of Kedah. He continued to live in Larut until 1750, and his presence there provided irrefutable arguments supporting retention of the treaty.²³²

But what spoke even louder in favour of the VOC connection was the hostility of another anak raja, Raja 'Alim, Raja Iskandar's cousin, who was also unwilling to lay aside his claims to the Perak throne. The account given in the Misa Melayu indicates that the court regarded Raja

231. KA 2673 OB 1752, Albinus to Batavia, 20 Feb. 1751, foll. 220-222. Tin is extremely heavy. An elephant could carry about one bahara, and a buffalo about half a bahara. Anderson, Political Considerations, p. 171.

232. There appears to have been a hereditary streak of insanity in Raja Kecil's family. He was reported to be insane in 1743, and in 1750 the Melaka governor reported that Sultan Berkabat had contracted the "family sickness, that is, foolishness." In 1750 he left Larut to seek a cure in Kedah. KA 2522 OB 1745, de Laver to Batavia, 27 Dec. 1743, fo. 215; KA 2673 OB 1752, van Heemskerk to Batavia, 20 Feb. 1751, fo. 222.

'Alim's challenge as serious. According to this text, Raja 'Alim had incurred Raja Iskandar's anger by his blatant refusal to take up arms or organise resistance against Sultan Berkabat.²³³ Of greater concern was the rumour reported by the Dutch that Raja 'Alim was conspiring with the ruler of Kedah to seize the Perak throne. Although Raja Iskandar was betrothed to Sultan Muzafar's daughter, and had already been declared heir apparent, Raja 'Alim was thought by many to have equal claims and himself had a sizeable following within the court, headed by the Laksamana and Syahbandar.²³⁴

In addition, Raja 'Alim had aroused Sultan Muzafar's hostility because of his reported involvement in smuggling to Kedah. Both Raja Iskandar and his uncle decided to exploit the Dutch alliance as a means of eliminating a dangerous rival. In July 1749 the resident received a letter from Raja Iskandar complaining about "the activities of Cik 'Alim," whom he accused of theft.

He is very wicked, for he has no other thought than to steal, and therefore I am very angry with him. If the Captain feels any affection for me, I think it advisable to send him away from here, or to kill him, together with Cik 'Asil.²³⁵

At the same time, Sultan Muzafar wrote to the Governor, levelling similar accusations against Raja 'Alim "the rival for this kingdom," who, he said, was not only conspiring against the Raja Muda but was smuggling tin to Kedah.²³⁶

²³³. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 30.

²³⁴. Harrison, "Malacca in the Eighteenth Century," pp. 27-28; KA 2634 OB 1750 Albinus to Batavia, 10 Aug. 1749, fo. 316.

Albinus lost no time in making a decision. On 3 July it was resolved to order the resident to place both Raja 'Alim and his father-in-law, Cik 'Asil, under arrest, and to send them to Melaka. If he considered it expedient, the Laksamana should also be detained, since he was known to be a friend of Raja 'Alim and "a thief and very pernicious person."²³⁷ There were several reasons underlying the Governor's decision. Firstly, he hoped to prevent the development of an alliance between Raja 'Alim and the ruler of Kedah. The latter had long been opposed to the Dutch post in Perak and might be tempted to support a rebellion aimed at placing Raja 'Alim, to whom he was related, on the Perak throne. This would guarantee Kedah's control of the tin trade.²³⁸ "He is only waiting," wrote Albinus in 1750, "for a suitable occasion to start a serious attack on our position, and has already promised to divide up the tin with the mercenary and fickle people of Perak, promising them a better price."²³⁹ If Sultan Muhammad, or even the Bugis, chose to support Raja 'Alim, it would certainly elicit some response in Perak, for Raja 'Alim was no petty chief and commanded widespread loyalty.²⁴⁰

Furthermore, Sultan Muzafar was now eighty years old, and it was

235. KA 2654 OB 1751, Albinus to Batavia, 16 Feb. 1750. Letter from "Paduka Sru Sultan Camar Chah" to Resident Fliesholt, foll. 148-149.

236. KA 2654 OB 1751, Albinus to Batavia, 16 Feb. 1750, fo. 147.

237. Ibid.

238. Ka 2634 OB 1750, Albinus to Batavia, 10 Aug. 1749, fo. 316.

239. Harrison, "Malacca in the Eighteenth Century," p. 27.

240. KA 2634 OB 1750, Albinus to Batavia, 19 Oct. 1749, fo. 359.

apparent that the Dutch must think in terms of policies which might be adopted by his successor. In view of his past opposition, Raja Iskandar could well turn back to his former allies, the Bugis, and refute the contract made by his uncle. In his report to his successor, Pieter van Heemskerck in 1750, Albinus gave the following advice:

Considering the advanced age of the King and our uncertainty with regard to the Raja Muda's methods as a ruler, it would be advisable to retain Raja 'Alim under house arrest within this fortress. . . . The purpose of this would be to keep the Raja Muda in a state of fear lest, if he broke the contract or attempted other deceitful evasions, the Company should place Raja 'Alim on the throne. . . . By this means, at any rate, it would be possible to keep the Raja Muda under better control and in greater respect for the Company after the King dies. Otherwise in response to others or in his own interest, he might change a little, as is the nature of the Malays.²⁴¹

Finally, as long as Raja 'Alim remained in the Company's charge, his adherents would hope for his ultimate return and oppose any attempt by Raja Iskandar to ally with the Bugis and attack the fort, with the expectation that by performing this service for the Dutch, Raja 'Alim would be installed as ruler.²⁴²

The means by which the arrest was accomplished are not disclosed in the Dutch records, but following a further order on September 26, Raja 'Alim and Cik 'Asil were transported to Melaka, where they arrived in mid October.²⁴³

241. Harrison, "Malacca in the Eighteenth Century," pp. 27-28.

242. KA 2712 OB 1754, van Heemskerck to Batavia, 17 March 1753, fo. 253.

243. KA 2634 OB 1759, Albinus to Batavia, 10 Feb. 1750, fol. 147, 19 Oct. 1749, fo. 357. According to Raja Culan, the Dutch Captain arrested Raja 'Alim one day when he came to the lodge to exchange tin. "He

Raja Iskandar, unaware of Albinus' ulterior motives, must have been highly gratified at the apparent Dutch willingness to support him against Raja 'Alim. By 1750 he could look back on several occasions when the Dutch had given him tangible assistance, and he was now completely won over to the contract. Perhaps the turning point in his attitude towards the alliance had been the Dutch victory over Sultan Berkat's forces in early 1747, followed by the commitment of further Company ships and men for patrols. In October of that year Albinus told Batavia that "the Raja Muda or heir to the throne is very pleased with the Company and promises to continue to maintain affairs on a good footing when he succeeds."²⁴⁴ The deportation of Raja 'Alim must have increased Raja Iskandar's goodwill towards the Dutch, and the Raja Muda's favour was particularly important in view of his growing importance in the government. In early 1748, by which time he was "administering the kingdom of Perak for his old father," Raja Iskandar repeated his intention of remaining loyal to the treaty concluded with the VOC.²⁴⁵ In the following year the Dutch sources record for the first time his use of the title "sultan," itself a mark of his high status and prestige within the court.²⁴⁶

243. (cont'd.)

was received by the Dutch and taken aboard their sloop, in which he was immediately conveyed to Melaka. Encik 'Asil, too, was subsequently seized by the Dutch and taken to Melaka. He was thrown into a dungeon and all those who remained submitted to Sultan Muzafar Syah." Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 31-32.

244. KA 2592 OB 1748, Albinus to Batavia, 13 Oct. 1747, fo. 472.

245. KA 2610 OB 1749, Albinus to Batavia, 21 March 1748, fo. 243.

With the support of Sultan Iskandar, the success of the contract appeared assured. To this point the tin collection had been proceeding smoothly and Albinus was justifiably proud of his achievement. In his retiring report to van Heemskerck, he recorded:

When I took over the administration of this government in 1745 . . . it was absolutely impossible to satisfy the requirements of the home government and those of the Indies. . . . I therefore began to give serious thought to the recovery of this trade. I gradually prepared the ground with Perak and just at the time when the Buginese had worked out a division of tin interests among the members of the court of that kingdom, I obtained an exclusive contract through a special envoy in the year 1746. . . . Since then this has been such a success that a good quantity of tin has been brought thither.²⁴⁷

As a result of these measures, Albinus added, he had been able to fulfil all the requirements for the European, Chinese and Surat markets, and still had supplies remaining in the warehouses of Perak and Melaka. "It is quite clear," he concluded, "that this tin trade depends mainly upon Perak and upon regular consignments from the hinterlands."²⁴⁸

The Governor had put some thought into the maintenance of satisfactory relations with Perak, constantly stressing the need for fair dealings and generous treatment of the Malays. Experience had shown, he that no contract could last unless the benefits of both parties were taken into consideration.²⁴⁹ Accordingly, he had chosen his representa-

246. KA 2654 OB 1751, Letter from Paduka Sri Sultan Camar Chah to Fliesholt, enclosed with Albinus to Batavia, 16 Feb. 1750, fo. 148.

247. Harrison, "Malacca in the Eighteenth Century," p. 26.

248. Ibid., p. 27.

249. KA 2634 OB 1750, Albinus to Batavia, 3 March 1749, fo. 61.

tives in Perak carefully²⁵⁰ and had consistently worked to gain the favour of Sultan Muzafar, Raja Iskandar and the principal nobles. The large amount of tin delivered during his period as governor attests his success.

Albinus left Melaka in 1750 and at first his successor, Pieter van Heemskerck, reaped the benefits of the previous relationship. In February 1751 he was able to report that "in Perak the collection of tin increases daily," and he had even been forced to send another ship to cope with deliveries.²⁵¹ By the middle of the year, however, the goodwill between Melaka and Perak had begun to sour. None of the problems were of van Heemskerck's making. As Melaka Syahbandar from 1741 to 1746 and head administrator from 1747 to 1749,²⁵² he had absorbed much of Albinus' attitude towards the Perak court. Like his predecessor, van Heemskerck worked hard to maintain amicable relations between the Company and the Perak ruler.²⁵³ But he had no control over such matters as the

250. For example, Johan Fliesholt was appointed in 1748 because he had long experience in Java, but was recalled in 1750 when he became ill. Albinus feared he might develop "a sort of melancholy" which would be regarded askance by the Malays. Albinus became very angry with Fliesholt when it was later disclosed that he had aroused Sultan Muzafar's annoyance. KA 2610 OB 1749, Albinus to Batavia, 30 Jan. 1748, foll. 15-16; KA 2634 OB 1750, Albinus to Batavia, 3 March 1749, fo. 63; KA 2654 OB 1751, Albinus to Batavia, 10 Feb. 1750, fo. 27; 6 Oct. 1750, foll. 399-400.

251. KA 2673 OB 1752, van Heemskerck to Batavia, 20 Feb. 1751, fo. 41. During the financial year 1750/51, Perak delivered 443, 979 lbs. of tin. KA 2673 OB 1752, 2nd Reg. van Heemskerck to Batavia, 26 Feb. 1752, fo. 20.

252. Resandt, De Gezaghebbers, pp. 221-222.

253. KA 2673 OB 1752, van Heemskerck to Batavia, 20 Feb. 1751, fo. 42.

supply of reals, and for several weeks in early 1751 he was unable to despatch sufficient amounts to Perak to pay for the large tin deliveries. The situation became so critical that the resident feared repercussions against him and his garrison. The resentment of tin suppliers in Perak had grown so great that they had given him an ultimatum: "no money, no contract."²⁵⁴

Van Heemskerck recognised the urgency of the situation and did his best to ease it. In April a large supply of reals were sent to Perak and in August he warned the Governor-General that "if Perak is not continually supplied with the desired coinage for the tin trade, and if the people are prevented by one means or another from taking their tin out, they could well try to break past using violence (following the sad example of 1651)."²⁵⁵ He also hoped to persuade the tin deliverers to accept goods in lieu of reals, but this proved impossible because of unfavourable Company prices.²⁵⁶

For the first time it became clear to Sultan Muzafar and Sultan Iskandar that their maintenance of the treaty might entail unforeseen disadvantages. Perak Malays had been prepared for the restrictions imposed by a monopoly, but not for Dutch inability to pay. Previously, most trading transactions had been carried out by barter in tin, and money had not therefore been considered a necessity. But now tin could only be sold to the Dutch, and Perak Malays were dependent on a steady

254. Ibid., 17 Aug. 1751, foll. 429-430.

255. Ibid., foll. 430-433.

256. Ibid., foll. 433-438.

supply of Spanish reals to buy their salt, cloth, pots and other items from incoming traders. Some delay in payment could be tolerated by the administration because the ruler did not have heavy expenses such as the maintenance of large fleets or armies. In later years Sultan Iskandar was able to use money from his own treasury in order to buy up his subjects' tin. Yet, although the actual machinery of government in Perak was not costly, most members of the court were responsible for the support of a large following in the same way that the anak raja depended on the ruler's kurnia or bounty. There came a point where reals were necessary both for the common man who wished to buy his salt and for the orang besar who needed to feed his household.

The shortage of reals in Perak was thus a matter of some concern, and while van Heemskerck was struggling to restore the former goodwill between Perak and the VOC he was faced with increasing antagonism from the Raja Muda, Sultan Iskandar, especially during the course of 1752. It was not until the following year, when a mission was sent to Perak, that the cause of this hostility was discovered. Albinus' decision to retain Raja 'Alim in Melaka and his recommendation that van Heemskerck should follow the same policy proved to be a gross miscalculation, for it merely served to rekindle Sultan Iskandar's suspicions about Dutch intentions. In 1749 Sultan Iskandar had asked the Governor to "get rid of Raja 'Alim, or to kill him" and had naturally been pleased when the Company placed his cousin under arrest. It was some time before he realised that Raja 'Alim was being kept by the VOC in Melaka as a state guest. This realisation brought immediate doubts as to the extent of

Dutch sincerity. Perak Malays explained Albinus' decision by pointing towards Raja 'Alim's acknowledged claim to the throne; obviously, they said, the VOC intended to depose Sultan Iskandar and place his cousin in Perak as ruler instead.²⁵⁷ This rumour spread throughout the country, gaining the more force because it was not so far from the truth, and because Raja 'Alim was known to be corresponding with his supporter, the Laksamana, in an effort to return to Perak.²⁵⁸ As van Heemskerck noted the following year, the question of Raja 'Alim's future had become "a thorn in [Sultan Iskandar's] foot."²⁵⁹

Suspicious of Dutch designs, Sultan Iskandar's attitude towards the alliance showed a marked change, and differences developed between him and his uncle over the favour the old man showed to the Company. In mid-1752 Sultan Mazafar signed a salt pact with the resident, giving the Dutch the monopoly of salt sales within Perak. Sultan Iskandar openly declared that he would revoke this after he succeeded.²⁶⁰ His distrust of the VOC became so great that he made no secret of his intention to evict the Dutch when he came to power.²⁶¹ Sultan Muzafar still clung to

257. KA 2712 OB 1754, van Heemskerck to Batavia, 14 July 1753, foll. 273-274.

258. KA 2673 OB 1752, Van Heemskerck to Batavia, 6 Oct. 1751, foll. 523-524; Raja 'Alim to Laksamana to Perak, foll. 525-526; Laksamana to Raja 'Alim, fo. 526.

259. KA 2712 OB 1752, van Heemskerck to Batavia, 1 Sept. 1753, fo. 291.

260. *Ibid.*, 31 Jan. 1753, fo. 89. The letter from Resident Essche telling of this pact was dated 24 May 1752 and arrived in Melaka on June 14. The date given by Heeres (*Corpus Diplomaticum*, BK1 96 (1938), 580) must be incorrect. The Hijrah date, 7 Rajab 1164 (1 June 1751) is also incorrect.

the alliance which he had helped to forge, but as the old ruler's hold on the last remains of his former authority became increasingly weaker, Sultan Iskandar assumed a corresponding degree of power. The relationship between them deteriorated rapidly, and during Sultan Muzafar's final illness, Sultan Iskandar was not even permitted to come into his presence.²⁶² Melaka had little cause for optimism about the future of the Dutch treaty, for in September 1752, Sultan Muzafar died and Sultan Iskandar ascended the Perak throne and assumed control of the government in fact as well as name.²⁶³ With his accession, Sultan Iskandar ushered in a new era of VOC-Perak relations.

261. KA 2692 OB 1753, van Heemskerck to Batavia, 12 Oct. 1752, foll. 15-16.

262. KA 2673 OB 1753, van Heemskerck to Batavia, 12 Oct. 1753, fo. 17.

263. *Ibid.*, fo. 16 and Register of Papers, fo. 13; Melaka first heard of the death on September 30 by the Resident's letter of 19 Sept. A postscript, dated 24 September had been added, telling of the death of Sultan Muzafar and the accession of Sultan Iskandar.

Chapter III

SULTAN ISKANDAR AND THE DUTCH ALLIANCE

When Sultan Muzafar died in 1752, the future of the contract between Perak and the VOC hung in the balance. From the Malay point of view, several factors argued against renewal. Firstly, the lack of reals in 1751 had meant real economic hardship and for weeks at a time trade had been brought to a standstill.¹ Secondly, tin prices were rising and the English and Bugis were prepared to offer far more than the Dutch in order to obtain supplies of this metal. Sultan Muhammad Jiwa of Kedah claimed that at his ports tin could be sold for as much as 42 reals the bahara, and even the Melaka Governor admitted that "the exchange market for cloth, opium and other goods" was much better in Kedah than either Perak or Melaka.² The tin miners of Larut and ulu Perak found the lure of Kedah great. The resident himself acknowledged that the amounts many people delivered were so small that it was not worth the journey to bring their supplies down to Tanjung Putus, since the trip cost "many times their profits."³

1. KA 2673 OB 1752, van Heemskerck to Batavia, 17 Aug. 1751, foll. 430-435.

2. KA 2654 OB 1750, Albinus' Report on Melaka, 15 Feb. 1750, fo. 360.

3. KA 2673 OB 1752, 2nd Reg. Van Heemskerck to Batavia, 20 Feb. 1752, fo. 23.

The attraction of the Selangor market, too, was not lost on Perak Malays. By the beginning of 1752 smuggling was beginning to eat into Dutch profits.

In spite of the careful watch kept at our Perak fort, the cunning natives leave no way unexplored in order to deceive our guards. They bring their tin down in two or three slabs in fishing perahu, concealing them under nets and, under pretext of fishing, go past our fort to the mouth of the river. Here the tin is buried until the amount reaches a few bahara.

When a larger vessel came by, these caches were secretly taken on board and shipped to Selangor for sale to the Bugis or to English country traders.⁴

The Perak nobles had even greater reason to be antagonistic to the Dutch presence. Formerly, they had been accorded certain privileges in the purchase of salt, but after the pact made with the Dutch in May 1752 the price had been regularised and no distinction was made between buyers.⁵ This VOC monopoly of a much-used item also had far-reaching effects on the lives of the common people. The latter had previously bartered their own produce, fruit and vegetables, for salt⁶ but the Dutch would only sell in exchange for tin or reals. The general unacceptability of the salt pact was exacerbated by the knowledge that Sultan Muza-far had concluded it secretly, without the normal consultation with his court. While van Heemskerck had accepted the Malay document signed by

4. Ibid., foll. 22-23. The Dutch had found the patrolling so expensive that van Heemskerck had contemplated asking for exemption from the tolls specified in the contract. Ibid., fo. 24.

5. KA 2712 OB 1754, van Heemskerck to Batavia, 31 Jan. 1753, fo. 156.

6. Ibid.

the resident and Sultan Muzafar at a private meeting as legal and binding, the court regarded it as invalid.⁷

Sultan Iskandar was likewise aggrieved at the new salt pact, especially since few benefits would accrue to him personally. An initial two hundred reals had been given to Sultan Muzafar, but thereafter the ruler would receive only a koyan of salt per annum.⁸ The Chinese, on the other hand, were willing to pay a hundred of the much-desired reals yearly for the same monopoly, an offer far more attractive than the arrangement made with the Dutch.⁹ To these economic considerations were added Sultan Iskandar's own distrust of the Company's intentions. He became increasingly convinced that the Dutch were merely biding their time, waiting for an opportunity to depose him and install Raja 'Alim instead.¹⁰ Naturally apprehensive of Dutch moves should they hear of Sultan Muzafar's death, the Raja Muda did not despatch an official envoy to inform the Melaka Council of this event and even sent van Heemskerck a letter which he signed with his uncle's name.¹¹

The atmosphere of suspicion was not confined to Perak. News of the death of Sultan Muzafar and of his nephew's succession arrived in

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7. Ibid., foll. 274-276. For a translation of the salt pact, see Appendix E.
8. KA 2682 OB 1753, van Heemskerck to Batavia, 22 Oct. 1752, foll. 15-16 and Appendix E.
9. KA 2712 OB 1754, Van Heemskerck to Batavia, 31 Jan. 1753, fo. 155.
10. Ibid., 14 July 1753, foll. 273-274.
11. KA 2692 OB 1753, Register of Papers, fo. 13.

Melaka on September 30, 1752. Van Heemskerck immediately convened a special meeting of the Council specifically to discuss "this significant change in that kingdom . . . since it is feared that the long perceived hostile feelings of the new king shall now be shown openly."¹² The renewal of the tin treaty, the future of the salt pact and, indeed, the safety of the garrison itself were all at stake.

The new king . . . incited by, and with the help of, his rapacious Bugis following, could be spurred on to a further step, namely, that of disputing the Company's present price for tin, or possibly driving the Company out totally, a move which both Kedah and Selangor would be pleased to bring about.¹³

The Governor left nothing to chance. A message was sent to Batavia by a private trader in order to notify the Governor-General as speedily as possible. Van Heemskerck requested permission to reinforce the Perak fort, and he also wrote posthaste to the resident, instructing him to "keep a close, watchful eye on all the doings of the court" and to inform Melaka immediately of any further developments. Even the cruisers in Larut were placed on the alert.¹⁴

It was at this point that relations between Sultan Iskandar and the VOC were at their most vulnerable point. The treaty had not been ratified, and any whisper of hostility from either side might end hopes of renegotiation. This realisation was not lost on the small group within the Assembly who still supported Raja 'Alim's cause. They appre-

12. KA 2712 OB 1754, van Heemskerck to Batavia, 31 Jan. 1753, fol. 155.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid., foll. 155-156.

ciated the clear advantage that Sultan Iskandar's alliance with the Company had given him in his rivalry with his cousin, but they were also attuned to the implications of the present estrangement. Because of the credence so easily given to rumours, as well as Dutch dependency on information, it would not be difficult for them to inject further suspicion into the already tense atmosphere. Sultan Iskandar's enemies understood full well that rumours of attack which filtered through to the Council Room at Melaka or the royal balai in Perak could eradicate any possibility of the contract's renewal, and, if the situation were fully exploited, pave the way for Raja 'Alim's return. But the time to strike was now, while the treaty was in abeyance; to wait even a week might be too late.

The initiative for this bold effort to sabotage any new alliance between Sultan Iskandar and the Dutch came from one of the most powerful nobles in the Perak court, the Laksamana, Nakhoda Pasmah.¹⁵ According to Perak tradition, the Laksamana was the jurubatu, the ship's mate who sat in the bow at Kuala Perak.¹⁶ The office carried with it control "up-river as far as the tide can reach, downriver to the line where the surf breaks on the bar and the grey mullet come to the surface."¹⁷ He took care of war preparations in case of enemy attack and had "the superin-

15. Called Nachoda Posama in the Dutch records and Tun Pasmah in the Misa Melayu.

16. Winstedt and Wilkinson, "A History of Perak," p. 146; Ms. 46943 SOAS, foll. 4-5.

17. Winstedt and Wilkinson, "A History of Perak," p. 146. The bar refers to the sand banks outside Kuala Perak.

tendence of everything relative to the perahu passing up and down the river."¹⁸ The Laksamana was expected to work closely with the Syahbandar, the harbour master, and only by application to them could a stranger gain admittance to the court.¹⁹ In the words of Raja Culan, these two men were "the keys to the country."²⁰

The Laksamana's previous dealings with the Dutch had shown that he was fully able to exploit the potentialities of his office. In 1746, when the VOC first contemplated a treaty with Perak, he had been singled out as a person of great authority and Albinus had despatched letters and presents in order to win his favour.²¹ The treaty of 1746 itself documents his prestigious position within the court, for the conclusion reads, "Thus contracted to-day, the 25th of July, anno 1746, in the balai of the Laxamana in the presence of the Radja Moeda, named Siandaar, and the Dato Laxamana Nachoda Posama."²² In contrast to other contracts, there is no mention of any further orang besar, and it appears that the Laksamana was the only major chief to emerge unscathed from the divisive disputes of 1746.

It was not long before the Dutch themselves came into conflict

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18. SSR G34/67, Cracroft to Clubley, 3 Aug. 1818 (FCCP 5 Sept. 1818); RKP SP 9/15, fo. 10.
19. RKP SP 9/15 fo. 11; Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 44, 106; KA 2567 OB 1747, Albinus to Batavia, 18 Aug. 1746, fo. 416; KA 2954 OB 1763, Meyer to Boelen, 20 March 1761.
20. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 44.
21. KA 2567 OB 1747, Albinus to Batavia, 26 Feb. 1746, fo. 328.
22. Heeres, Corpus Diplomaticum, BKI, 96 (1938), 431.

with this powerful man, whose favour they had so assiduously courted.

In October 1747 an angry letter from the Laksamana had arrived in Melaka:

I sent a perahu to Prai to buy rice and padi. . . .
The Nakhoda with two of his people landed on [Pangkor Island] without any weapons, but the Captain arrested the nakhoda and his people and threw them into chains without their doing anything wrong.²³

To offend such a prominent personage was a serious matter, and Albinus hastened to make amends. Although the garrison commander was recalled in disgrace, the letter showed the Laksamana was unhappy with the Dutch presence on other counts. His request to collect tin sand on Pangkor had been refused and he, like other tin suppliers, was growing dissatisfied with the VOC price for tin. Because this price had been established at a fixed level, it showed no response to the rising market elsewhere. In his letter to the Governor, Nakhoda Pumah voiced the complaints of the faction which resented the Company monopoly.

The Captain of the Company ships asked to buy all the tin I had and I have helped him. There is much tin here, but the merchants will not sell for 32 Spanish reals. They want 33, apart from the toll, which makes 35 with the toll. I cannot compel the merchants to deliver their tin.²⁴

By 1749, Governor Albinus had recognised that the Laksamana was not only the leader of the anti-Dutch faction within the court but was also a strong supporter of Raja 'Alim. While Sultan Muzafar was alive, however, the Laksamana's opposition both to the Company and to Raja Muda

23. KA 2592 OB 1748, Letter from Laxamana Nachoda Pusama, rec'd. October 2, 1747, foll. 734-735.

24. Ibid., fo. 735.

Iskandar had been muted, since he stood in high favour with the old ruler. In 1747, and again in 1750, Sultan Muzafar had himself protested to Melaka when the Laksamana had complained to Dutch insults and, as a token of royal approval, both he and the Syahbandar had been permitted to retain the two reals toll on any tin they sold.²⁵

The position Nakhoda Pumah had attained in Perak is the more surprising since the evidence indicates that he was from Sumatra rather than Perak and had inherited this office by marriage into the Perak Laksamana family.²⁶ Furthermore, according to the Misa Melayu, although

25. KA 2592 OB 1748, Albinus to Batavia, 13 Oct. 1747, foll. 475, 727-728, 733-735 and Resolutions, 5 Oct. 1747, fo. 328; KA 2673 OB 1752, Resolutions 29 June 1750, fo. 210; KA 2753 OB 1756, Dekker to Batavia, 30 April 1755, fo. 45.

26. Winstedt suggests that the Laksamana may have come from Pasumah in south-west Sumatra; Raja Culan says he was "a man of Aru," which is on the east coast of Sumatra directly across the Melaka Straits from Perak. It may be relevant to note that he died in Asahan. (Winstedt's note, Misa Melayu, p. 57; KA 2827 OB 1759, Meyer to Dekker, 27 May 1758.)

The office of Laksamana was held to have once belonged to the family of Tun Saban Balik, the legendary founder of ulu Perak. In Perak folk-lore the first Laksamana is called Nakhoda Hitam, a fisherman from Pasai, in Sumatra. He had been given the office of Laksamana by a genie, who also promised that he would be "the greatest chief in Perak" and that his descendents would prosper. His title, 'Tuk Kuala Bidor, occurs again in another Perak manuscript, where the Laksamana figures as a supporter of Sultan Muzafar during his struggles with his brother, Sultan Muhammad. When Sultan Muzafar succeeded to the Perak throne, the Laksamana was ordered to take charge of Kuala Bidor. After this Laksamana died, Sultan Muzafar gave this office to his son. (Raja Kamaralzaman Papers, SP 9/15, fo. 10; Winstedt and Wilkinson, "A History of Perak," pp. 146-147; Notes and Queries, 1, JSBRAS (1885), p. 47; for the legend surrounding Tan Saban Balik, see Raja Razman et al., Hulu Perak Dalam Sejarah, p. 2.)

It is impossible to establish any definite connection between this Laksamana and the Nakhoda Pumah who held office from 1746 to 1758. However, according to one genealogy it was the son-in-law of

Nakhoda Pumah had been accredited with the authority of a Laksamana, he had never been formally installed.²⁷ Yet this did not prevent his assuming a prominent place in court politics, and it was this favoured position which Nakhoda Pumah saw threatened by the accession of Sultan Iskandar. Neither he nor the Syahbandar had accepted Sultan Iskandar's claim to be the legitimate heir to the Perak throne and, as we have seen, Nakhoda Pumah had long been working towards Raja 'Alim's return. Raja 'Alim's letters from prison to "his father, the Laksamana" attest the latter's loyalty to the exiled prince.²⁸

The new ruler, for his part, was well aware of the Laksamana's support for Raja 'Alim, and it is a comment on Nakhoda Pumah's influence that he had not been dismissed like many others when Sultan Iskandar first came to power. If anything, his position was strengthened, for the Misa Melayu notes that soon after his own installation, Sultan Iskandar held an impressive ceremony of appointment for the Laksamana "to in-

26. (cont'd.)

'Tuk Kuala Bidor who succeeded him in office. This son-in-law was called Tun Abu 'esama, and he was from Sumatra; it is tempting to see here a corruption of "Tun Pumah." The same genealogy notes that his niece married Sultan Ahmadin Syah (1792-1801?), and another states that Sultan Ahmadin married the daughter of 'Tuk Kuala Bidor. If in fact Nakhoda Pumah was the son, or son-in-law of 'Tuk Kuala Bidor, it would explain his appointment as Laksamana and also in part his opposition to Sultan Iskandar, since he would have been associated with Sultan Muzafar in the days when Raja 'Alim was the favourite and Sultan Iskandar the enemy. (Winstedt and Wilkinson, "A History of Perak," p. 148; Silsilah Raja-Raja Perak, fo. 34A, lines 6-7; Silsilah Raja Raja Perak II, fo. 12, lines 10-12.)

27. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 57.

28. KA 2673 OB 1752, Raja 'Alim to Laksamana and Laksamana to Raja Alim, foll. 525-526.

crease his loyalty." In the presence of the entire court his status received public recognition. Sultan Iskandar not only presented him with a new set of clothing and offered him sirih from the royal betel box, but formally bestowed upon him the title of Laksamana Orang Kaya-Kaya.²⁹

If the new ruler had hoped to win over the Laksamana by these marks of honour, he was disappointed. Nakhoda Pumah remained loyal to Raja 'Alim and his determination to bring about the exile's return to Perak grew even stronger. His aim was to discredit Sultan Iskandar in Dutch eyes and in this he found a ready ally, not only in the Syahbandar, but in the VOC interpreter, an Indian named Piro Muhammad. The latter had been a Company employee for a number of years and, prior to his appointment in Perak, had been stationed in Linggi.³⁰ He was sent to Perak in 1747 to help the Dutch resident organise the tin deliveries, principally because "he was a man experienced in the Malay areas, especially in Perak."³¹ At first he was sufficiently trusted to have the entire tin trade in his hands, albeit under the nominal supervision of the resident.³² Probably another reason for Dutch reliance on his services was the influence he wielded with Sultan Muzafar. According to Raja Culan, "Piro Muhammad had been appointed by the Raja of Melaka to be interpreter (jurubahasa) to the Dutch, who were living at Pangkalan

29. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 57-58.

30. KA 2592 OB 1748, Albinus to Batavia, 13 Oct. 1747, fo. 261.

31. Ibid., fo. 684; KA 2610 OB 1749, Albinus to Batavia, 30 Jan. 1748, fo. 16.

32. KA 2592 OB 1748, Albinus to Batavia, 13 Oct. 1747, fo. 686.

Halban,³³ and during the reign of Sultan Muzafar this interpreter was in high favour and could do anything he liked."³⁴

While this comment comes from a hostile source, it is supported by Dutch accounts. Early in his Perak career, it was disclosed that Piro Muhammad had entered into an arrangement with the Laksamana in order to gain greater influence over the Indians who came to buy elephants. In a report submitted to the Governor in May, 1750, Resident Fliesholt claimed that Piro Muhammad was "a cunning fellow," who had devised a number of ways to further trade between Indians and Malays to the detriment of the Company's interests. He had therefore forbidden the interpreter to have any more dealings with the Indians, an order which annoyed both Piro Muhammad and the Laksamana exceedingly. On this occasion, Piro Muhammad gained his revenge by utilizing his influence over Sultan Muzafar, demonstrating a shrewd understanding of the basic issues in Perak-Melaka relations. The value placed by van Heemskerck on amicable dealings between resident and court was well-known. Piro Muhammad succeeded in having the resident summoned before the Melaka Council by the simple ruse of drafting a letter of complaint in Sultan Muzafar's name and persuading the older ruler to put his seal to it.³⁵ In the following years, Piro Muhammad had used his privileged position as royal confidant and Company interpreter to pass on private confidences to

33. Pangkalan Halban was the landing place just below the Dutch fort, Kruijt, "Iets over de Vestiging der Nederlanders in Perak," p. 598.

34. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 60.

35. KA 2673 OB 1752, Resolutions 29 June 1750, foll. 209-212.

Melaka. Immediately before Sultan Muzafar's death, for example, he had written to a Company official telling him that Sultan Muzafar was very ill and hinting at dissension between the dying ruler and his nephew, the Raja Muda.³⁶

With Sultan Iskandar's succession, however, all Piro Muhammad's influence within the court was suddenly lost. Raja Culan describes the new situation in straightforward terms: "In Sultan Iskandar's time, Piro Muhammad could not behave as he had done before. He therefore hated Sultan Iskandar."³⁷ It is obvious that the interpreter, like the Laksamana, had good reason to be hostile towards Sultan Iskandar. Driven by rancour and desire for revenge, he joined the Laksamana and the Syahbandar in a shrewdly-laid plot aimed at unseating Sultan Iskandar and, with Dutch compliance, installing Raja 'Alim on the Perak throne.

It was essential that they move quickly, because it soon became clear that Sultan Iskandar was still prepared to negotiate with the Governor, despite his dissatisfaction with many aspects of the Dutch relationship and his suspicions about Raja 'Alim's future. Since 1746 he must have seen how the VOC alliance, if manipulated adroitly, could be turned to the ruler's advantage. More impressive was the revenue which had gone to Sultan Muzafar in years like 1749 and 1750 when there had been a constant supply of reals and the tin deliveries had gone well. While Albinus and van Heemskerck had regarded with delight the mounting surplus of tin in the Melaka godowns, Raja Culan comments on the in-

36. KA 2692 OB 1754, Albinus to Batavia, 12 Oct. 1752, foll. 16-17.

37. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 61.

creased wealth which flowed to Sultan Muzafar and his subjects. "Many thousands of reals were given to His Majesty in tolls from Perak and all the people in the country put by many reals."³⁸

With memories of these years, Sultan Iskandar felt the treaty was worth salvaging. In September 1752, about two weeks after his succession, he decided to send two envoys to the fort "to assure the resident of his sincere friendship towards the Company."³⁹ The conspirators wasted no time. Hardly a day had elapsed before the Laksamana himself came secretly to the resident,

declaring that he had no other intention than to benefit the Company and further the well being of Perak and for that reason he felt obliged to inform the resident that the promises of the king, however noble they might appear, should be regarded as nothing more than a trick. In fact, shortly after the death of the older king, Sultan Iskandar had already decided to get rid of the Company.⁴⁰

The resident, already apprehensive, accepted Nakhoda Pasmah's story without question and immediately wrote to inform van Heemskerk. The letter arrived on October 15, accompanied by one from Sultan Iskandar, another from the Laksamana, and a third from Piro Muhammad. Those of Nakhoda Pasmah and his accomplice were carefully calculated to reinforce that of the resident and add to Melaka's known distrust of Sultan Iskandar.⁴¹

38. Ibid., p. 29. Even in 1751-2, a poor year, Perak delivered 425,081 lbs. tin. KA 2712 OB 1752, van Heemskerk to Batavia, 17 March 1752, fo. 175.

39. KA 2712 OB 1754, van Heemskerk to Batavia, 17 March 1753, fo. 170.

40. Ibid., foll. 170-171.

The Governor and his Council discussed all four letters in detail and

remarked that the king protested the most sincere declarations of friendship with the Company, but from the letters of the resident, Laksamana and interpreter, we should construe his feelings as being otherwise.⁴²

Van Heemskerck's suspicions were now so strong that Sultan Iskandar's letter, intended as a preliminary step towards further correspondence and negotiation, merely gave greater reason for mistrust.

Reflecting that he has never once informed the Company in a fitting manner of his accession to the throne, it is agreed, therefore, that for the present this letter will remain unanswered, until we are told by an embassy of his succession.⁴³

Even more critical from the point of view of Melaka's standing in Perak was van Heemskerck's decision to disregard the Governor-General's order to send Raja 'Alim to Batavia. In the meeting of December 10, "after mature deliberation," the Melaka Council decided that it was inexpedient to discard their protege, since they had grave doubts about Sultan Iskandar's real intentions towards the Company. Van Heemskerck was unaware of the rumours which had resulted from this policy and still felt, as Albinus had done, that Raja 'Alim's presence in Melaka would serve as a "bridle for the present government."⁴⁴

41. Ibid., fo. 195. The interpreter, as a Company servant, would have been well aware of Melaka's feelings toward Sultan Iskandar.

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid. and fo. 171.

44. Ibid., fo. 258.

In Perak, the Laksamana continued to press his advantage. The Resident's fears had been partly put to rest by Sultan Iskandar's conciliatory attitude and on October 29 he wrote to Melaka reporting that there were "no difficulties, and the king appears to be succeeding with a good government."⁴⁵ Piro Muhammad and Nakhoda Puschah, nonetheless, proceeded with their carefully laid plan, a plan so calculated and so shrewd that it very nearly succeeded.

In describing this episode, the Misa Melayu ignores the role played by the Laksamana and portrays Piro Muhammad as the sole conspirator. According to Dutch records, the Company interpreter had often acted as a messenger to the court,⁴⁶ but on this occasion, says Raja Culan, he came upstream without first informing the Laksamana and the Syahbandar. He announced that he had brought a letter from the Kompeni Holanda, and requested an audience. When Sultan Iskandar heard that the interpreter had not brought the customary bingkisan, and had not previously consulted the Laksamana and Syahbandar, he was angry and refused to receive either letter or interpreter, "since it is customary for letters from one country to another to be accompanied by presents."⁴⁷

45. Ibid., fo. 171.

46. KA 2592 OB 1748, Albinus to Batavia, 13 Oct. 1747, fo. 730; KA 2712 OB 1754, van Heemskerck to Batavia, fo. 171.

47. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 61. There is no account in the Dutch records which tallies exactly with this one, although the resident did write on January 29, 1753 to say that he had sent the interpreter upstream with a letter to ask for some elephants previously ordered by Melaka, as well as two to three hundred bahara of tin, "and that the present Raja Muda, in the king's name, had answered that there were elephants to sell, without speaking of tin. KA 2712 OB 1754, van Heemskerck to Batavia, 17 March 1753, fo. 171.

Unable to gain admittance to the court, Piro Muhammad determined on revenge. Returning downstream, he went immediately to the resident and told him not only that Sultan Iskandar had refused to accept the letter, but that he obviously intended to attack the Dutch post, and he was even now gathering all his men together.⁴⁸ This entire story, says Raja Culan contemptuously, was merely fitnah, slander, but Resident Hartman was convinced of its veracity. He was not simply a gullible fool. He had already been warned by the Governor of possible repercussions as a result of Sultan Iskandar's succession. Furthermore, there was indeed great activity upstream, although Hartman was not aware, and the Laksamana did not enlighten him, that this was because Sultan Iskandar was in the process of building a new capital a few miles upstream from the fort.⁴⁹ The interpreter and Laksamana thus found a receptive audience for their warning of imminent attack and, with the help of the Laksamana, the frightened resident made ready the fort's defences.

In reply to our letter of January 7 [wrote Melaka], the resident informed us that the king, when all his tin was collected, intended to divide it into fifty or sixty parts. At the same time, with a corresponding number of ships, he would send them down the river with the aim of taking the Company's fort by surprise. In order to carry this out, he has already gathered soldiers together.

On receiving this news, the Commander [Resident Hartman], gave orders to the Laksamana that no armed Perakese should approach the fort, which orders this official approved and thereby promised to assist the Company with all his power saying that yes, his might alone was sufficient to withstand the king in his rapacious aims.⁵⁰

48. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 61.

49. Ibid., p. 60.

Nakhoda Pasmah was even able to convince the resident that the only solution to the problem of Perak's relation with the Dutch was to instal Raja 'Alim as ruler "since his arrival there would be met with great delight by most of the people."⁵¹

The Laksamana may have succeeded in winning over the resident, but convincing the Governor was another matter. In the Council Room at Melaka, far removed from the tense atmosphere at Tanjung Putus, van Heemskerck could afford to adopt a more sceptical attitude towards the Laksamana's show of confidence and his declarations of loyalty. Nakhoda Pasmah's claim that he alone could resist Sultan Iskandar seemed hardly credible and his proposed solution disclosed his true aims. In his efforts to convince the Governor of Sultan Iskandar's hostility Nakhoda Pasmah had overplayed his hand. The Melaka Council now regarded his entire story with suspicion. In the Governor's view, the resident had placed undue reliance on the Laksamana's information, and he concluded that Nakhoda Pasmah "the interpreter, and others, are united in an effort to take away the new king's realm with the Company's help and give it to Raja 'Alim."⁵²

Nakhoda Pasmah, unaware that Melaka no longer accepted his version of events, continued to foment suspicion in Perak. He not only persuaded the resident that the lives of the entire garrison were in danger, but also used his position as a senior official in the court to spread

50. KA 2712 OB 1754, van Heemskerck to Batavia, 17 March 1753, fo. 172.

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid.

the rumour that the VOC was prepared to support a rebellion against Sultan Iskandar. This khabar angin, "news spread by the wind," swept through the country and Sultan Iskandar's suspicions about the Dutch became certainty. The Company did intend to turn against him, depose him, and instal Raja 'Alim instead.⁵³ It was only when all these reports reached Melaka that van Heemskerck realised the connection between Raja 'Alim's continued retention there, and Sultan Iskandar's hostility. The ruler's antagonism had seriously affected tin deliveries, for since his succession he had only sent down eleven bahara. As the Governor said, the situation was critical (hachelijk) and the Council was finally jolted into action. In their meeting of February 6, they resolved

in order to remove these difficulties as quickly as possible . . . to send one of us [to hand over] our letters, accompanied by a few unusual presents, first to present condolences over the death of [the king's] father-in-law, and then congratulate him on his succession, together with verbal and written compliments to the Raja Muda and other nobles.⁵⁴

The envoy was then to reassure Sultan Iskandar of the Company's friendship in order to eliminate his suspicions and, this done, should renegotiate both the tin treaty of 1746 and the salt pact of 1752. Furthermore, if it was considered necessary, the Laksamana and his friends who were to blame for the present antagonism could be placed under arrest.⁵⁵

This was a most delicate mission, and van Heemskerck chose his

53. Ibid., fo. 267 (Resolutions, 6 Feb. 1753).

54. Ibid., fo. 172.

55. Ibid., foll. 172-173.

representatives with care. The man in charge was "the merchant and treasurer," Thomas Schippers, who had been in the Indies since 1740, serving in Bantam, Batavia and, after 1746, in Melaka.⁵⁶ He would be assisted by the accountant Ary Verbrugge, already well-known in Perak and acquainted with affairs there. Perhaps the most important member of the mission, in view of Piro Muhammad's duplicity, was the interpreter, and for this post van Heemskerck selected "the man most qualified and of proven trust, many times employed by the Company in dealings with native kings," Encik Surin, the brother of the Malay Captain in Melaka.⁵⁷

Schippers' departure from Melaka on February 19 came none too soon. Both Dutch and Malay sources clearly demonstrate the success with which the Laksamana disseminated his stories of deceit and sedition. Only three days after Schippers had left, another letter arrived in Melaka from the frightened resident. The king, he said, had already established himself a few miles above the Dutch post and "was building a fortress for himself there, as well as two others, one for the Chinese and one for the Moors." Once again he begged the Governor to send Raja 'Alim back to Perak.⁵⁸ Raja Culan's account, on the other hand, shows the result of the conspirators' campaign not only in the residency, but within the court itself:

When the Captain heard the interpreter's report, he was extremely fearful. Then the interpreter wrote a letter,

56. Ibid., foll. 173, 269; Resandt, De Gezaghebbers, p. 224.

57. KA 2712 OB 1754, van Heemskerck to Batavia, 17 March 1753, fo. 173.

58. Ibid., fo. 175.

the contents of which were very evil. This was ordered to be sent to Melaka, and from thence to Batavia to the Company, saying that the Raja of Perak wanted to destroy all the Dutchmen in Perak who were at Tanjung Putus. When the contents of this letter were heard in Melaka and Batavia, the Company ordered seven sloops to be sent from Batavia to Melaka, and thence to Perak. One of their panglima was called Commissary and the other was Kapitan Melayu, and they came to ascertain whether the intentions of the Raja of Perak were as described in the interpreter's letter or not. . . .

The commissary and the Kapitan Melayu arrived at Kuala Perak with their seven sloops, and then came up the river to Pangkalan Halban, to the Dutch godown which guarded that place. They made arrangements for an audience, and told the Laksamana and Syahbandar that they were envoys from Batavia who wished to see the ruler. The Laksamana and Syahbandar went to His Majesty and told him there was an envoy from Batavia with seven sloops which wished to see him. When His Majesty heard this, he ordered a consultation with the Raja Muda and orang besar. And the Raja Muda discussed the matter with the orang besar. "The arrival of so many Dutchmen in our country creates difficulties, as our place here [the new capital] does not yet have a fort. Because of this, it would be better if we waited three days longer. After this the Yang di Pertuan can receive them."

After the matter had been discussed between the Raja Muda and the chiefs, they waited three days and in this time they built a fort. . . . When this was done, cannon were ranged around it and all the weapons and war materials were collected.⁵⁹

The Dutch envoys were then brought upstream and taken to the royal balai, where the entire assembly was waiting, each man fully armed, beautifully dressed and arranged according to rank. When all was ready, continues Raja Culan, "the Commissary, the Kapitan Melayu and Ary Verbrugge⁶⁰ entered, escorted by the Laksamana and Syahbandar, followed by many

59. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 61-63. The Dutch mention only three ships, the Mercurius, the Pera, and a private ship belonging to the interpreter. KA 2712 OB 1754, van Heemskerck to Batavia, 17 March, 1753, fo. 173.

60. The Jawi reads أرأى في البازار, which Winstedt inexplicably romanised as R. E. F. Lybroke. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 64; HS 632 Kon. Inst., fo. 31.

soldiers armed with muskets, blunderbusses and pistols, for the Dutch had come with the sole aim of speaking harshly (keras bicara).⁶¹

In this suspicious atmosphere, Schippers was faced with the task of restoring Malay faith in Dutch sincerity and beginning negotiations for the renewal of the contract. At a time when Dutch administrators bemoaned the lack of good men,⁶² van Heemskerck's envoys showed themselves to be skilful and adept. In a frank and open discussion, Schippers and Sultan Iskandar discussed the rumours which had influenced thinking among members of the Council in Melaka and the court assembly in Perak. The VOC envoy roundly denied that the Company had had any intention of placing Raja 'Alim on the Perak throne, while Sultan Iskandar said that the reports concerning his supposed plan to massacre the Dutch in Perak were totally false. On his solemn oath, he declared that such a thought had never entered his mind. In fact, he said, he had actually tried to speak to the resident himself, in order to investigate the truth of the widespread rumours, but Hartman had refused to meet him, saying he could not leave the fort.

This had inspired further suspicions and the king began to believe the general reports. In order to discover the truth and find what was fact from this maze and confusion, he had finally considered it advisable to send a distinguished envoy here, but this plan was placed in abeyance by the unexpected arrival of our Commissioner.⁶³

61. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 63-64. Schippers' actual report, though sent to Batavia, is no longer available. KA 2712 OB 1754, Register of Papers.

62. T. H. Milo, De Invloed van de Zeemacht op de Geschiedenis der Vereenigde Oost Indische Compagnie (The Hague, 1946), p. 16.

63. KA 2712 OB 1754, van Heemskerck to Batavia, 14 July 1753, foll. 273-274.

Sultan Iskandar felt he had good grounds for his attitude towards the Dutch, and it was only with "much difficulty" that his antagonism could be assuaged. But on March 13, as a direct result of Schippers' efforts, a "totally new contract" was signed between "Paducca Siry Sulthan Iskandar Sul Karney, king of Perak, and Mr. Thomas Schippers . . . in the presence of the Radja Moeda, Bindhara B'saar, Tommegong, Laxamana, Sjabandaar and all the orangcayas or nobles."⁶⁴

Van Heemskerck was pleased with the new treaty, which had prescribed more severe punishment for smuggling than that of 1746 but, as he had expected, Schippers, despite lengthy discussions, found it impossible to renew the salt pact. Sultan Iskandar made it clear he did not wish the Dutch to control the price of such an important commodity, and, in any event, even a short experience with the pact made the previous May had shown that it made barter difficult for the ordinary person.⁶⁵ The court in general expressed its opposition, not only to the terms of the pact, but the "surreptitious manner" in which it had been concluded. This, they said, was "strictly against the custom and laws of the kingdom . . . that all contracts and treaties made with other states and princes must be concluded in the presence and with the approval of all the nobles of the kingdom, at least that of the oldest."⁶⁶

Sultan Iskandar summed up his views succinctly: renewal of the salt pact would bring nothing but trouble to Perak, resentment among the

64. Ibid. See Appendix E.

65. KA 2712 OB 1754, van Heemskerck to Batavia, 14 July 1753, foll. 274-275.

66. Ibid., foll. 275-276.

nobles, and inevitably, differences between him and the Company. Schippers wisely decided not to pursue the issue any further and did not attempt to obtain reimbursement of the two hundred reals the Company had paid the year before.⁶⁷ The salt pact was of little importance beside the tin treaty, and Governor van Heemskerck was so gratified by its renewal that he was prepared to devote even more energy to creating a working relationship between himself and Sultan Iskandar. It was crucial that the Perak ruler should not regret his decision to sell his "previous tin" to the Dutch and allow the Company "to pluck this fruit quietly and unhindered."⁶⁸

Schippers reported that one of Sultan Iskandar's principal concerns was still his elephants. As he explained to the envoys, it seemed unreasonable that he should suffer because he had signed a treaty with the Dutch which dissuaded buyers from coming to Perak. At present he had "an abundance of elephants, and daily many more were rounded up, so much so that he could only think of his loss."⁶⁹ Once again, he asked that Indian ships be permitted to come to Perak, giving his personal guarantee that the Company should not suffer in its purchase of tin.⁷⁰ Although the VOC had not, in fact, attempted to proscribe Indian shipping

67. After Schippers' return to Melaka, Hartman was instructed to sell the Company's salt a little below the current market price. It was hoped that by this means the VOC would regain control of the trade. KA 2731 OB 1755, Dekker to Batavia, 25 March 1754 (Resolutions, 2 July 1753), foll. 92-93.

68. KA 2712 OB 1754, van Heemskerck to Batavia, 14 July 1753, fo. 276.

69. Ibid.

70. Ibid.

as it had done in the previous century, Schippers was well aware that few Indians now came to Perak. The reason was not that the Company actually prevented them but that the Dutch monopoly of the tin made Perak a less attractive market, even for elephants. In answer to Sultan Iskandar's request, Schippers pointed to Batavia's attempts to encourage the trade,⁷¹ but, although the Perak ruler seemed pleased, the envoy knew the basic problem had not been solved.

Van Heemskerck agreed with Schippers, and in March, after the envoy's return, warned the Governor-General that if the Company's measures to stimulate Perak's elephant trade were unsuccessful, it could well provide sufficient reason for the breakdown of the entire treaty.

This is the more to fear because, according to Schippers' report, the King of Kedah has offered to unburden him of these animals, as well as buying all the tin in his kingdom for a higher price than that paid by the Company. For the greedy native this is all too tempting to refuse, especially if our repeated promises [of improvement] bring no better results. The king could then easily come to the idea that . . . the VOC thinks more of its own advantages than of both parties, and also has no other aims than slowly to make itself master of, if not the entire kingdom, at least of all the advantages it offers, just as the people of Kedah, probably at the instigation of our competitors in the Straits, the English, daily whisper in his ear.⁷²

Van Heemskerck thus did what he could to convince Batavia that the health of the Dutch tin monopoly in Perak was closely linked with that of the elephant trade, and in early October the Melaka Council was gratified

71. In 1751 the Governor-General had urged the Ministers at Nagapatnam to encourage traders to come to Perak to buy toll-free elephants. Ibid., fo. 277.

72. Ibid., foll. 277-278.

to hear of the arrival of an Indian ship "expressly to trade elephants."⁷³

Schippers returned to Melaka in April, and by July van Heemskerck was satisfied that Sultan Iskandar's assurances of friendship were sincere. He therefore felt justified in taking further steps to strengthen this new and promising friendship. It was vital that Sultan Iskandar's confidence in the Company personnel be restored. Although van Heemskerck had no influence over the Laksamana, he was aware of the part played by Piro Muhammad in the conspiracy and regarded his influence in Perak as pernicious. Accordingly, he wrote to Batavia asking for "a man skilled in language, a capable scribe with some experience in trade, and who also has a quiet and accommodating nature" to replace Piro Muhammad. The interpreter, now considered a person "of no further use to the Company," "a harmful and dangerous subject, full of underhand doings," was to be recalled.⁷⁴

Secondly, and more importantly, "in order to pull the thorns out from [the king's] foot," Raja 'Alim and his father-in-law were to be exiled to Batavia. Van Heemskerck hoped not only

that this despatch of Raja 'Alim (which will undoubtedly please the Perak king) will be accepted as a tangible token of the Company's willingness to remove any hindrance that might in time lead to distrust or

73. KA 2731 OB 1755, Political Council to Batavia, 24 March 1754, fo. 25.

74. KA 2712 OB 1754, van Heemskerck to Batavia, 14 July 1753, fo. 278; KA 2731 OB 1755, Political Council to Batavia, 25 March 1754, fo. 94. It is a comment on the Company's lack of capable personnel that, even with this record, Piro Muhammad was reinstated as Company interpreter and translator three years later. KA 2776 OB 1757, Dekker to Batavia, 9 April 1736, fo. 51; Stapel, Corpus Diplomaticum, p. 155.

the breaking of the contract, and also that by this arrangement the long-nurtured hopes of Raja 'Alim's followers will disappear in smoke . . . and the tin trade will blossom in peace.⁷⁵

The combination of Schippers' favourable report and the renewed contract had convinced van Heemskerck of Sultan Iskandar's goodwill. In July, when the still apprehensive resident refused to leave the safety of the fort to go upstream and collect the ruler's tin, he was told outright that he had no grounds for his fears. "This king," wrote the Governor, "has just renewed his father's contract and has now declared that he is a friend of the Company and therefore is not full of wicked intentions."⁷⁶ In fact, they specifically instructed Hartman to make every effort to gain not only the favour of the king but also that of the Orang Kaya Besar. The latter had been singled out from the court as a man who appeared to approve of the Dutch presence, whose friendship would benefit the Company, and who "has great influence with the king."⁷⁷ The Governor's conviction that he could trust Sultan Iskandar now meant that he paid little heed to rumours of hostility. When the indefatigable Laksamana, who had remained untouched by Piro Muhammad's disgrace, attempted once again to undermine the newly contracted alliance, he was completely unsuccessful. In their meeting of July 2, the Council discussed a letter which Raja 'Alim had apparently handed over to the Dutch

75. KA 2731 OB 1755, Political Council to Batavia, 25 March 1754 (Resolutions, 23 Aug. 1753), fo. 146.

76. KA 2712 OB 1754, Political Council to Batavia, 8 Sept. 1753, fo. 290.

77. *Ibid.* and KA 2731 OB 1755, Political Council to Batavia, 25 March 1754 (Resolutions, 2 July 1753), fo. 94.

authorities. It was written by his brother in Perak, and claimed

that Sultan Iskandar has sent five perahu to the King of Kedah. . . . The Laksamana and I have both heard that they went to bring Indian and English ships here. They were also sent to establish a friendship with the King of Kedah and allow him into the Perak River with guns and heavy cannon in order to arm Perak. We have heard this and, if you feel inclined, you can inform the Governor and the fictoor.⁷⁸

A year before, such a letter might have thrown the Council into confusion, but, coming so soon after Schippers' successful return, these efforts to arouse Dutch suspicion met with total failure. The Governor regarded the allegations as a complete fabrication, since it was hardly likely that such a large fleet could have left Perak without the Resident's knowledge, or, indeed, that Sultan Iskandar would have taken such a step less than four months after the signing of the treaty.⁷⁹

Van Heemskerck was justified in feeling pleased with the outcome of Schippers' mission, but unfortunately he did not live to receive the praise of his superiors. On August 10, 1753 he died and, until February of the following year, Melaka was without a governor.⁸⁰ The Council, however, had caught something of van Heemskerck's optimism. In early September the Ministers reported that affairs in Perak were still going

78. KA 2731 OB 1755, Translated letter from Raja Sinala, brother, and Paduka Anakanda Raja Abdullah, son of Prince Alim, rec'd. or intercepted, 23 June 1753, fo. 134. A factor (Malay fetur) is the head of a trading post or the local agent of a trading Company. Wilkinson, Malay-English Dictionary, I, 312.

79. KA 2731 OB 1755, Political Council of Melaka to Batavia, 25 March 1754, foll. 133-134.

80. Resandt, De Gezaghebbers, p. 222.

well.⁸¹ Tension there had disappeared and the general situation had returned to normal. Dutch authorities could have been pardoned for their expectations for a prosperous future in Perak.

These hopes, however, were not fulfilled. The new governor, who arrived in Melaka in February, 1754, appeared unable to capitalise on his predecessor's achievements. Dekker, though born in Melaka, had grown up in Holland and, in fact, had only returned to the Indies in 1753. He already held the rank of senior merchant (oppercoopman) and promotion came quickly. Less than a year after his arrival, Dekker was appointed Governor of Melaka⁸² and thus, unlike most men who held this post, had had little experience in dealing with native rulers. This factor may have been behind some of the troubles which beset his relationship with Sultan Iskandar, which he must have realised was unsatisfactory. In March 1759, when he was relieved by David Boelen, Dekker was forced to admit that during his five years of office in Melaka, he had rarely been able to fill the tin quotas.⁸³ What caused this sudden decline so soon after the renewal of the treaty in 1753?

Though the Perak records for this period are by no means complete, one fact emerges clearly from the available evidence. Sultan Iskandar had committed himself to the Dutch alliance and remained one of its staunchest supporters. In shaping his policy toward his own court and

81. KA 2712 OB 1754, Political Council of Melaka to Batavia, 8 Sept. 1753, foll. 290-291.

82. Resandt, De Gezaghebbers, pp. 222-223.

83. KA 2858 OB 1760, Dekker's Report on Melaka to Boelen, 10 March 1759, foll. 185-187.

the outside world, he always tried to gauge and, if possible, to accommodate the Company's reaction. The Perak ruler was an astute man, and he understood that the treaty which he had signed was based on certain assumptions which could not be ignored. One of these assumptions was that an ally of the Company would not seek friendship with the VOC's enemies, notably the Bugis and the English. Dutch fear of the former and hostility towards the latter was no secret and Sultan Iskandar realised that the Company would regard relations with either as disloyal, regardless of whether tin was sold or not. In the atmosphere of growing tension which characterised the Malay world in 1753, Sultan Iskandar had put his seal to a treaty which concluded:

Finally, the king promises to offer a helpful hand to the Netherlands Company in all matters and to oppose and prevent all disadvantageous and dangerous plans that might at times be contemplated against the fort here by enemies of the Honourable Company and those who wish it ill.⁸⁴

The implications of this article were not lost on the Perak ruler. In September 1753, for example, he informed Resident Hartman that he had received a letter written "from the English--without saying by whom or from where--by which this nation asked to meet the king in his kingdom."⁸⁶ Hartman was summoned to court so that Sultan Iskandar could discuss probable Company reaction should he grant such a request, and the ruler indicated that he was quite willing to refuse should the Dutch

84. See Appendix E.

85. KA 2731 OB 1755, Political Council to Batavia, 25 March 1754, foll. 23-24. Resident Hartman was ordered to obtain the letter or, alternatively, a copy, if this were possible. Melaka, however, thought his chances of doing this were slim.

disapprove.⁸⁶ Two years later, another English ship from Bengal almost managed to slip past the Company post at Tanjung Putus on the pretext of buying rice but in fact to sell opium. Once again, Melaka found Sultan Iskandar's response highly gratifying, for he wholeheartedly approved of the resident's decision to send the ship away. He even forwarded a request from himself and the Perak Chinese Captain for two pikul of Dutch opium, known to be more expensive than that of the English.⁸⁷

Sultan Iskandar's understanding of the political implications of the contract and his continuing loyalty to the Dutch are more impressively demonstrated in his attitude towards the Bugis. By 1753, when Sultan Iskandar renewed the Dutch alliance, the struggle between the Bugis and Malays had not only polarised the Riau court but threatened to involve the entire Malay world. The Bugis now regarded the former rantau areas of Johor--Selangor, Linggi and Kelang--as theirs, and were prepared to do battle rather than relinquish jurisdiction. So far-reaching were these disputes that it was difficult to remain uninvolved, and the Malay states had become divided into two opposing camps. On the one side were the Bugis, led by Daeng Kemboja, and their Minangkabau allies under Daeng Kemboja's brother-in-law, Raja Alam, the son of Raja Kecil. On the other side was the Malay faction, where leadership came from Sultan Sulaiman of Johor and his son-in-law, Sultan Mansur Syah of Terengganu.⁸⁸ This

86. Ibid.

87. KA 2753 OB 1756, Dekker to Batavia, 30 April 1755, fo. 47; KA 2858 OB 1760, Dekker's Report on Melaka, 10 March 1759, fo. 191.

88. This is a very brief summary of a complex situation. See Netscher, De Nederlanders, pp. 67-81; Lewis, The Dutch East India Company, pp. 170-192.

group, aware of its military inferiority, desperately courted Dutch help, but this was slow in forthcoming. In May 1753, Raja Alam, with Bugis support, made himself master in Siak, and for a brief period it appeared as if Daeng Kemboja and his Minangkabau friends would control the destiny of the entire Straits.⁸⁹

In this context, Sultan Iskandar's decision to renegotiate the treaty with the VOC rather than revive his former relationship with the Selangor Bugis assumes added significance. It was, in a sense, a public declaration of Perak's loyalties in a threatening world. A little over a year later, in June 1754, Sultan Iskandar made it clear that the growing strength of the Bugis had not persuaded him to change his mind. A letter arrived in Perak from Raja Syed, head of Selangor. It was addressed to the Laksamana, and Syahbandar, both known opponents of the Dutch alliance, as well as to the head of the Perak Bugis. The contents stated that "the people of Riau, Siak, Selangor, Kedah and Batubara are now united, and how would it be with Perak, since the tin contract signed with the Company had meant a loss to them?"⁹⁰ To the relief of the Governor, Sultan Iskandar gave an unqualified demonstration of his attitude towards the Company. He immediately ordered a general retreat upriver, and all Malays living near the kuala were told to break down their houses and move up behind the safety of the Dutch fort.⁹¹ In perhaps the first

89. Netscher, De Nederlanders, pp. 79-81.

90. KA 2753 OB 1756, Dekker to Batavia, 30 April 1755, foll. 46-47. Once again, the Governor asked the resident to obtain a copy of the letter concerned.

91. Ibid. and fo. 198.

real test of his loyalty to the VOC alliance, Sultan Iskandar passed with flying colours. In a world where the Governor of Melaka felt pressured from many quarters, he could at least rest assured that the little garrison in Perak would remain unharmed.

The fort's immunity became even more apparent in 1756-57, when Melaka faced the first native attack since 1641. The initial assault occurred in April 1756, with the Bugis burning a large number of houses almost in the centre of the town.⁹² A combined Malay-Dutch campaign against the Bugis stronghold of Linggi did not succeed in breaking the enemy's strength. By the end of the year the situation in Melaka was desperate.

On the landward side, the town was totally surrounded and under siege. An expedition . . . returned on December 20, blood-stained. The town was hit by lack of food, and the daring of the enemy increased in relation to the ineffectiveness of the garrison. . . . Requests for help from Batavia became more and more urgent. Finally, in July 1757, help arrived.⁹³

Only then was the siege broken. During much of 1756 and the greater part of 1757, Melaka had lain helpless, and for weeks at a time communication with Perak was cut off. In these circumstances, Sultan Iskandar could do little to help his Dutch friends, except hold fast to his alliance. This he did unreservedly.

His support is the more impressive because Sultan Iskandar was confronted with a number of problems which were a direct result of his

92. The attack is described in Netscher, "Twee Belegeringen van Malakka," pp. 285-320.

93. Netscher, De Nederlanders, p. 91

decision to renew the contract. It will become clear that it was these problems, none of which were easily solved, which caused the lowering of tin deliveries to Melaka during Dekker's term of office (1754-58). Throughout these five years, Governor Dekker's relationship with Sultan Iskandar was marred by a fundamental difference in interpretation of the fourth article of the treaty, which read

The tin suppliers (leveranciers) are to bring their tin downstream themselves to the Company's post, as has been done up till now. There it will be weighed with the Company's scales and weight.⁹⁴

The difficulties arose over the word leveranciers. To the Governor this implied any individual in Perak who sold tin, and specifically, Sultan Iskandar who was "the greatest of them all."⁹⁵ Melaka had assumed that the question of royal tin deliveries had been settled during Schipper's visit of March 1753.⁹⁶ This assumption proved entirely mistaken. Sultan Iskandar's Malay version of the treaty read "segala orang yang jual timah" (all people who sell tin), and it had never occurred to him that the ruler might be among those expected to bring tin down to the Company post.⁹⁷ Needless to say, he was shocked in October 1753 when he discovered that by signing the treaty he had apparently lowered himself to the status of one of his subjects, as simply "a person who sold tin."⁹⁸

94. See Appendix E.

95. KA 2776 OB 1757, Melaka's reply to comments by Heeren XVII, 8 Oct. 1756, fo. 99.

96. Ibid., Dekker to Batavia, 9 April 1756, foll. 29-30.

97. Ibid., and KA 2885 OB 1761, Visboom's Report, 9 July 1759; Visboom to Boelen, 9 July 1759.

Sultan Iskandar remained adamant in his contention that it was unfitting for the ruler to deliver his tin. The Dutch themselves, he said, should come and collect it from his dalam (literally, "inside," i.e., residence). This argument is entirely consistent with what we already know of his character. In the previous chapter brief references have been made to incidents which demonstrate Sultan Iskandar's heightened sense of his own status and what was suitable behaviour for, and towards, a ruler, regardless of whether it concerned the quality of a gift, the phrasing of a letter, or the adat of an audience. He was certainly not a man to allow his prestige to be undermined by incorrect wording on a treaty. We should not, therefore, be surprised to learn that in early 1756 Sultan Iskandar told the resident he would not bring his tin downstream "even if his whole kingdom should be ruined."⁹⁹

Governor Dekker, however, could not understand where the problems lay. At first it was thought that the Malay and Dutch versions of the treaty might differ in content; perhaps, it was suggested, a Company employee had given offence.¹⁰⁰ For over two years Dekker allowed this

98. KA 2731 OB 1755, Political Council to Batavia, 25 March 1754, fo. 22.

99. KA 2776 OB 1757, Dekker to Batavia, 9 April 1756, fo. 29. The Company argued that it was uneconomic and unfeasible for the Dutch to maintain ships in Perak for the purpose of collecting the ruler's tin. The water upstream from the fort was shallow and only ships drawing a light draft could be used, which meant that cargoes were also correspondingly light. There was also a constant danger of ambush because the banks of the river were thickly covered with jungle growth. KA 2731 OB 1755, Political Council to Batavia, 25 March 1754, foll. 22-23; KA 2801 OB 1758, Dekker to Batavia, 26 Aug. 1757, fo. 49.

100. KA 2776 OB 1757, Dekker to Batavia, 9 April 1756, fo. 30; KA 2801 OB 1758, Dekker to Batavia, 26 Aug. 1757, fo. 48.

anomalous situation to continue, and as a result the Company could only obtain royal tin at irregular intervals. Finally, in October 1756, Ary Verbrugge, who had been instrumental in concluding the treaties of 1746 and 1753, was sent to Perak to investigate.¹⁰¹ Sultan Iskandar told Verbrugge that

he had no reason to complain against the Company, much less its servants, in their dealings with the tin, but that neither he nor his entire court could see any place in the Malay version of the contract that obliged the ruler to bring his tin so far downstream and further that it was impossible for him to understand that a king in his own realm could be placed on an equal footing with a merchant. They [the Company] had a privilege in Perak which other people, even with vast sums of money, could not obtain--namely, the exclusive tin monopoly. Other people would gladly pay 40 reals the bahara. Finally, if he had known that the contract required he should bring his tin downstream to the Company's post, or deliver it elsewhere, he would never have agreed to it.¹⁰²

To the Europeans, Sultan Iskandar's attitude was inexplicable, but the importance of the issue of who should deliver tin, and where, is clearly evident in the Malay version of Verbrugge's mission.

Again there came an embassy from Batavia with three sloops. When they arrived in Perak they cast anchor off the fort. The head of the mission was Ary Verbrugge (أري فربروج), who held the office of commissioner. He went up the river and made obeisance to the ruler at Kota Lumut, being escorted by the Laksamana, the Syahbandar and the scribe, Sri Dewa Raja. He brought a letter and presents in accordance with adat, and was received by Sultan Iskandar with customary ceremony. Sultan Iskandar was at that time holding court in the balai at Kota Lumut, and the Raja Bendahara, the chiefs, the anak raja and the officers

101. KA 2776 OB 1757, 3rd. Reg. Dekker to Batavia, 4 Feb. 1757, fo. 11.

102. KA 2801 OB 1758, Dekker to Batavia, 26 Aug. 1757, foll. 48-49.

and people were in attendance. All was arranged and ordered in the time-honoured way.

The purport of the letter was to ask for some tin, with a request that it be sent down the river to be weighed. This demand did not meet with Sultan Iskandar's approval, but the Raja Bendahara and the chiefs suggested Kuala Bidor as a convenient place at which the tin might be weighed. The ruler then directed them to build a balai at Tanjung Bidor as a place for weighing tin.¹⁰³ (my italics)

With this compromise, Verbrugge had to rest content, and Kuala Bidor was designated as the royal weighing station. But these protracted debates had meant that tin deliveries had been sparse and this was the root cause of Dekker's inability to fulfil the tin quotas. Behind everything was a basic difference in Dutch and Malay understanding of the treaty terms and a failure on the Company's part to distinguish between what could suitably be asked of a ruler, and what could not.

This failure is illustrated in another episode two years later. In March 1758 Governor Dekker wrote to Sultan Iskandar informing him that in future cruisers would be maintained along the Melaka Straits to ensure that ships there carried a Company pass. This was aimed particularly at combating piracy, and the Governor did attempt to alleviate what the Malays viewed as unnecessary restrictions. Passes could be obtained "without the least payment" from the resident and these would guarantee Perak inhabitants unmolested passage.¹⁰⁴ When, however, he asked Sultan Iskandar to publicise this throughout the country, the Perak ruler refused outright. He told the resident that he had agreed to do

103. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 106; HS 632 Kon. Inst., fo. 59.

104. KA 2827 OB 1759, Dekker to King of Perak, 20 March 1758; Dekker to Meyer, 20 March 1758.

nothing more than sell his tin at the fixed price, and beyond this he was not bound to anything. As a token of his independence, he despatched two baluk to Batubara without asking for a pass.¹⁰⁵

Further problems were caused by the continued opposition to Sultan Iskandar himself from a small but influential faction within the court, led, as before, by the Laksamana and Syahbandar. Their authority was so established that they had remained untouched when Piro Muhammad was recalled. Indeed, in the same Council meeting that decided to recall the interpreter, four letters were read from the principal members of the Assembly, "the Older King, the Younger King, the Laksamana and Syahbandar."¹⁰⁶ The Laksamana and Syahbandar were two of the wealthiest chiefs in Perak, for they not only delivered a large amount of tin but since the previous reign had been permitted to keep the two reals toll which would normally have gone to the ruler. This privilege had been granted by Sultan Muzafar, but to Sultan Iskandar it was intolerable that part of his income should be going to men who had previously worked to depose him. In 1754, therefore, he revoked this privilege, a move which infuriated the two chiefs. As a result, they resorted to smuggling in order to obtain a higher price, and in early 1758 the Laksamana told the resident "that he would rather keep his tin than give it for 32 reals."¹⁰⁷

This smuggling was not confined to the Laksamana and Syahbandar.

105. KA 2827 OB 1759, Meyer to Dekker, 27 May 1758.

106. KA 2731 OB 1755, Political Council to Batavia, 25 March 1754 (Resolutions 2 July 1753, fo. 84).

107. KA 2753 OB 1756, Dekker to Batavia, 30 April 1755, fo. 45.

In May 1754, Sultan Iskandar, disturbed to find that only four hundred bahara of tin had been collected in the previous year, complained to the resident that "an equally large amount was being smuggled out of the mountains via the Kurau River, which was prejudicial to both himself and the Company."¹⁰⁸ Sultan Iskandar realised that in this regard his interests and those of the Dutch coincided. Sizeable tin deliveries brought benefits to them both; smuggling meant a common loss. He obviously expected that he and the Governor would work together to combat any tendency to take tin elsewhere, and in mid-1754 despatched "one of his first ministers, the Orang Kaya Besar, as Commissioner" to the Kurau area. The ruler's representative, a man whom Sultan Iskandar greatly trusted, was charged with investigating the situation there and encouraging greater vigilance on the part of the penghulu.¹⁰⁹ Sultan Iskandar also asked for the loan of a Company ship to cruise kuala Kurau, but, although Governor Dekker reluctantly agreed to spare a vessel, it was too large to enter the shallow Kurau River.¹¹⁰ By the end of the year the situation had deteriorated so greatly that it became a matter of major concern. As Governor Dekker wrote:

there is nothing good to hope for, when the nobles and first ministers carry out their work of smuggling. They shall certainly be followed fearlessly by the common man and this will result in both great displeasure to the king and great harm to the Company.

¹⁰⁸. Ibid., foll. 44-45.

¹⁰⁹. Ibid., fo. 45.

¹¹⁰. Ibid.

In order to prevent this, last October [1754], we complained directly to the king by letter.¹¹¹

The onus had now been placed on Sultan Iskandar, who, however found his expectation of working in conjunction with the Dutch disappointed. He discovered that the VOC alliance provided little assistance in the struggle against smugglers. In 1757 the cruising of Larut was discontinued because, although the captains had been provided with reals to buy tin, the collection there had only averaged forty bahara annually.¹¹² At a time of Company retrenchment, the expense entailed in patrols was considered unwarranted. This provided further opportunity for smuggling which in the following year became even greater because of Dutch failure to maintain the supply of reals to Perak. In 1754 the Heeren XVII had expressed the hope that some other currency could be used in Perak, but, as the resident remarked three years later, reals were vital to the tin trade there, since the people would accept nothing else.¹¹³ In February 1758 the shortage became so acute that when Sultan Iskandar arrived at the post "with a large fleet of small boats . . . all laden with tin," there were only sufficient reals to pay for 160 bahara "and the king left to go upstream with a full three hundred bahara."¹¹⁴

The following July Sultan Iskandar wrote to Dekker protesting

111. Ibid., fo. 46.

112. KA 2801 OB 1758, Dekker to Batavia, 26 Aug. 1757, fo. 51.

113. KA 2776 OB 1757, Extract from Missive, Heeren XVII to Batavia, 10 Oct. 1754; KA 2801 OB 1758, Dekker to Batavia, 26 Aug. 1757, fo. 54.

114. KA 2827 OB 1759, Meyer to Dekker, 5 Feb. 1758.

at this unsatisfactory situation. He and his subjects were willing to sell their tin but the Dutch could not buy. "The head of the Perak post is very unhappy because he still has no Spanish reals, and, as a result, the merchants wish to go elsewhere with their tin."¹¹⁵ Although 10,000 reals arrived a few days later, this did not strike at the basic cause of smuggling which was still the uncompetitive price. One of the difficulties arose from the fact that it was not just his own subjects who were involved.¹¹⁶ In early 1759 it was reported that people from Kedah were buying tin in the ulu mines, and Sultan Iskandar told Resident Meyer that the rulers of Kedah and Selangor themselves encouraged smuggling from Larut, Kerian and Kurau "in order to make themselves masters of the tin."¹¹⁷ By February the situation in these districts had deteriorated so greatly that Sultan Iskandar asked for the cruising there to be renewed, promising that he would also contribute two or three baluk to the patrol.¹¹⁸ For a maritime state with a large navy, such a contribution would have presented no problem, but, for Sultan Iskandar, it was a measure of his willingness to support the contract. Only a few months later, for example, he was only able to provide two baluk which were sufficiently seaworthy to help the resident unload cargo from a sinking VOC ship.¹¹⁹

115. Ibid., King of Perak to Dekker, 3 July 1758.

116. Ibid., Dekker to Meyer, 1 July 1758.

117. KA 2885 OB 1761, Meyer to Boelen and Dekker, 7 Feb. 1759.

118. Ibid.

119. Ibid., Wasbeek and Meyer to Boelen, 8 Sept. 1759.

After making what was for him a sizeable commitment, Sultan Iskandar must have been shocked to learn that Melaka, too, lacked seapower, and could not spare ships for such an enterprise. Instead, the Governor asked that Sultan Iskandar himself assume this responsibility. "His Majesty answered that he would contribute everything in his power to prevent the smuggling of tin by cruising, and was therefore sending out seven baluk under the command of the [newly appointed] Laksamana."¹²⁰ Sultan Iskandar also adopted sterner measures against smugglers, a move facilitated by the death of his old enemy, the Laksamana Nakhoda Pusmah, in May 1758.¹²¹ The latter had long been an opponent of the Dutch alliance and of Sultan Iskandar who supported it, yet despite all his scheming and plotting, the Laksamana had not been deposed. His position was so powerful that he could not be stripped of his office and, though deprived of certain privileges, he lost none of his former influence in court discussions. When death finally removed him, it also left the anti-Dutch faction temporarily without a leader. Sultan Iskandar now felt sufficiently confident to move against the Laksamana's accomplices. In January 1759 Melaka complained that the last cargo of Perak tin had been debased by the surreptitious inclusion of rubbish and sticks "the size of half a candle."¹²² Those responsible were probably delighted at their own cleverness, but Sultan Iskandar was extremely annoyed,

120. Ibid., Boelen to Meyer, 23 March 1759; Meyer to Boelen, 11 April 1759.

121. KA 2827 OB 1759, Meyer to Dekker, 27 May 1758.

122. KA 2885 OB 1761, Dekker to Meyer, 18 Jan. 1759; Dekker to Sultan Iskandar, 18 Jan. 1759; KA 2858 OB 1760, Dekker and Boelen to Batavia, 10 March 1759, fo. 94.

especially when the Governor hinted at the effects the dishonesty of the orang besar might have on Perak-Melaka relations. "He declared that this was totally against his wishes, and promised to issue strict orders that whoever was discovered should be punished by death, without regard to position."¹²³ In the same letter the resident noted that the Syahbandar, Nakhoda Pusmah's old ally, had been dismissed.¹²⁴

It is apparent, however, that several members of the court did not take Sultan Iskandar's new orders seriously. They were enjoying an income drawn from illicit sales of tin and were not prepared to relinquish it. Unfortunately for the ruler, the foremost among this group were his own brothers, the Raja Muda and Raja Bendahara. When they heard of Sultan Iskandar's decision to send the Laksamana out to cruise, the Raja Muda hit on a plan which he was certain would outwit both the Dutch and his brother. It was simple enough. When the Laksamana went out, he could carry their tin, and, under cover of a perfectly legitimate activity, could act as their agent and sell tin to passing ships. The only difficulty was to avoid the rigorous Dutch inspection at Tanjung Putus, and to accomplish this the Raja Muda and Raja Bendahara accompanied the new Laksamana downstream, ostensibly to inform Meyer of his appointment. When the seven baluk arrived at the fort on March 5, the Raja Muda told Meyer that Sultan Iskandar was sending them out to patrol, and solemnly assured the resident that "none of the baluk had so much as a tampang (small coin) of tin aboard."¹²⁵ Meyer, willing to trust the

123. KA 2885 OB 1761, Meyer to Boelen and Dekker, 7 Feb. 1759.

124. Ibid.

word of the ruler's own brother, agreed to allow the fleet to pass un-inspected.

No sooner had the ships passed the kuala, however, than he realised his mistake. The baluk divided, four going immediately to Selangor, while the Laksamana sailed northwards with the remaining three. After only two days in Larut, he sent two boats on to Ujung Salang, while he himself remained in Larut, supposedly to prevent smuggling. But as Meyer remarked to Melaka, "it was easy to see how effective he would be, devoid of ships, especially as three of his baluk have already returned."¹²⁶

The Raja Muda was not the only anak raja who betrayed Sultan Iskandar's trust. Raja Hitam, one of the Raja Muda's relatives, also left in March with a pass from Meyer, on the pretext of cruising against smugglers. "According to reports," wrote a VOC envoy, "this rascal is making ill use of the pass" and had sailed to Larut where he was assisting the Laksamana to sell tin." The Raja Muda and his fellow conspirators had even succeeded in frightening the "poor mountain people" [armen bergmen] into delivering only to them. No one dared to bring the situation to Sultan Iskandar's notice out of fear of the ruler's son, who was himself involved.¹²⁷ By early April 1759 the resident reported that "no tin worthy of mention" was being brought down from the ulu.¹²⁸

125. Ibid., Meyer to Boelen, 11 April 1759, 9 June 1759.

126. Ibid., Meyer to Boelen, 11 April 1759.

127. Ibid., Jan Visboom's Day Register, under date 24 May and 25 May, 1759. This may be the same individual who is later called the Maharaja Muda, Sultan Iskandar's son, and who was involved in piracy. See pp. 390-393.

Though Sultan Iskandar was unaware of his brother's deception, he too was concerned about the low tin deliveries. As he saw it, the basic question was his own control in the ulu areas. The mines here were of vital importance to him, not only because they produced a large proportion of Perak's tin, but because they also contributed to his own revenue. An eighteenth century genealogy states that the royal income came partly from taxes on Indah and Intan, the principal mines in the area, and during Sultan Iskandar's reign the ulu became even more vital to the ruler's interests when new lodes of tin were discovered in the Indah district.¹²⁹ It is not surprising, therefore, that one of the Sultan Iskandar's primary considerations was the affirmation of his jurisdiction in this valuable area. In May 1759, when Jan Visboom arrived in Perak as an envoy from Melaka, Sultan Iskandar had already left for "a pleasure trip to the uplands."¹³⁰ Such a trip would normally have entailed a tour of inspection, but Sultan Iskandar made it clear that he was determined to see his orders were carried out. At the same time, the Orang Kaya Besar was also sent upstream with a force of men in order

128. Ibid., Meyer to Boelen, 11 April 1759.

129. RKP SP 9/15, fo. 1; KA 3166 OB 1770, Werndly's Report on mission to Perak under 11 Sept. 1768. To-day only the name Kelian Intan survives. In 1883 Hugh Low was told that this area was called "indifferently Klian Intan and Klian Indah." CO 273/120 Low to Colonial Secretary, 16 March 1883, fo. 16. An eighteenth century court list gives both Indah and Intan, as does Werndly. According to a report drawn up in 1952, the richness of the deposits here is due to the presence of ore both in outcropping veins and alluvial deposits. W. E. Everett, A History of Tin Mining in Perak, Ms. in Arkip Negara, Kuala Lumpur, fo. 65. See also RKP SP 9/15, fo. 1.

130. KA 2885 OB 1761, Visboom's Day Register, under 20 May 1759.

to drive the people from Kedah out of the ulu mines, and, when Sultan Iskandar returned at the end of May, the Orang Kaya Besar remained behind.¹³¹

It was probably at this time that Sultan Iskandar introduced the far-reaching changes in the ulu administration which were described to another envoy, Antony Werndly, in 1770. Werndly was informed that in the past, authority here had been in the hands of two chiefs.¹³² Sultan Iskandar obviously approved of this system of territorial jurisdiction but brought in reforms aimed at enforcing greater central control over the chiefs' activities. Werndly reported that "the former king, Iskandar, appointed to heads over the uplands called Sadikka [Sri Adika] Raja and Maharaja Lela. The Sri Adika Raja was charged with the task of ensuring that all the tin in the Indah district was brought downstream. To accomplish this the Sri Adika Raja placed his own son over the district."¹³³

Other sources reinforce this Dutch report. Raja Culan, a contemporary observer, tells us that the Sri Adika Raja "held authority over the rantau people" in the ulu,¹³⁴ and over a century later the descendants of this Sri Adika Raja still remembered his appointment as a great event. He was given control over the area from Kuala Temung to the "headwaters of every tributary of the Perak River and to the borders

131. Ibid., under 25 May and 1 June 1759.

132. KA 3166 OB 1770, Werndly's Report, 11 Sept. 1768.

133. Ibid.

134. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 91.

with Patani at Gunung Jambul Merah.¹³⁵ Here he ruled as the ruler's representative, the "prince of the shallows" (raja di hujung karang), the helmsman (jurubatu) of the ship of state. He was permitted to erect his own flagstaff and have his trumpet blown, and he was also allowed to draw his income from the area he governed.¹³⁶

The Sri Maharaja Lela was, according to the Misa Melayu, "the penghulu of the upstream districts." From his home at Sayung, he held authority over the hulubalang of Sayung, Kota Lama, Talang, Padang Assam and Sungai Siput. This appointment too was considered to be a significant one, and Raja Culan commemorated it in verse.

Hulubalang Maharaja Lela
 Outstanding in the ulu rantau
 Ordered by the king most mighty
 As head of the people there

Appearance and demeanour seem just
 Like a tiger newly caught
 A kakap was bestowed upon him
 Weapons, decorations too.¹³⁷

135. CO 273/115, Weld to Kimberly, 3 June 1882, Syed Alahadin's statement, 4 March 1882, fo. 18. According to Syed Alahadin, a descendent of the Sri Adika Raja, the original title of chiefs in this area was Tun. The fifth Tun was installed as 'Tuk Berelok, the first Sri Adika Raja. Compare the genealogy given in Winstedt and Wilkinson, "A History of Perak," p. 150, with that given in Raja Razman, Hulu Perak. Raja Razman's genealogy makes Alang Idris ('Tuk Jawang) the first Sri Adika Raja and 'Tuk Berelok the second.
136. SOAS Ms 46943, List of Perak chiefs, 1876, foll. 4-6; RKP, SP 9/15, fo. 11.
137. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 98-99, 141. There appears to be some confusion in the literature between the Maharaja Lela the chief of royal balai, and the Sri Maharaja Lela who, according to a list from 1876, "builds the balai of the Perak raja." SOAS Ms 46943, fo. 4.

In 1826 the Maharaja Lela is listed as head of the Orang Besar Delapan, the Eight Great Chiefs. The Sri Maharaja Lela is head of

The information gathered by Werndly supplies further details. The Sri Adika Raja and the Sri Maharaja Lela were placed under the general supervision of the Orang Kaya Besar, the most trusted of the orang besar.¹³⁸ If a matter could not be settled by the two ulu officers, the Orang Kaya Besar went upstream personally and, after investigating the affair, discussed it with Sultan Iskandar. Together ruler and minister came to a decision.¹³⁹

Sultan Iskandar was fortunate in that, at the very time he was attempting to reassert his control over the ulu tin mines, a new Governor took up his duties in Melaka. David Boelen had come to the Indies in 1738 as a common sailor, but he was a man of exceptional abilities and eventually rose "to the highest rank."¹⁴⁰ Until 1750 he had been a clerk in the Company's service but had caught the eye of his superiors and had been promoted to junior merchant (ondercoopman) in Japan. Between 1752 and 1756 he had headed the Japanese comptoir three times and had performed so well that in September 1758 he was designated as the new gov-

137. (cont'd.)

the next rank, the sixteen. The confusion between the two probably arose because the Malays themselves often dropped the Sri. The Dutch, in fact, refer to him simply as Maharaja Lela, but it is obvious that this is the same individual who is called Sri Maharaja Lela in the Misa Melayu. Home Miscellaneous, 670 Letter from Sultan Abdullah to James Low, 18 Oct. 1826.

138. See above, p. 211.

139. KA 3166 OB 1770, Werndly's Report, 11 Sept. 1768.

140. Rensandt, De Gezaghebbers, p. 223. After his departure from Melaka in 1764, Boelen became Governor of Makassar, and in 1771 took his seat in the Council of the Indies. Ibid., pp. 223-224.

ernor of Melaka.¹⁴¹ Boelen took up his appointment in the following March, bringing to the Council Room in Melaka an energy and vigour reminiscent of the days of Albinus. Indeed, in his retiring report, Boelen acknowledged that in his dealings with Perak he had always tried to emulate the Governor responsible for the 1746 treaty and to follow the guidelines set out in the latter's Memoire of 1750.¹⁴² It was obvious that the Company's position in Perak was unsatisfactory and, when news arrived of the Raja Muda's smuggling, Boelen decided that the situation must be clarified. A mission would be sent to Perak under the command of Captain Jan Visboom who, four years before, had been instrumental in concluding a number of treaties which had extended VOC control over the west coast of Sumatra.¹⁴³

Visboom set sail on May 14, equipped with detailed instructions, carefully chosen presents, and a letter of greeting and recommendation from Governor Boelen to Sultan Iskandar.

We ask that you regard Captain Visboom as our ambassador and regard any proposals that he may make as being in our name. We also ask that you give your whole trust to him as a person we have chosen from among us, and in whom we place perfect confidence. We beg that you will accept the accompanying gifts [saffron, rosewater, assorted spices, pistols with silver mounting, muskets, and two Japanese screens] as a token of a sincere heart.¹⁴⁴

141. Ibid., p. 223.

142. KA 3045 OB 1766, Boelen's Report on Melaka to Thomas Schippers, 25 Jan. 1765, fo. 138.

143. Stapel, Corpus Diplomaticum, pp. 29-52.

144. KA 2885 OB 1761, Boelen to King of Perak, 14 May 1759.

Visboom's mission to Perak was entirely successful. Sultan Iskandar was delighted with the gifts and gave the envoy a full hearing. When Visboom finally presented two new articles aimed at clarifying the 1753 treaty, and explained why they had been considered necessary, he met no opposition. Boelen had been careful to give due recognition to Sultan Iskandar's position as ruler and, responding to correct language and to Visboom's presentation, Sultan Iskandar agreed not only to deliver his own tin downstream, but to allow his ships to be inspected like those of his subjects. Though shocked and surprised by Visboom's blunt denunciation of the Laksamana, the Raja Muda, and Raja Hitam, the Perak ruler also promised to recall those people misusing VOC passes. He told the envoy, however, that lack of ships made it impossible for him to continue cruising, although he would be able to add two boats to a Company patrol.¹⁴⁵

Sultan Iskandar's reception of Visboom and his assurances of support for the treaty convinced Boelen of the ruler's goodwill.¹⁴⁶ For a brief period it appeared as if a new resolution and commitment had been injected into the alliance. Stricter inspection and supervision of the pass system by the Dutch, combined with Sultan Iskandar's measures in the ulu, brought a marked increase in tin deliveries. In September

145. KA 2885 OB 1761, Visboom's Day Register, under date 1 June 1759. See also Appendix E.

146. KA 2884 OB 1761, 2nd Reg. Boelen to Batavia, 26 Dec. 1760, foll. 6-7. Visboom's superiors were obviously pleased with his work. He was later appointed commander of the Melaka garrison and a member of the Melaka Council in 1761. Stapel, Corpus Diplomaticum, p. 204; Netscher, De Nederlanders, p. 115.

1759 the resident reported that he had been able to buy a large amount of tin and that Sultan Iskandar was ready to sell his entire supply.¹⁴⁷

This improvement may be traced to further innovation in the ulu areas described to the Dutch in later years. Having established an effective administration over the Indah/Intan districts, Sultan Iskandar also succeeded in making the home market for tin more attractive. This was done by encouraging the district heads in the ulu always to have on hand goods which could be exchanged for tin. By this method, the mine workers could obtain their daily necessities without being tempted to go to Kedah, only two days' travel away.¹⁴⁸ "This all had good results and under this government all the tin was brought down to Perak."¹⁴⁹ Once again, Sultan Iskandar and the Melaka Governor appeared to have reached a working relationship. In later years the Dutch were to look back on this reign as a period when the alliance functioned most smoothly and when the profits from the tin trade were at their greatest. Malays also remembered this period as one of greatness, not because of the treaty so much as the achievements of Sultan Iskandar, achievements which are recorded in the Perak court chronicle, the Misa Melayu. To ignore this text and write a history of Perak based purely on Dutch records might convey the impression that the Malays were concerned with little else except the alliance with the Dutch and the tin collection.

147. KA 2885 OB 1761, Wasbeek and Meyer to Boelen, 8 Sept. 1759; Boelen to Meyer, 14 May 1759; KA 2884 OB 1761, Boelen to Batavia, 2nd Reg. 26 Dec. 1760, foll. 79-83.

148. KA 3166 OB 1770, Werndly's Report, 11 Sept. 1768.

149. Ibid.

It is only when the VOC account is juxtaposed with the Malay history that a sense of proportion is restored. The Company treaty brought an unprecedented period of prosperity and peace, which made possible the rise of an outstanding ruler and the blossoming of what was seen as a glorious reign. It is this ruler and this reign which is celebrated in the Misa Melayu.

Chapter IV

THE REIGN OF SULTAN ISKANDAR SYAH, AS DESCRIBED

IN THE MISA MELAYU

The records of the Dutch East India Company contain a substantial body of material relating to eighteenth century Perak, the details and emphasis of which vary according to whether events are viewed from Amsterdam, Batavia, Melaka, or the residency at Tanjung Putus. Yet even if these Dutch sources had been lost or destroyed, there would still remain a testimony to Sultan Iskandar's reign in the Malay chronicle called the Misa Melayu, written by Raja Culan, a member of the Perak court circle. This text provides the historian with a perfect complement to the account of Sultan Iskandar as given in the VOC documents. The latter, despite the detailed information they supply, are essentially the work of outsiders, observers of the Perak scene; the Misa Melayu, on the other hand, takes us into the world of the Perak court and of Sultan Iskandar Zulkarnain Syah himself.

This text was not written casually or without purpose. Sultan Iskandar emerges in the Dutch sources as a man aware of his place in history, a ruler convinced that his reign was somehow different from those of his predecessors. He probably hoped, like Malay kings elsewhere that wherever traders gathered, Perak was mentioned as a place where laws

were just, food cheap and trade brisk, for fame provided the criterion of success.¹ Sultan Iskandar, however, wanted more than fame in his own time; he wanted his name to live on forever. In 1753, Raja Culan tells us, Sultan Iskandar built a new city because he wished to leave something which could be passed on to his grandchildren "in the days to come."² Eight years later he decided to construct a fort that would stand as an abiding tanda, a symbol of his reign.³ And in the same spirit that he built a town, a fort, a palace, a mosque, Sultan Iskandar commissioned his cousin, Raja Culan, to write a hikayat, a history which would capture for posterity the greatness of this time. He could assume that this hikayat would be preserved, recopied, and recited, as other texts were, and would therefore survive. Buildings, no matter how fine, could be destroyed or could decay, but the name of a prince whose achievements were celebrated in a hikayat would last until the end of time.⁴ In the words of Raja Culan, "My lord commanded, I composed."⁵

Sultan Iskandar was fortunate in that his cousin was admirably suited to the task of chronicler. Firstly, as a member of the royal

1. Abdullah Hj. Musa Lubis, ed., Kesah Raja Marong Mahawangsa (Kuala Lumpur, 1965), p. 21; Brown, "Malay Annals," pp. 31, 157; A. H. Hill, trans., "Hikayat Raja-Raja Passai," JMBRAS, XXXIII, 2 (1960), 65; Kasim Ahmad, ed., Hikayat Hang Tuah (Kuala Lumpur, 1968), p. 17.

2. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 60.

3. Ibid., p. 120.

4. Shelly Errington, A Study of Genre: Meaning and Form in the Malay Hikayat Hang Tuah, Ph.D. thesis, Cornell University, 1974, expands upon this point in her conclusion. I am most grateful to Dr. Errington for her critical comments on this chapter.

5. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 182.

family, Raja Culan was intimately acquainted with the details of court life. He was born Raja Culan ibni Raja Hamid ibni Sultan Mansur Syah and was cousin of all four brothers who ruled from 1752 until the end of the century. The ties between him and the main figures in the hikayat were very strong. One of his sisters, for example, married Raja (later Sultan) Alauddin and another married Raja di Hilir Inu, who was afterwards appointed Raja Bendahara.⁶ During the reign of Sultan Muzafar, Raja Culan ranked fourth in the hierarchy of anak raja and at the betrothal ceremonies of his cousins, Raja Iskandar and Raja Budak Rasul, he was awarded with the title Raja Kecil Besar.⁷ In 1766 he was made Raja Bendahara⁸ and in 1773, Raja Muda.⁹ Had it not been for his death in 1787, Raja Culan would probably have succeeded as ruler.¹⁰

6. Ibid., pp. 34, 193; Silsilah Raja-Raja Perak II, fo. 5, line 13.

7. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 37, 41.

8. Ibid., p. 186.

9. KA 3104 OB 1768, Wiederholt to Schippers, 5 May 1766; Winstedt's note in Misa Melayu, p. 195. Raja Culan himself married two wives, one of whom was of royal birth and the other a commoner (orang keluaran), the daughter of the Sri Maharaja Lela, Datuk Osman of Kota Lama. Silsilah Raja-Raja Perak II, fo. 10, lines 14-15, fo. 11, lines 1-15.

10. He was accorded the posthumous title of Marhum Pulau Juar. At the time there were rumours that Raja Culan had been poisoned by his cousin, the Sultan Muda. Over a century later some people still believed that he had been murdered, possibly by a jealous husband. One of his descendants, Raja Culan ibni Sultan Abdullah, told Winstedt that this was not correct and that his namesake had died a natural death while holding the office of Raja Muda. Maxwell, "The History of Perak from Native Sources (1884)," p. 310; Silsilah Melaka Kerajaan Negeri Perak, fo. 31, lines 5; KA 3075 OB 1789, Diederhove to de Bruyn, 15 Feb. 1787; Winstedt's notes in the Misa Melayu, p. 195.

Secondly, Raja Culan was, by Perak standards, an educated man. He had studied for a time with a certain Imam Panjang, and the ties between him and his old teacher remained close. When the son of Imam Panjang was thwarted in his marriage plans by the Sri Maharaja Lela, he turned to his father's former pupil, now Raja Kecil Besar, for help.¹¹ The Misa Melayu shows that, at appropriate moments, Raja Culan could quote passages from the Koran, while the language and descriptions suggest that he was well acquainted with literary works from other courts. The Dutch themselves considered him "an upright man, well versed in the laws."¹² Raja Culan was not only considered something of a scholar but was also acknowledged to have considerable literary talent. At the time, we are told, he was thought to be "the cleverest man in Perak at composing prose and verse."¹³ In the text of the Misa Melayu he included several of his own pantun, the most well-known type of Malay poetry, and later experimented in a less popular genre, the syair.¹⁴

Thirdly, Raja Culan had been associated with Sultan Iskandar for many years and was obviously a warm admirer of his policy towards the Dutch who, for their part, were aware of his support. When Raja Culan was appointed Raja Bendahara in 1766, the resident was pleased, noting that Sultan Iskandar's cousin was a "well-loved man."¹⁵ Despite his

11. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 100-101.

12. KA 3104 OB 1768, Wiederholt to Schippers, 5 May 1766; Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 182, 116.

13. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 41.

14. See Appendix A.

occasional opposition, the Dutch generally felt that in Raja Culan they had "a good friend" and greatly regretted his death.¹⁶ Raja Culan clearly approved of Sultan Iskandar's style of government, especially the disciplined attention given to state matters and the numerous royal trips to outlying areas. When he states that "during this time there was no one who was tyrannised . . . the fame and importance of the country increased," Raja Culan does so with conviction.¹⁷

It is only recently that Malay texts have been examined using literary criticism as a referent rather than philology.¹⁸ From such studies certain generalisations can be inferred about the structure and style of hikayat, since Malay chronicles, regardless of origin, stemmed from a common culture and possessed a common vocabulary. Discussion of these generalisations represents a study in itself, but some features of hikayat should be borne in mind during the following description of Sultan Iskandar's reign as it appears in the Misa Melayu.

Events in the Misa Melayu, as in other hikayat, are recorded episodically. While the narrative progresses through time, incidents are treated as separate and discrete, even though they might have been contiguous or contemporaneous. A Malay hikayat does not use the words "meanwhile" or "at the same time," but simply begins each episode anew

15. KA 3104 OB 1768, Wiederholt to Schippers, 5 May 1766.

16. KA 3074 OB 1789, Diedenhover to de Bruyn, 15 Feb. 1787; de Bruyn to Diedenhover, 23 March 1787.

17. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 97, 106.

18. See, for example, Errington, A Study of Genre.

with the phrase "here is the story" or "the story is now set out." (Maka tersebutlah pula perkataan) There is never any real sense of a number of events occurring simultaneously.¹⁹ At public recitations any episode could stand as an individual entity, pleasing and edifying even when divorced from the hikayat as a whole. Like other Malay texts, the Misa Melayu is made up of aesthetically shaped sequences, strung together like "a necklace of pearls" or "a garland of flowers."²⁰

Secondly, the repetition of words and phrases which in translation sounds monotonous is an integral part of the text. In the original Malay there is a balance, a harmony, an almost lyrical quality that results from this repetition and which is only apparent when the work is read aloud. Malay hikayat were not meant to be perused quietly at home but were intended to be recited wholly or in part at a public performance.²¹ The hikayat was designed to appeal particularly to the aural sense, and sound and meaning thus become part of one unity. The manner in which an event is expressed is as important as the event itself.

Certain conventions also governed a hikayat's treatment of such subjects as kingship. Throughout Malay literature, a successful ruler is depicted as a person of noble descent and great distinction, possessed of particular powers that are subsumed in the word daulat, or royal sanctity.²² He is wise, learned and just, famous because of his religious

19. This point is developed in Errington, A Study of Genre, pp. 4-7.

20. R. J. Wilkinson, P.M.S. Literature (Kuala Lumpur, 1907-1925), p. 5.

21. See Errington, A Study of Genre, pp. 1-2, 10, and pp. 51-52 where the author discusses the problems of translating a Malay text.

knowledge and his pious deeds. His virtue is reflected in the prosperity of the country and the happiness of his subjects, who submit themselves to him in grateful loyalty. Under his rule food is cheap and trade active; many merchants come from other countries and frequent the port because of the glory and justice of the ruler, whose very presence attracts wealth.²³ Such a ruler inhabits a world conceptualised in terms of how a king should live. He marries a princess of a prestigious lineage, as fair and virtuous as he is wise and just. Her beauty surpasses all description and there is none other who is her equal.²⁴ He builds a magnificent palace, the like of which has never been seen;²⁵ he engages in

22. For a discussion of daulat, see R. J. Wilkinson, "Some Malay Studies," JMBRAS, X, 1 (1932), 78; Andaya, The Kingdom of Johor, pp. 47-48; Errington, A Study of Genre, pp. 30-31, 126-127; Barbara Andaya, The Nature of the State in Eighteenth Century Perak, unpublished paper presented to a colloquium on the Nature of the State in Pre-Colonial Southeast Asia, A.N.U. Canberra, 1973. The ruler was considered to possess this special quality, daulat, by virtue of his birth and position. Daulat subsumed a number of concepts rarely articulated concerning the immutable nature of kingship, the sacredness of a ruler's person and the unseen forces which guarded him. Berdaulat, "to have daulat," became an accepted part of a ruler's title. In Malay texts daulat is often invoked to explain mysterious events.
23. For example, S. O. Robson, ed., Hikayat Andakan Penurut (The Hague, 1969), pp. 65, 105; Kassim Ahmad, ed., Hikayat Hang Tuah, pp. 16-17; Brown, "Malay Annals," pp. 15, 31, 157, 187; Musa Lubis, Marong Mahawangsa, pp. 21, 39. For a discussion of the relationship between ruler and wealth, see Wolters, The Fall of Srivijaya, pp. 97-98.
24. Brown, "Malay Annals," pp. 15, 48; Kassim Ahmad, Hikayat Hang Tuah, pp. 90, 232-233.
25. Compare, for example, Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 92-94; Brown, "Malay Annals," p. 87; Teugku Iskandar, ed., Bustanu's Salatin (Kuala Lumpur, 1966), p. 37.

kingly pursuits, such as elephant trapping, tuba fishing, and buffalo hunting; he takes his court on a pleasure trip.²⁶

Stories illustrating the exploits and achievements of kingly heroes are found throughout Malay literature and provided the accepted exemplar for a Malay chronicler. The recurrence of similar themes, characters and descriptions in hikayat is due to the respect with which past works were regarded. As Munshi Abdullah explained nearly seventy years after Raja Culan's death, a pengarang or chronicler never forgot that the stories now before him were produced by educated men. He could profit best by referring to these and adapting them to his own purposes, introducing changes only when this would lead to improvement. "Thus does our work become ever finer and finer, shedding light on that which is already clear."²⁷ Innovation in style or treatment was not valued. As Raja Culan realised, his task was to tell the story of Sultan Iskandar's reign in the time-honoured manner which could be trusted to "delight the hearts and rejoice the imagination" of both his patron and audience.²⁸ There was only one idiom in which a royal wedding, the beauty of a princess, or the excitement of a battle, could be described. This meant that wherever Malay was spoken a hikayat would be enjoyed and appreciated. Through

26. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 72, 97; Hill, "Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai," pp. 113-114, 129. A searching analysis of many of these conventions has recently been published which, though illustrated by reference to a Balinese babad, finds direct parallels in Malay literature. P. J. Worsley, Babad Buleleng, a Balinese Dynastic Genealogy (The Hague, 1972), especially pp. 1-46, 76-82. See also Andaya, Nature of the State in Eighteenth Century Perak.

27. Hill, "Hikayat Abdullah," p. 98.

28. C. Skinner, Sja'ir Perang Mengkasar, VKI, 40 (1963), 7.

its recitation, experiences were shared which reinforced story and legend, providing common beliefs which "explained the past and present and provided a basis for interpreting the future."²⁹ The hikayat form, found throughout the Malay world, functioned not only to resolve contradictions in past history, but to shape reality in terms of an explicable and understandable mould.³⁰

Raja Culan did not lack for examples on which to model his work. By the middle of the eighteenth century, when he began to write, the golden age of classical Malay literature was already past. The courts of Melaka, Aceh and Johor had produced a large number of works which had begun to attract even the attention of the Dutch. In 1736, sixteen years before Sultan Iskandar succeeded to the Perak throne, the VOC published, at its own expense, a pioneer work on Malay literature and language by the Swiss scholar-missionary, George Werndly.³¹ Werndly described 69 Malay texts which had been brought to his notice, among which were the Hikayat Iskandar, the Bustanu's Salatin, the Sejarah Melayu, the Hikayat Aceh and the Hikayat Hang Tuah.³² He stressed, however, that his list

29. This comment, made about myth in general, seems particularly relevant to hikayat. See Claude Levi-Strauss, "The Structural Study of Myth," in Structural Anthropology (New York, 1963), pp. 205, 226.
30. This is quoted in B. Malinowski, Magic, Science and Religion (New York, 1954), pp. 125-126 in reference to myth in general.
31. George Hendrik Werndly, Maleische Spraakkunst (Amsterdam, 1736), pp. 343-356. See also J. Gonda, "De Inaugureele Rede van Werndly," Indische Gids, 59, 2 (1937), 1067-1075.
32. Werndly, Maleische Spraakkunst, pp. 344, 345, 246, 251, 352. See also a list compiled ten years earlier in Francois Valentijn, Oud en Nieuw Oost Indies (Amsterdam, 1726), III, 26-27.

was incomplete and that there were certainly many more works which could be found in the various Malay courts. "The Malays," he concluded, "are not an unrefined people. Among them, language and knowledge blossom."³³

Though Perak was never a great literary centre, it was still part of this living cultural and literary tradition. It has been suggested, for example, that Malay versions of the Panji Tales, called simply Misa Jawa, were well known in eighteenth century Perak and Raja Culan notes that at court festivities the reading of hikayat was a popular form of entertainment.³⁴ Over a century later, a traveller in Perak observed how villagers still enjoyed listening to recitations of parts of the Hikayat Hang Tuah as well as "Arabic and Hindu romances."³⁵ Sultan Iskandar himself conceived the idea of building a palace (mahaligai) which would be like those described in old stories and hikayat, indicating that he, too, enjoyed such recitations.³⁶ When he presented "two books" to the resident in 1749, he obviously considered them a worthy gift and, indeed, Werndly specifically mentions that Malays placed great value on their texts, being reluctant even to lend them for fear they would not be returned.³⁷

33. Werndly, Maleische Spraakkunst, p. 357.

34. Teungku Iskandar, "Misa Melayu dan Pengarang-nya," Dewan Bahasa, IX, 6 (1965), 245-251; Hussain bin Mahmud, "Sadikit Tentang Misa Perabu Jaya," Dewan Bahasa, IX, 9 (1965), 396-402; Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 41, 55.

35. Bird, The Golden Chersonese, p. 357.

36. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 90-91.

37. KA 2654 OB 1751, Sultan Iskandar to Resident, enclosed in Albinus to

Sultan Iskandar, it becomes clear, was well acquainted with the deeds of literary heroes, whose achievements provided a scale of worth and quality against which his own reign could be measured. Raja Culan similarly came to his task with a very precise understanding of the manner in which historical events should be recorded. The Misa Melayu was consequently written according to the best traditions of Malay literature, fully justifying Sultan Iskandar's choice of chronicler. Yet despite the conventions of form and language, it is apparent that Raja Culan is describing a man and a period with which he is intimately acquainted. His concern lies not with events in a distant, indeterminate past, but with "the present time" (zaman sekarang), a phrase which is reiterated throughout the text. The Misa Melayu was intended not as a vague tribute to kingship, but, in a very real sense, as a record of what was felt to be a unique period. Each achievement or state occasion in Sultan Iskandar's reign is one pearl in the necklace, one flower in the garland, one diamond in the crown; together, they make up the splendour of the zaman. Every episode, exploited to the full, contributes to the brilliance of the whole.

The Misa Melayu, like most Malay texts, begins with a recitation of the ruler's genealogy. This invocation of progenitor and ancestors was not merely a conventional statement. In traditional Malay society, the genealogy of the king was of immense symbolic and practical significance. It was not a historical record so much as an "assertion of a

37. (cont'd.)

Batavia, 16 Feb. 1759 (Res. 3 July 1749), fo. 49; Werndly, Maleische Spraakkunst, p. 356.

moral order, a claim to the right of succession" and was thus a highly political document.³⁸ Thrones could be lost and betrothals refused because of inferior ancestry. The Sejarah Melayu, for example, relates how the legendary Raja of Kelinga would not accept the suitors who came to ask for his daughter's hand because "they are not of a lineage such as mine."³⁹ A century after the death of Sultan Iskandar objections were raised to the election of Raja Ismail to the Perak throne "for he is not descended from the kings of Perak."⁴⁰ Seven years later, when Isabella Bird visited the Malay states, she remarked that the genealogies of rulers and nobles were jealously guarded, "preserved with superstitious care and kept from common eyes."⁴¹

On the death of a Perak ruler, his successor was normally chosen from among his immediate male relatives. The closer the relationship with the former Sultan, the greater the chance of succession. As we have seen, during the last years of Sultan Muzafar's reign, three princes-- Sultan Berkabat, Raja 'Alim and Raja Iskandar--all claimed certain rights to the throne. In the ensuing struggles, the merits of their respective

38. James J. Fox, "A Rotinese Dynastic Genealogy: Structure and Event," in The Translation of Culture: Essays to E. E. Evans Pritchard, ed., T. O. Beidelman (London, 1971), pp. 44-45, 68. The Malay word for genealogy, silsilah, adopted from Arabic, symbolised much more than a mere listing of relationships. "Through it those dead and yet unborn were intimately linked in the minds of the living." G. Lienhardt, Social Anthropology (London, 1964), p. 139.

39. Brown, "Malay Annals," p. 34.

40. G7, Letters from Native Rulers, Raja Muda of Perak to Gov. of Penang, 21 Feb. 1872, fo. 19.

41. Bird, The Golden Chersonese, p. 19.

genealogies must have been hotly debated. The details of these might appear confusing, but to Malays of the time they were crystal clear and of great political significance. Sultan Berkabat's father, the legendary Raja Kecil, was believed by many to be a son of Sultan Mahmud of Johor; his mother was a Kedah princess, no mere gundik but a "lawful wife" of Raja Kecil.⁴² When Verbrugge arrived in Perak in early 1746, Sultan Berkabat was already betrothed to Sultan Mazafar's daughter.⁴³

Raja 'Alim's genealogy was also a formidable one. His father was a member of the Kedah royal house and his mother a sister of Sultan Muza'far, who had herself been adopted by a reigning ruler.⁴⁴ By birth, Raja 'Alim's claims were at least equal, and possibly greater than those of Raja Iskandar. Although the latter's father was Sultan Muhammad, his mother was not a member of the royal family but an anak baik, the daughter of a Kinta noble.⁴⁵ In this situation, it is probable that many members of the Perak court looked for a solution in the old Perak law code. "What is the rule to be followed in the case of a raja dying, when all his surviving descendents claim to succeed?" . . . 'Firstly, the eldest child will succeed; in default of him, a younger may take his place, provided he is anak gahara, or royal blood on both sides.'⁴⁶ Unlike Sultan Berkabat and Raja 'Alim, Sultan Iskandar was not an anak gahara.

42. See Chapter II, notes 59 and 60.

43. See Chapter II, pp. 118-120.

44. See Chapter II, pp. 159-60, and Silsilah Melaka Kerajaan Negeri Perak, fo. 28, line 15.

45. Ibid., fo. 28^v, line 6. Another Perak genealogy, the Silsilah Raja-Raja Perak I, claims that Sultan Iskandar's father was also adopted by Sultan Mahmud Syah (Marhum Besar). See fo. 30, lines 3-6.

The Misa Melayu's description of the challenges launched by Sultan Berkabat and Raja 'Alim clearly shows that these disputes were not forgotten even when Raja Culan was writing, over a decade later. In this context, the normal recitation of the dynastic genealogy assumes even greater significance. Raja Culan wastes no time. "The origin of the raja whose story is now to be told" he says in his opening paragraph, "is from Raja Iskander Zul-Karnain [Alexander the Great] who came down from the sun."⁴⁷ From this glorious progenitor, Sultan Iskandar can trace his lineage through to the legendary princes who were believed to have appeared on Bukit Si Guntang and to become the first Malay kings.⁴⁸ An unbroken line of descent, says Raja Culan, joins Sultan Iskandar and his zaman to this glorious past.⁴⁹ It is surely no coincidence that, in his reign name, Sultan Iskandar adopted the honorific Zul-karnain, one which would have evoked memories of his noble ancestor.⁵⁰

Having established this proud heritage, Raja Culan moves on immediately to the mid-seventeenth century, to al-Marhum Jalilu'llah, whom he calls the "first" ruler of Perak.⁵¹ In a sense he was correct,

46. Rigby, Ninety-Nine Laws of Perak, pp. 51, 83.

47. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 21.

48. See Chapter I, n. 31.

49. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 21. "Maka lalu turun temurunlah, ganti berganti Khalifatu'llah dengen beberapa julat sudah dahulu daripada zaman ini, maka sampailah sekarang."

50. I have previously suggested that careful thought was put into the selection of a reigning title, and into the posthumous title of a ruler. See Chapter 1, n. 107.

51. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 21.

for other genealogies show that this prince, Sultan Muzafar of Siak, himself descended from the Bukit Si Guntang line, had begun a new dynasty in Perak by marrying the princess who was the last survivor of the old lineage.⁵² In less than a page, Raja Culan gives an abbreviated history of events in the early eighteenth century and his narrative effectively starts with the disputes that broke out in Perak sometime before 1746.

Sultan Muzafar, Sultan Iskandar's uncle, established his capital at Brahmana Indra.⁵³ He had ruled there for some time, says Raja Culan, when "with the will of Allah, confusion (huru-hara) broke out in country . . . and His Majesty moved upstream to Kuala Kangsar."⁵⁴ As the Dutch sources reveal, this huru-hara was in fact a deeply divisive civil war resulting from an attempt by Raja Iskandar and his Bugis allies to seize the throne from Sultan Muzafar. Verbrugge, in his report of early 1746, speaks of Sultan Muzafar's move upstream "to a small negeri where elephants roam," but Raja Culan assures us it was a royal residence established according to time-honoured custom. Sultan Muzafar, he says, "built a palace complete with a fort and ditches" and appointed his own ministers, a Bendahara, Orang Kaya Besar, Temenggong and Menteri. Perak was divided into two, with Sultan Muzafar ruling the ulu down to Pacat and his brother, Sultan Muhammad, governing the hilir area from his residence at Pulau Tiga.⁵⁵

52. Silsilah Melaka Kerajaan Negeri Perak, fo. 27v, lines 3-10; Silsilah Raja-Raja Perak 1, foll. 31-31A.

53. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 22. Brahmana Indra is Bota, about sixty miles from Kuala Perak.

54. Ibid. Kuala Kangsar is about thirty miles beyond Bota.

Sultan Muhammad is not mentioned in Verbrugge's account, which shows clearly that the dominating figure in the court at Pulau Tiga was Sultan Muhammad's eldest son, Raja Iskandar.⁵⁶ The Misa Melayu also indicates that Sultan Muhammad's installation as ruler was purely nominal and that the real power rested with Raja Iskandar.

His Majesty had eight children, five sons and three daughters. The names of the sons were Raja Iskandar, Raja Kimas, Raja Alauddin, Raja Inu and Raja Kecil Bungsu. Raja Iskandar was the one entitled Raja Muda and he governed on behalf of his father, Sultan Muhammad Syah. He was followed by all the orang besar and was obeyed by all the anak raja in Perak. He was loved and respected by all the hulubalang and the people. Everyone loved and feared the Raja Muda, whose name became famous in other countries. His Majesty was blessed with good fortune (tuah), royal sanctity (daulat), wisdom, understanding and nobility. He was generous in all his words and governed according to the laws of Allah and of adat, protecting all the people. Several times enemies and foes came, but with the special fortune and daulat of His Majesty, and the wisdom of his words, Allah did not allow any harm to come to Perak.⁵⁷

To those familiar with the descriptions of kings given in classical Malay hikayat, this portrayal of Raja Iskandar contains nothing of particular originality. It is one which, with some variation, can be found in a number of texts and which owes much to descriptions of just kings contained in Islamic texts like the Mahkota Segala Raja (Taj us Salatin).⁵⁸ In terms of accepted literary standards, there could be no

55. Ibid., pp. 22-23. See also Chapter II, pp. 117-120, 159-161.

56. Ibid., p. 22

57. Ibid., pp. 22-23.

58. Khalid Hussain, ed., Taj us-Salatin (Kuala Lumpur, 1966). This well known text, written in the early seventeenth century in the Acehese

better way to depict Raja Iskandar than to employ the elegant words and phrases which all those who listened would have recognised as applicable to a great king. Nothing could be more stirring or more pleasurable than to hear again the familiar description, this time applied not to a ruler of Bentan or Aceh, but to the Raja Muda of Perak itself.

Raja Culan now turns to the events which took place during the years when Raja Iskandar was Raja Muda of Perak, a period which Dutch sources show covered about eight years, from 1746 until 1752. He does not attempt to give a month by month account. Instead, Raja Culan selected those events which he considered contributed to Raja Iskandar's eventual success, those which had the greatest influence on his early career: his reconciliation with Sultan Muzafar, the defeat of Sultan Berkabat, the treaty with the Dutch, the exile of Raja 'Alim, the death of his father, and finally, his betrothal and marriage to Raja Budak Rasul, Sultan Muzafar's daughter.

Most of these events also came to the attention of the Governors in Melaka, Albinus and van Heemskerck, both Raja Culan's contemporaries. By the standards of their own societies, all three were educated men;

58. (cont'd.)

court, is one of those listed by Werndly (Maleische Spraakkunst, p. 344). It is modelled on the "wisdom" literature of the Middle East, especially Persia, and especially on the guides for kings like Nizam al Mulk's Siyasat Nama. See R. Levy, An Introduction to Persian Literature (New York and London, 1969), p. 51; R. Levy, trans., A Mirror for Princes, The Qabus Nama (London, 1951); H. Darke, trans., The Book of Government or the Rules of Kings (London, 1960); F. R. C. Bagby, The Book of Council for Kings (Oxford, 1964). Even in the early nineteenth century, Abdullah Munshi advised all rulers to read the Taj us-Salatin carefully every day and heed its advice, since this would aid in good government. Kassim Ahmad, ed., Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah (Kuala Lumpur, 1960), pp. 38, 57.

Albinus was the son of a Leiden Professor, van Heemskerck's father was a Delft lawyer, and Raja Culan was a celebrated pengarang and poet.⁵⁹ But they came from vastly different cultural backgrounds and wrote with very different aims. Albinus and van Heemskerck sent their missives to Batavia as part of their administrative duties, to summarise VOC trading fortunes in the Melaka area, to explain fortunes or successes and offer suggestions for future policy. Raja Culan, on the other hand, was writing a chronicle which would please his patron, conform to literary standards of the time and provide a fitting memorial of Sultan Iskandar's zaman. It is therefore understandable that, when describing the division of the country, he makes no reference to Raja Iskandar's alliance with the Bugis or of the enmity which divided him from his uncle. In Malay terms, derhaka or treason to the ruler, was a heinous crime.⁶⁰

The differences between the Misa Melayu and the VOC records are easily explicable in view of their contrasting nature and purpose. More striking are the similarities which emerge, the degree to which Raja Culan and the Melaka governors agreed as to the events which were crucial in establishing Sultan Iskandar on the Perak throne.

59. Resandt, De Gezaghebbers, pp. 220-222; see above, p. 240.

60. When Sultan Husain Syah of Singapore told Thomas Raffles that a person convicted of treason should, according to Malay custom, be killed "together with his family and relations to the last man, his house uprooted, roof to the ground, pillars uppermost and the soil on which it stands thrown into the sea," he was repeating the penalty meted out to Hang Kasturi for his derhaka, a penalty recorded by the author of the Sejarah Melayu over three hundred years before. Hill, Hikayat Abdullah, p. 174; Brown, "Malay Annals," pp. 27, 86. The so-called Siak Chronicle describes the terrible fate of Megat Sri Rama, who was instrumental in the killing of Sultan Mahmud of Johor in 1699. Grass grew in a wound in his foot caused by the Sultan's keris and it did not heal for four years. Cod. Or. 7304, Leiden. Univ. Library, fol. 409, lines 1-9.

The future of Perak would obviously have been vastly different if the division of the country into two negeri had remained permanent, but when Verbrugge arrived in early 1746, ulu and hilir were once again united. While the Dutch sources stress the economic necessity which urged reconciliation between the two rulers, Raja Culan depicts the reunion in terms of the impossible situation created by the existence of two kings in one country, a sentiment found elsewhere in Malay literature.⁶¹ For some time, he says, Sultan Muzafar governed at Kuala Kangsar.

But now let us turn to Sultan Muhammad Syah governing at Pulau Tiga. One day His Majesty was sitting in the balai penghadapan [hall of audience] with his sons, the Raja Muda and the Raja Kecil Muda [Raja Iskandar and Raja Kimas] as well as all the orang besar and hulubalang. His Majesty said to his son the Raja Muda and all the orang besar, "How is it that we now have one negeri and two raja? I feel we should ask Sultan Muzafar Syah to return to his palace at Brahmna Indra [Bota], so that the government can be restored to him. It would be better that I cease to govern, because His Majesty is the elder brother. I do not think it suitable that I should be greater than he."⁶²

This suggestion met with the court's approval and, after a few days, the ruler left, escorted by his sons as well as the entire court. When they reached Brahmna Indra, where Sultan Muzafar had formerly lived, Raja Iskandar left the party to make ready the royal residence.⁶³

Sultan Muzafar reached Kuala Kangsar and went to make obeisance to his elder brother, Sultan Muhammad Syah.

61. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 24; Raja Ali Haji, Tuhfat al-Nafis, p. 48; Musa Lubis, Marong Mahawangsa, p. 208.

62. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 24.

63. Ibid., pp. 24-25.

The latter welcomed Sultan Muzafar with the greatest honour, in the presence of all the orang besar, the hulubalang and people. . . . The two brothers kissed and embraced each other and wept.

Sultan Muzafar then asked, "Why did my younger brother come here?" Sultan Muhammad answered, "I came to see my elder brother and to ask him to return to the palace at Brahmana Indra." Sultan Muhammad said, "If that is the wish of my younger brother and of all my children, I will return to Brahmana Indra."⁶⁴

The reunion was celebrated with a great feast, during which the two brothers ate from the same plate and took sirih together, a gesture which can be regarded as a symbol of friendship and equality.⁶⁵ Then, Raja Culan goes on, the task began of loading Sultan Muzafar's belongings, his regalia and household goods on to perahu and rafts. A large number of boats were necessary because "at that time Sultan Muzafar was richer than his father had been."⁶⁶ After several days all the perahu were loaded and the party moved on downstream to Brahmana Indra, where Sultan Muzafar took up residence in the newly restored istana which, under the Raja Muda's direction, had been made "more beautiful than before." Sultan Muhammad returned to Pulau Tiga "and peace came to Perak."⁶⁷

Verbrugge's account of events in 1746, it will be remembered, is often confusing and unclear.⁶⁸ The Misa Melayu's version of the same

64. Ibid., p. 25.

65. Brown, "Malay Annals," 126, 197; Arnold van Gennep, "The Rites of Passage", trans., M. B. Vizedom and G. L. Caffee (Chicago, 1960), p. 29.

66. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 26.

67. Ibid.

68. See Chapter II, pp. 160.

period provides the historian with a tantalising glimpse into a world closed to Dutch eyes. The result is a puzzle, the general shape of which is obvious, but from which many details are missing. It is apparent, however, that Sultan Muzafar's move downstream was marked by a changed atmosphere in the court. "All the orang besar given titles by the Yang di Pertuan when he was at Kuala Kangsar were dismissed, because they did not follow him."⁶⁹ New ministers were appointed, whom we can assume were all amenable to the favoured place of the Raja Muda in the administration. Megat Pendi became Bendahara, Tun Marasin was the new Orang Kaya Besar, Tan Bantan the Temenggong and Syarif Husain was made Menteri. "After this, the reign of Sultan Musafar Syah was established in Perak and there was no one who brought about confusion any more."⁷⁰

Although these newly appointed Orang Empat Besar play only a minor role in the Dutch sources, they are more prominent in the Misa Melayu. Their promotion would certainly have been the result of some thought. Gullick, describing Malay society over a century later, has emphasised that an individual's influence within the court, his loyalty or opposition to the ruler, was often dictated by the status of his own family lineage and the attitudes of its members.⁷¹ A wise ruler would therefore seek to ensure the loyalty of prestigious and influential lineage heads.

In eighteenth century Perak, two of the most prominent family

69. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 26.

70. Ibid., pp. 26-27.

71. Gullick, Indigenous Political Systems, pp. 65-73.

groups were the Megat family and the Syeds or Syarifs.⁷² The Megats claimed descent from Megat Terawis, the legendary Minangkabau prince believed to be a son of the Raja of Pagar Ruyong and descended from a prince of Bukit Si Guntang.⁷³ The Megats not only possessed a genealogy as old as that of the ruler himself, but had married into many of the leading families in both Perak and Kedah.⁷⁴ When Sultan Muzafar had lived at Kuala Kangsar, the positions of Orang Kaya Besar and Temenggong had both been held by Megats and it was an astute political move to instal another as Bendahara in the new administration.

The Syarif family in Perak traced their line from the Prophet himself and were thus entitled to veneration from all Moslems. They were believed to possess special qualities, "supernatural power" ('al-sulṭat al rūhiyah) which gave them an honoured position in Perak, as elsewhere

72. The title Megat, said to indicate royal descent on one side, is now obsolete in Perak, and it is not clear whether it was only inherited, or whether it could also be conferred as an honorific. In 1778, for example, a Megat, said to be a Moor, is listed as the ruler's confidant. KA 3446 OB 1780, Meyer to de Bruijn, 9 Dec. 1778, 16 April 1779. Genealogies shown me by Daeng Muhd. Ibrahim bin Daeng Abdul Rauf, Cik Gu Ahmad Manjang, Encik Md. Shahrudin bin Mansur and Encik Haji Buyong Adil all indicate the title came through descent. See also Winstedt and Wilkinson, "History of Perak," p. 139.

In theory there is a distinction between syeds, descended from the Prophet through his grandson Hassan, and syarifs, descended through Husain, but this distinction was not recognised in traditional Malay society (Wilkinson, Malay-English Dictionary 11, 1000). Although Raja Culan uses Syarif, it seems that Syed is more appropriate, since the Perak family was believed to have come from Hadramaut, where the Syeds had migrated. R. D. Sergeant, The Sayids of Hadramaut (London, 1957), pp. 1-29. Sergeant notes that in early times the titles were regarded as synonymous. Ibid., p. 4. See also R. O. Winstedt, "The Hadramaut Sayids of Perak and Siak," JSBRAS, 79, 2 (1918), 48-52.

73. Raja Kamaralzaman Papers, SP. 9/13, fo. 1; Datuk Sri Dr. Haji Megat Khas to author, 14 Feb. 1974.

in the Malay world.⁷⁵ In the words of Francis Light, "They are so much respected by the Malay princes that their persons are held too sacred for punishment; the only chastisement they inflict on them is either a fine or dismissal from their country."⁷⁶ The Syarifs or Syeds, as Gullick has pointed out, were the one group of outsiders that members of the royal lineage accepted as equal in status to themselves.⁷⁷

This group was not only possessed of a noble genealogy, but were also, like other Arabs, known for their trading and business acumen. In 1750, for example, the saudagar raja of the Siak ruler was a Syed and in the same year Governor Albinus complained that "the Arab priests of Muhammad's descent, called Syeds, have spread everywhere throughout the Malay countries and have given too much information to the natives."⁷⁸ Combining wealth and prestige, these men were sought after as husbands for Perak princesses and, because of their special links with religion, were often appointed as spiritual advisors to the rulers.⁷⁹ The appoint-

74. RKP SP 9/13, Silsilah Orang Kaya Besar di Kuala Kenas, foll. 1-2.

75. Sergeant, The Sayids of Hadramawt, p. 3; see also L. W. C. van den Berg, Le Hadramout et les Colonies Arabes dans l'Archipel Indien (Batavia, 1886), p. 50.

76. SSR G 34/5, Light to Corwallis, 30 July 1792 (FWCP 24 Aug. 1792), fo. 65.

77. Gullick, Indigenous Political Systems, p. 67. It will be seen later that when a mahaligai or palace was built in Perak, Raja Culan records that the Syarif, together with the royal family, had the position of honour on the topmost level. Misa Melayu, p. 95. When Munshi Abdullah went to Pahang in 1836, he noted that the Malay revered the large community of Arabs Syeds and Sheikhs there, observing the same etiquette towards them as towards a ruler. Pelayaran Abdullah, p. 55.

78. KA 2654 OB 1751, Albinus' Report on Melaka, 15 Feb. 1750, foll. 362-363.

ment of Syarif Husain as Menteri ushered in a period of even greater Syed influence in Perak and would have gained for Raja Iskandar the support of an extremely powerful lineage.

The peace established after Sultan Muzafar's return to Brahmana Indra did not endure long. The new regime faced a challenge from Sultan Berkabat, who launched an attack on Bukit Gantang, the pass which separates Larut from Kuala Kangsar. Sultan Berkabat has already made his appearance in the missives sent by Albinus to Batavia, and the Governor's reports glide smoothly into the account given by Raja Culan. Always remembering the differing reasons which prompted the writing of each source, they can be seen as the reverse and obverse sides of the same coin.

According to Raja Culan, Sultan Berkabat "the son of Raja Kecil, the Minangkabau Raja," had been a great favourite of Sultan Muzafar when the royal residence had been at Kuala Kangsar.

But after Sultan Muzafar had returned to Brahmana Indra, Sultan Berkabat came again, wishing to present himself at court. He was accompanied by Daeng Matekko and Daeng Mencilak, both Bugis princes, with all their panglima and people. He said he had been adopted by Sultan Muzafar as his son and wanted to be received at court.⁸⁰

Naturally no mention is made of Sultan Berkabat's previous betrothal to

79. Syed Hussain al Fardz bin Jamal-al ail, for example, was said to have been the teacher of the first ruler of Perak, Sultan Muzafar Syah. It was he who was reputed to have introduced the first Law Code into Perak and his burial place, beside that of Sultan Muzafar and his consort, indicates the honour accorded him. Notes and Queries, JSBRAS, 3. Issued with XVI (1886), 70; Stia Rijaya di Raja, "Graveyards of the Sultans of Perak," JSBRAS, XLVII (1907), 97; "Telok Baking: Remembering History in Perak," Malaysia in History, XIII (March 1970), 10.

80. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 27.

Raja Budak Rasul, for the inclusion of such a detail was not appropriate in a hikayat intended to glorify Sultan Iskandar's role. On the other hand, there is no attempt to belittle Sultan Berkabat or present him as anything less than a worthy opponent of Raja Iskandar. In dealing with an event which would still have been remembered and talked about, Raja Culan has no need to rely on hyperbole to evoke a response from his audience. In contrast with descriptions of court ceremonial, the style of the Sultan Berkabat episode is almost spare.

Sultan Berkabat reached Bukit Gantang, but he was not permitted to pass by the hulubalang of the ulu area. All the hulubalang of the ulu conferred with His Majesty and the Raja Muda. The Raja Muda and His Majesty ordered the Raja Kecil Besar, together with the Bendahara, all the orang besar, hulubalang and people, to go upstream.⁸¹

When the Raja Kecil Muda, Raja Iskandar's brother, and the Datuk Bendahara reached Kuala Kangsar, they found that Sultan Berkabat had already attacked Bukit Gantang. They, therefore, sent a message downstream to tell of the difficulties they had encountered in the ulu, difficulties which Raja Culan indicates were caused by the unwillingness of some people to rally against Sultan Berkabat. Hearing this, Sultan Muzafar immediately despatched Raja Iskandar upstream to investigate the situation. Those whose disloyalty had been proved by things they had said or by their reluctance to fight Sultan Berkabat were to be brought back to Brahmana Indra.⁸²

The Misa Melayu remembers the Raja Muda's expedition upstream as

81. Ibid.

82. Ibid.

a glorious occasion, when the war fleet swept up the river to Sayung and Kuala Kangsar, where Raja Iskandar joined his brother and the Bendahara. His very presence instilled courage into the hearts of the ulu people "who became increasingly brave and able to fight the enemy." They all came to make obeisance and their declarations of loyalty were rewarded with the customary gifts of clothing, "each according to his status."⁸³

When this was done, they all rose up to attack Sultan Berkabat at Bukit Gantang. Sultan Berkabat's forces scattered, his panglima died, and he returned to Kuala Pengkalan [Larut], followed by the people of Perak. When they reached Kuala Pengkalan, all the hulubalang and people returned to bring the news of victory to the Raja Muda. Raja Iskandar then returned to Brahmana Indra taking with him those people who had been summoned by His Majesty.

After reaching Brahmana Indra, the Raja Muda went to make obeisance to Sultan Muzafar Syah, who felt very happy to see his son return victorious. He was greeted by His Majesty with all the royal family, hulubalang and people. The Raja Muda then asked permission of his father to go back to Pulau Tiga. After this, Sultan Muzafar was established firmly on the throne and the government was administered by His Majesty's son, the Raja Muda.⁸⁴

Sultan Muzafar continued to rule at Brahmana Indra, while Raja Iskandar administered the government from his residence at Pulau Tiga. The next noteworthy event during this time was the coming of the Dutch Company to Tanjung Putus. "The Dutch," writes Raja Culan, "were ordered by the Kings of Batavia to go to Melaka."

From Melaka they came directly to Perak. They asked the Raja of Perak for a place, asking to settle at Pangkalan Halban. They also wished to buy tin with Dutch reals,

83. Ibid., p. 28.

84. Ibid., pp. 28-29.

and would pay 32 reals for each bahara of tin. The toll was two reals. Sultan Muzafar agreed to all the requests of the Dutch who settled at Pangkalan Halban. They built a godown and surrounded it with a fort. After this, people were not permitted to take tin with them when they went sailing, for everything was given to the Dutch. Only reals could be taken here and there. Every three years a Dutch captain came as a replacement from Batavia, and for a long time the Dutch stayed at Pangkalan Halban, guarding the mouth of the river. (Menunggu kuala Perak).⁸⁵

Raja Culan's summary of the treaty terms demonstrates a clear understanding of the salient points. It is obvious, however, that the Malays felt a prime function of the garrison was to act as watchmen, to guard the mouth of the river. The contract undoubtedly entailed restrictions, but these were acceptable, for now "a great many reals were paid to His Majesty in tolls, and all the people in Perak put by many reals."⁸⁶ Raja Culan, echoing the views of his patron, has nothing critical to say about Perak's alliance with the Kompeni Holanda. Indeed, he goes on immediately to relate an episode which shows how the Dutch, like the Perak Malays themselves, were willing to assist Sultan Muzafar and the Raja Muda in their peaceful administration of a newly flourishing Perak.

"The story is now set out of Raja 'Alim, who was ordered by Sultan Muzafar to be taken to the Dutch at Melaka."⁸⁷ The almost sparse style

85. Ibid., p. 29. Winstedt's romanisation gives only thirty, but the manuscript gives thirty two (tiga puluh dua). Hs. 632, fo. 7.

86. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 29.

87. Ibid. This name, which appears as 'Alam in the romanised version, is written as Khalim by Maxwell ("The Dutch in Perak," p. 259) and as Alim by the Dutch. The discrepancy is explained by the ambiguous Jawi spelling (حليم) and the fact that in Perak the initial letter of many names is not sounded. The Dutch translators, transcribing from

of this section, like that dealing with Sultan Berkabat, is marked off from the mellifluous, even hypnotic descriptions of marriage, installations, the building of palaces. These latter events are common to many Malay texts and, as one recent study has suggested, there was a 'formula' which dictated the manner in which they were to be depicted.⁸⁸ But each text contains events which are unique to itself and to them the 'formulaic' style does not apply. The potency of memory, the uniqueness of the event, and the unadorned manner of recounting would have compelled attention. As the preceding chapter has shown, Sultan Iskandar's court contained a number of disaffected elements, whose influence grew greater in the following reigns. But each time the story of Raja 'Alim was read, the audience would have been reminded of the punishment attendant upon those who committed the sin of derhaka.

According to Raja Culan, Raja 'Alim's father was a raja from Kedah and his mother was a sister of Sultan Muzafar. When the latter had been living at Kuala Kangsar, he had been very fond of Raja 'Alim, who had accompanied him upstream and who had been given the title Raja Kecil Besar. Even Raja Culan is willing to concede that this prince was "extremely loyal" to Sultan Muzafar, and we are told later that he married the ruler's niece.⁸⁹

87. (cont'd.)

Jawi, were themselves uncertain. On one occasion Kalim had been written, but the 'k' had been crossed out. Geoffrey Hodgson, "Malay Conventional Siblings," JMBRAS, XL, 2 (1967), 109; C. C. Brown, Country Malay (London, 1956), pp. 29 and 61, n. 8; KA 2654 OB 1751, Albinus to Batavia, 16 Feb. 1750, fo. 27.

88. Errington, A Study in Genre, Chapter IV.

89. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 31.

Then His Majesty returned to Brahmana Indra, brought by his younger brother, the Yang di Pertuan Muda Sultan Muhammad Syah. By order of Raja Iskandar, Raja 'Alim remained at Kuala Kangsar and did not accompany Sultan Muzafar when he moved.⁹⁰

Raja 'Alim fell out of favour with Sultan Mazafar, Raja Culan goes on, because he did not join the attempt to repel Sultan Berkabat, and in fact, did nothing at all. Sultan Muzafar was extremely angry, and ordered the Raja Muda to turn Raja 'Alim out of Kuala Kangsar. The latter brought his cousin downstream to Sultan Muzafar, and afterwards took him to Pulau Tiga, the residence of Sultan Muhammad. Raja 'Alim only remained at Pulau Tiga a short time, however, before he moved downstream to Tanjung Putus.⁹¹

At Tanjung Putus, Raja 'Alim refused to associate with the other anak raja, who were all under Raja Iskandar. Instead, he allied himself with Encik 'Asil, a man from Haru, to whose daughter Raja 'Alim became betrothed.⁹² His companions were "evil people, like Bugis and Haru men" Sultan Muzafar was annoyed when he heard of Raja 'Alim's activities and his anger increased when he was told the nature of the people consorting with Raja 'Alim. When Raja 'Alim came upstream to Pulau Tiga to fetch

90. Ibid., p. 30.

91. Ibid.

92. Ibid. Little is known about Cik 'Asil (حصيل). Winstedt's reference to him as "the Malay customs officer" (Misa Melayu, p. 212) is apparently based on the fact that 'asil' means product. There is no evidence for Winstedt's interpretation. The Dutch call Encik 'Asil a Bugis, and say he held the title of Orang Kaya Muda. It is possible he was originally from Sumatra, since in 1757 rumours were spread that he would be installed there as ruler. KA 2654 OB 1751 Albinus' Report on Melaka, 15 Feb. 1750, fo. 358; KA 2801 OB 1738 Dekker to Batavia, 18 Oct. 1757, fo. 129.

his family, Sultan Muzafar refused his request "because Raja 'Alim's wife was a daughter of the Raja Kecil Muda, a brother of Sultan Muzafar and Sultan Muhammad."⁹³ Acting under Sultan Muzafar's orders, the Raja Muda and orang besar took up arms against Raja 'Alim, and the fighting lasted for seven days. Raja 'Alim then retreated to Sungai Dedap, but he later returned to Tanjung Putus. Here he lived quietly and shortly afterwards married the daughter of Encik 'Asil.⁹⁴

It was not long, Raja Culan goes on, before Raja Alim made another attempt to undermine the Raja Muda's position. He assembled all the people of Tanjung Putus and bound them to him by oaths of loyalty (sumpah setia), telling them that he was planning an attack on the Raja Muda's settlement at Pulau Tiga. The people were undecided, half willing to join him and the other half unwilling to commit derhaka against Sultan Muzafar and the Raja Muda. Meanwhile, Sultan Muzafar wrote a letter to the Dutch Captain, but no one knew what its contents were. One day, after this letter had been delivered to the Captain, Raja 'Alim came to the lodge to exchange some tin for reals. The Captain then took him into the godown, "and the will of God was accomplished upon his servant, who was not allowed to sin any more." Raja 'Alim was taken by the Dutch to Melaka and later Encik 'Asil was also arrested. He too was sent to Melaka, where he was thrown into prison (gedung gelap). When this had been done, ends Raja Culan, all the people remaining in Perak submitted to Sultan Muzafar "and that ends the story of Raja 'Alim."⁹⁵

93. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 31.

94. Ibid.

Discussion of this episode must have been somewhat difficult for Raja Culan. The Laksamana, whom Dutch sources show was Raja 'Alim's closest ally, may have been alive at the very time this section was written. A brief allusion to Raja 'Alim's alliance with "men of Haru" would have been sufficient to remind the court of Nachoda Pumah's role. Similarly, the degree of support Raja Alim drew from within Perak itself raised problems. Ideally, no Malay would commit derhaka against his ruler. By referring specifically to the involvement of "Bugis and men of Haru," Raja Culan successfully deflects any accusations of treason away from Perak Malays and towards outsiders and foreigners.

But Raja Alim is clearly culpable. His downfall is inevitable, for he has chosen to pit himself against the might of the ruler himself and his Raja Muda, who can in their turn call on their loyal allies, the Dutch, who stand ready to do their bidding. In terms of the whole hikayat, the Raja 'Alim incident is merely one more step which lessens the distance between Raja Iskandar and the Perak throne.

This is also true of the following episode, the death of Raja Iskandar's father, Sultan Muhammad. As previously mentioned, the latter makes no impact on the Dutch records and we can only assume that he died sometime after Raja 'Alim's exile in 1749. This event elevated Raja Iskandar to the position of head of the family as well as second in the royal hierarchy, and thus next in line for the throne.

One day, His Majesty became very ill. His wife and all the anak raja gathered, but after they had come,

His Majesty's illness became more severe. He gave his last testament to all his children, his old slaves and most loved servants. Then came the moment and the proper time, and Sultan Muhammad Syah returned to the mercy of God.⁹⁶

As customary following a royal death, people gathered at Pulau Tiga and Sultan Muzafar himself came down from Brahmana Indra to be present at the funeral ceremonies. "Everything was conducted according to the adat when great kings die. The tabal (drum) was beaten and the customary procession went to His Majesty's grave." Along the way, alms of gold and silver were distributed to the religious officials and to those who had come to offer prayers. After the burial Sultan Muzafar did not allow the playing of the nubat, the royal orchestra, for seven days as a sign of respect. Meanwhile, Sultan Muhammad's sons supervised the construction of an elaborate kandang, or grave enclosure and for a hundred days prayers were read by the imam and alms distributed.⁹⁷

The death of Sultan Muhammad can be seen to have two results. Firstly, it led to increased status for Raja Iskandar. As Raja Culan tells us,

After his Majesty died, he was entitled Al Marhum Aminu'llah. After this, the story is told of the Raja Muda, who had governed for his father. He was firmly established, ordering the government for his father, Sultan Muzafar Syah. At that time, there was no one who was the Raja Muda's equal.⁹⁸

96. Ibid., p. 32.

97. Ibid., pp. 32-33. A hundred days was the normal mourning period following the death of a member of the royal family. SSR G34/57, Raja to Perak to Gov. of Penang, 27 Aug. 1816 (FCCP 7 Nov. 1816).

98. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 33.

Secondly, by moving on quickly to a discussion of the betrothal between Raja Budak Rasul and Raja Iskandar, the Misa Melayu indicates that the question of succession had now become all important.

Raja Budak Rasul has already made a brief appearance in the text. When Sultan Muzafar lived at Kuala Kangsar, we are told, he had a beautiful daughter. "His Majesty loved his daughter greatly, and brought her up as was fitting. But at that time she was very small."⁹⁹ Yet even then, as Dutch sources demonstrate, she was already betrothed to Sultan Berkabat. When Verbrugge returned to Melaka in December 1746, plans were afoot for a new marriage, this time between Raja Budak Rasul and Raja Iskandar. By the time Governor Albinus submitted his retiring report in 1750, however, the marriage had not taken place.¹⁰⁰ Other genealogies show that Raja Budak Rasul was not Sultan Muzafar's only child, for he had another daughter, Raja Tengah Bungau, by a gundik.¹⁰¹ But it was on Raja Budak Rasul that attention concentrated. Albinus noted that she was Sultan Muzafar's favourite but to Malays the fact that she was an anak gahara, the daughter of a Perak ruler and a royal mother, would have been more important.¹⁰² Although she could not succeed, her rights to the throne could pass to her husband, a precedent which, it will be remembered, had already been established in the previous cen-

99. Ibid., pp. 23-24.

100. See Chapter II, p. 161; KA 2654 OB 1751, Albinus' Report, 15 Feb. 1750, fo. 359.

101. Silsilah Melaka Kerajaan Negeri Perak, fo. 28V, lines 14-15.

102. Her mother was the daughter of Raja Muzafar and Raja Perempuan. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 23.

tury.¹⁰³ It was the duty of any Malay ruler to ensure a peaceful succession after his death and it is proper that, within the framework of the text, Sultan Muzafar now concerns himself with the question of his daughter's marriage.

Raja Iskandar, we are told, had not ceased to pay homage to Sultan Muzafar, and the royal couple loved him greatly.

Then His Majesty thought, "Should my child the Raja Muda present the pinang¹⁰⁴ to my daughter, Raja Budak Ragul, I should accept it, because there is none other who is fitting to marry my child apart from the Raja Muda, for he is the oldest of all my relatives and the anak raja. Furthermore, he is already Raja Muda and will inherit my government and become khalifah¹⁰⁵ in Perak. He will have the sword of state and all the gold and valuables and will look after the people in my palace and will protect my slaves and elephants, buffalo and goats, because he is feared and loved by all the people and his fame has reached other countries.¹⁰⁶

Nowhere in the Misa Melayu are the potentialities of kingship spelt out more clearly than here. For this reason the question of succession was not only the concern of Sultan Muzafar. Downstream, at Pulau Tiga, it was also discussed, as Raja Culan goes on to tell us. Indeed, he credits himself and his cousin, Raja Alauddin (Raja Iskandar's brother) with first suggesting the possibility of betrothal. As they said to the Raja Muda,

Our older brother has greatness and glory, but in our opinion this is not yet complete. How wonderful it

103. See Chapter I, p. 32.

104. Pinang here refers to the sending of areca nut (pinang) and sirih together with a formal proposal of marriage.

105. God's Regent.

106. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 33-34.

would be if you could ask the Yang di Pertuan to become his son. This would please us greatly, for there is no one else who is suitable to become the son-in-law of His Majesty. Furthermore, we feel that, with the will of Allah and the daulat of your Majesty, you will become khalifah and ruler of this country in the future. Then we will be completely happy.¹⁰⁷

The political importance of the marriage meant it was essential that no offence be given by undue haste or any lack of observance of accepted custom. As Wilkinson remarked in 1925, one of the major concerns in betrothal negotiations was to avoid the humiliation of refusal and for this reason envoys were normally employed to sound out the feelings of the girl's parents.¹⁰⁸ The comment of Raja Iskandar's brother, the Raja Kecil Muda, reflects this attitude. "It is better than we speak to His Majesty first, so that we can hear definitely what he decides."¹⁰⁹ He and Raja Alauddin therefore went upstream to Brahamana Indra as envoys.

When they arrived, says Raja Culan, they were welcomed in the traditional manner, and Sultan Muzafar indicated that he would be delighted to see a betrothal between his daughter and the Raja Muda. "After this, the two raja returned to Pulau Tiga to tell their brother all that their father and mother had said." Raja Iskandar summoned all the hulubalang who lived near Pulau Tiga and ordered them to make ready the pinang gifts. He himself sent a kati of gold, which was taken upstream in a

107. Ibid., p. 34.

108. Wilkinson, Papers on Malay Subjects, I The Incidents of Malay Life, p. 21.

109. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 34-35.

great procession under the command of the foremost anak raja, among whom was Raja Culan. After a day's travel, the procession reached Brahmana Indra, stopping first at the home of the Orang Kaya Besar, where they were suitably entertained. The next day Sultan Muzafar sent an elephant to bring the pinang to the palace, and, with the playing of the nubat and the flying of flags, the party set off. The gifts were accepted, a public recognition of Raja Iskandar's proposal, and the betrothal party then returned to Pulau Tiga.¹¹⁰

With the added information supplied by the Dutch records, this betrothal can be seen as a great reconciliation between uncle and nephew and, indeed Raja Culan regards it as one more progression in Raja Iskandar's career. "The love of the royal couple for their son, the Raja Muda, increased even more after he was betrothed to their daughter." Raja Iskandar frequently went upstream to Brahmana Indra, and if he remained away longer than a month or two, Sultan Muzafar would send for him.¹¹¹

Raja Budak Rasul was now betrothed and it was therefore proper that, as custom dictated, her ears should be pierced and the subang, the ear studs denoting virginity, inserted. A royal subang ceremony was of great symbolic significance. On the one hand, it was an open demonstration of the fact that a ruler's daughter was now ready for marriage. On the other, this ceremony, like any other great court occasion, provided an opportunity for the ruler to display his wealth to his admiring sub-

110. Ibid., pp. 35-39.

111. Ibid., p. 39.

jects and to reward those loyal servants who had carried out their allotted tasks faithfully. At such state occasions, the bonds between ruler and subject which had transformed a collection of scattered villages into a political entity were made impressively apparent.

His Majesty ordered all the orang besar to gather the hulubalang and people of Perak, as well as the foreign traders and to come to Brahmana Indra. . . . Each orang besar went to summon his people for kerah [corvée] duties, each having his own district and each his own task. The people were summoned from every subject district [ta'aluk dan rantau jajahan] under Perak's jurisdiction. In several days, all the hulubalang, the people and the foreign traders had come from the farthest point, from the kuala, from every anak sungai, and gathered at Brahmana Indra.¹¹²

A pantun from a Perak folk story conveys the excitement and anticipation with which these people, many living far from the royal residence, would have arrived at the capital.

What business is toward, Your Highness
That the royal drums are beaten
And the call of summons sounded
And the gong is struck so loudly¹¹³
That the drums in every kampung
Thud in answer one by one.
Where's the enemy that's coming?

112. Ibid., pp. 39-40.

113. The despatch of messengers to beat gongs and deliver a ruler's orders was normal practice among the Malay states and there are frequent references to this custom in Malay texts. See, for example, Brown, "Malay Annals," p. 74; Teeuw and Wyatt, Hikayat Patani, pp. 148, 152. The Dutch call this method beckenslag or gomgomslag (i.e., giving announcements verbally or by beating a gong). It was still current in the nineteenth century. KA 2885 OB 1761, Boelen to King of Perak, 7 Dec. 1759; KA 3474 OB 1781, Meyer to de Bruyn, 5 Jan. 1780; KA 3803, Secret, Walbeem to Couperus, 27 Nov. 1789; Hill, Hikayat Abdullah, pp. 62, 63; F5 Sultan Abdullah to Gov. of Penang, 31 July, 1828, foll. 128-129.

Where's the bank that's falling down?
 Where's the fort you'd have us batter?
 Where's the powder we must dry?
 Where's the gun you'd have us carry?
 Where's the dyke that broken through?
 Or bamboo clump that must be tended?
 Perhaps an embassy has come?¹¹⁴

When the Raja Muda and his party had arrived from Brahmana Indra, continues the text, the festivities commenced. There were all kinds of amusements; spear-throwing, dancing, cock-fighting, draughts, the reading of hikayat. "Everyone was very merry and the celebrations did not stop, day or night."¹¹⁵

The Bustanu's Salatin, describing a similar occasion at the court of Aceh, remarks on the amazement felt by people from outlying districts as they watched the entertainments offered at court.¹¹⁶ One can well imagine that, less than a century later, the people of Perak experienced something of the same excitement, and excitement which the oft-used Malay 'formulaic' phrase capture and convey in an unparalleled combination of alliteration and onomatopoeia that defies translation: "Terlalu ramai, siang dan malam, gegak gempita, riuh rendah, sorak tempek, tepok dan tari." (Everything was very lively, evening and night, noise and clamour, shouting and cheering, clapping and dancing.)¹¹⁷

It was during state occasions such as this that the reciprocal relationships which bound the ruler to his subjects could be seen in a

114. Sturrock and Winstedt, Hikayat Awang Sulong, p. 30.

115. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 40.

116. Teugku Iskandar, Bustanu's Salatin, p. 68.

117. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 40.

heightened form. Perhaps the brightest pearls in the necklace which was Sultan Iskandar's zaman, they provided an opportunity for the brilliance of the court to be displayed and for the ruler to receive the allegiance of his subjects, to accept their persembahan or gifts and to bestow upon them his kurnia or bounty. An anthropologist, Marcel Mauss, has seen this exchange pattern as crucial in binding the society together, an unceasing flow upwards and downwards which made up the warp of the social fabric. Such a relationship is characterised by giving and taking, "with gifts being rendered, given and repaid, both obligatorily and in [self] interest, in magnanimity, for repayment of services, challenges, or pledges."¹¹⁸ But, as Mauss goes on to point out, what is exchanged in such a society is "not exclusively goods or wealth, real or personal property and things of economic value." Rather, it is "courtesies, entertainments, ritual, military assistance, woman, children, dances, feasts."¹¹⁹ It is on this level that the kurnia of the Perak ruler and the persembahan of his subjects become intelligible. A failure to give when the occasion demanded, or a ceremony unworthy of status, could result in a loss of prestige as great as defeat in war or humiliation by a rival.¹²⁰ A state occasion like the subang ceremony was marked off from the events of mundane life in almost every way. It was a total experience. Beautiful clothes were worn, amazing sights were

118. Marcel Mauss, The Gift: Form and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies (New York, 1967), p. 27.

119. Ibid., pp. 3, 11-12, 27.

120. Ibid., p. 10, 38-39.

seen, wonderful things were done. Even the food--buffalo, cow, goat, duck, chicken, special rice dishes, sweet meats--made court festivities something to remember.¹²¹ It was episodes like this which provided the stuff from which hikayat are made.

The Perak ruler, like his subjects, was obliged to give, but he also retained certain prerogatives. He alone, for example, could bestow titles and court posts and he alone could decide when and to whom they should be given. A text does not record such honours lightly. We should be duly impressed, therefore, to hear that, during the subang ceremony, Raja Iskandar's supporters who had helped arrange the betrothal were suitably rewarded. Raja Culan himself was made Raja Kecil Besar, Raja Alauddin was made Raja Kecil Tengah, and Raja Inu received the title Raja di Hilir.¹²² Worthy services never went unnoticed. Some years later, in 1761, when Sultan Iskandar made a pleasure trip to Larut, two kitchen servants who had carried out their allotted tasks faithfully were given titles and made panglima.¹²³

After seventeen days of celebrations, the subang festivities

121. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 41, 47, 49, 95. In 1826 James Low remarked that "Perak Malays live very plainly, fish, rice and a little seasoning with fruits being their common food. Very few of them will taste wine and none ardent spirits. . . . One day during my stay the Raja gave a feat to his people, it being an anniversary. A long and slightly built shed was prepared as a kitchen. Here five or six huge iron pots were placed over fires. In each of these about thirty fowls were boiled." "Observations on Perak," JIA, IV (Sept. 1850), 502.

122. See Appendix A, stanzas 190-195.

123. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 143.

climaxed in the henna-staining ceremony, in which the Orang Kaya Besar played a principal role. He too received his just reward, payment for a duty performed, and the Raja Muda distributed gifts of reals and Dutch rupees to others "each according to his rank"¹²⁴ The henna-staining lasted two nights and the next day Raja Budak Rasul was carried in procession on an elephant, seven times around the town "according to the adat or anak raja."¹²⁵ This was followed by the ceremonial bathing, the serving of specially prepared rice and the actual ear-piercing. When all was over "everybody, the Raja Muda and the anak raja . . . each returned to his place."¹²⁶

Raja Culan remarks that there are many stories about the time when Raja Iskandar was betrothed to Raja Budak Rasul. It is impossible for him to repeat them all, he says, but one important event was the death of the Bendahara immediately after a trip to Kampar where he had trapped a large elephant. He was buried at Bota and was called Datuk Hilang di Padang. Syarif Abu Bakar, whom Raja Culan later notes was a brother of the Menteri, Syarif Husain, was appointed as the new Bendahara.¹²⁷

The text moves on quickly to the final consolidation of Raja Iskandar's position in regard to the throne. One again Raja Culan assures

124. Ibid., pp. 41-42. "Dutch rupees" probably refers to Indian rupees used by the Dutch in many trading activities. See Chapter II, p. 165.

125. Ibid., p. 42. There are marked similarities between this henna staining ceremony and that described by Wilkinson during a Malay marriage. PMS, The Incidents of Malay Life, pp. 30-31.

126. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 42-43

127. Ibid., p. 43.

us that there are a number of stories which he could tell but he does not wish to prolong his account and therefore turns to the marriage of Raja Iskandar and Raja Budak Rasul, three years after the pinang had been sent. This occasion, like other court ceremonies, involved an enormous outflow of wealth by the principals involved. There was obviously a need to restock the royal treasury. Sultan Muzafar, for example, made a pleasure trip to the ulu and during his two months stay at Kuala Kangsar, "all the hulubalang, officials of the ulu and all the people brought gifts."¹²⁸ At the same time the Raja Muda made a trip to the Kinta River with the Raja Kecil Muda and some of the other anak raja. After two months he too returned, bringing back a large amount of tin to his residence at Pulau Tiga.¹²⁹ The tin collected would, presumably, have been sold to the Dutch, probably during the pleasure trip taken by the whole court after Sultan Muzafar returned from Kuala Kangsar. When the procession reached Tanjung Putus, the Laksamana and Syahbandar, "the keys of the country" came to present themselves, accompanied by the people of Tanjung Putus and the foreign traders, all of whom brought gifts. "The Dutch Captain also came to make obeisance bringing his offering for His Majesty."¹³⁰ After three or four days of marry-making at Tanjung Putus, Sultan Muzafar returned to Brahmana Indra.

Verbrugge, in his report of 1746, commented on Sultan Muzafar's advanced age. The Misa Melayu likewise shows that Sultan Muzafar felt

128. Ibid., p. 44.

129. Ibid.

130. Ibid.

his end was near and was therefore anxious to see the completion of the wedding arrangements. To his nobles, he explained, "Now I am old, my body is very weak, and this world will not remain in my grasp much longer."¹³¹ It was clear that if he should die leaving his daughter unmarried, the succession would be disputed. A betrothal fixed nothing, for betrothals could be broken. As a Perak law code remarks, an unmarried girl was potentially a great advantage or a great hazard; she could be like pure gold or as destructive as a fire in the kampung.¹³² The wedding plans were therefore set in motion. Once again all the people gathered at Brahmana Indra "from the ulu to the kuala . . . bringing gifts according to their ability."¹³³ The entire country, says Raja Culan, was delighted at the prospect of this royal wedding and the gifts --buffalo, goats, chickens, ducks, tin, reals--flooded in. The Raja Muda came upstream in a great procession and all that could be heard was the sound of rejoicing. A feast was held and the celebrations lasted for forty days and forty nights until the night of the actual wedding arrived. Everything was conducted "according to the custom of former days" and, on the final day, the Menteri read the marriage service and pronounced the appropriate words. After the ceremonial bathing a few days later, the union was complete.¹³⁴

131. Ibid., pp. 44-45.

132. Rigby, The Ninety Nine Laws of Perak, p. 45.

133. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 45-47.

134. Ibid., p. 48.

Into what at first might appear a conventional description, Raja Culan has also inserted his own memories. During the trip upstream, for instance, some of the anak raja and anak baik were lightheartedly firing guns, and in the confusion, two people were accidentally wounded. Raja Iskandar ordered them to be sent back to Pulau Tiga and the incident passed unnoticed.¹³⁵ Other details show that this wedding description was not merely copied from an Acehnese or Melakan text. The Raja Muda, for example, was dressed in the clothes of a royal Perak bridegroom and when he presented his gifts, they included not only gold and slaves, but "a thousand pieces of tin" which we know could be found in Perak in abundance.¹³⁶

The marriage, the climax of Raja Iskandar's political apprenticeship, took place, according to Raja Culan, about three months prior to the death of the ruler. This chronology is supported by the Dutch sources, for when van Heemskerck wrote to Batavia in October 1752, he remarked that Sultan Iskandar had been married a few months before Sultan Muzafar died.¹³⁷ The succession was thus assured and Sultan Muzafar need have no fear for the future. The stage was now set for Sultan Iskandar's own succession and an audience listening to the hikayat would not have been disappointed. About a month after the wedding, Raja Culan continues, Sultan Muzafar became gravely ill. Various people skilled in medicine were summoned, but he did not recover even though alms of gold

135. Ibid., p. 46.

136. Ibid., p. 48.

137. KA 2692 OB 1753, van Heemskerck to Batavia, 12 Oct. 1752, fo. 15.

and silver were offered. When the sick ruler became delirious, a mad woman in the palace was killed, but this too had no effect.¹³⁸

After two months of illness, Sultan Muzafar realised he was nearing his end and, as customary, pronounced his wasiat, the last testimony, to his family and courtiers, most prominent among whom was his trusted councillor, the Orang Kaya Besar.

All His Majesty's children and the anak raja and the orang besar paid homage. His Majesty said . . . "I feel this world is slipping from my grasp. This is my final word. My hope is now that my child, the Raja Muda, will succeed. I wish to order all the orang besar, the hulubalang and officials to administer the government of my child and protect the laws of the country and cherish all the people of Perak."¹³⁹

Sultan Muzafar also gave a last injunction to his nephew and chosen successor, Raja Iskandar.

My child the Raja Muda should always speak properly to all the orang besar and the anak raja, govern the country and protect the people, the army, and all my relatives and slaves and confer together with the orang besar, the hulubalang and anak raja concerning all matters. The Raja Muda should also support our religion, the imam, the officials and all their relatives.¹⁴⁰

138. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 49-50. Compare this with an Italian's description of remedies adopted to bring a ship returning from Melaka in 1514 safely to land. "[We] went in procession and made vows, there being not a saint in Paradise who was not daily invoked. As many as four hundred ducats were set aside for charity; and the wind was still contrary. The Captain General took counsel with the leaders and agreed that the Moors we had with us should be thrown into the sea . . . many Moors were thrown into the sea by night while asleep; wherefore each of us weeping in disciplined fashion and calling upon God to help us in our direst need." A. Bausani, ed., Lettera di Giovanni da Empoli (Rome, 1970), pp. 142-143. (With English Translation).

139. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 50.

140. Ibid., p. 51. Compare this conventional description with that in Brown, "Malay Annals," pp. 111, 124.

Amidst the grieving of his family and courtiers, Sultan Muzafar moved "from this world which is transient to that which is eternal."

The death of Sultan Muzafar marks a natural break in the narrative. The preceding section, it is clear, has recounted only those episodes which had a direct bearing of Raja Iskandar's progression towards the throne. The enumeration of Sultan Iskandar's achievements in the years immediately following his succession forms the theme of the remainder of the prose section, which ends in 1758 with the death of Sultan Iskandar's wife. Though Dutch reports have shown that these years were not without their troubles, they are important because they provided the base for the harmony and peace which was to develop after 1761. Once again, only certain events are described, treated as separate episodes, beginning with the introductory phrase "Maka tersebutlah pula perkataan . . . , and ending with a conventional tribute to Sultan Iskandar's greatness. It is necessary to re-emphasise, however, that none of these episodes was chosen casually. Raja Culan tells his audience on several occasions that there were so many stories it was impossible to recount them all. Those he relates were carefully selected because they represented the highlights, not merely in the opinion of Raja Culan, but in that of Sultan Iskandar himself. Against the VOC account of treaties and tin deliveries, of piracy and smuggling, the Misa Melayu provides another perspective, an alternative perception and a differing emphasis. It is indeed moulded in the accepted pattern and couched in the traditional fashion, but this obscures neither the excitement of living "in the present time" nor the vigour and energy of an unusual ruler.

Sultan Iskandar's first concern after his uncle's death was, understandably, to establish his undisputed right to the throne. Although Raja Budak Rasul is a shadowy figure in the hikayat, her place in the succession was crucial. She was, after all, the true heir and it is clear that her claims were not forgotten. After the death of Sultan Muzafar, we are told, the Raja Muda ordered all the orang besar and people to come down for the funeral. An assembly was held to discuss the choice of successor, and it was agreed that the Raja Muda and his wife should become rulers.¹⁴¹ The approval of Sultan Muzafar's widow also appears to have been an added prop to Raja Iskandar's position, for she presided over the installation, giving the royal couple the state sword, the regalia and the remainder of the royal insignia, a function which, in the following century, was always carried out by the Bendahara.¹⁴² All those present made obeisance while the gendang was beaten and the nafiri blown seven times. After the tabal (drum of installation) had also been sounded seven times, the people raised their hands to their heads in homage, saying, "Daulat, tuanku! May God lengthen your days on the throne of Perak!" The coffin was carried in procession to the grave and interred, Sultan Iskandar having chosen the posthumous title of al-Marhum Haji Allag for his predecessor.¹⁴³

141. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 51-52.

142. Ibid., p. 52; Wilkinson, PMS, II History, 74. This joint installation of ruler and consort differs from the nineteenth century, where the Raja Perempuan was enthroned separately in the presence of the women. R. O. Winstedt, "Kingship and Enthronement in Malaya," JMBRAS, XX, 1 (1947), 137.

143. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 52.

Sultan Iskandar then ascended the throne as ruler, refraining from playing his nubat for seven days as a sign of respect. It was during this period, when the attention of the Melaka Council was focused on the resident's alarming reports about a possible attack on the fort, that Sultan Iskandar was preoccupied in reviewing his court, rewarding and promoting those whom he trusted and dismissing others who had shown signs of disloyalty. The Raja Kecil Muda, Sultan Iskandar's brother, was made Raja Muda, the ruler's wakil or representative. The title of Yang di Pertuan Tua was given to Sultan Muzafar's widow "because she was the oldest raja in Perak and instructed all the royal children."¹⁴⁴

None of these appointments was made without thought, but it is also clear that anyone who performed a task well could expect rewards, not only for himself but for his family. A son of the Sri Nara di Raja, for example, was promoted to his father's position as head of the court pages;¹⁴⁵ when the Bendahara and court nobles ceremonially presented Sultan Iskandar with his headdress (bulang ulu), they all received "robes of honour according to their status."¹⁴⁶ On the other hand, negligence

144. Ibid. In the Sejarah Melayu the ruler's grandmother is called the Raja Tua. Brown, "Malay Annals," p. 111.

145. In traditional Perak the Sri Nara di Raja was said to be descended from a child which had sprung from the vomit of the bull Bhat, which had belonged to Demang Lebar Daun, the ancestor of all Malays. "When the child of the Bull's vomit grew up, Deman Lebar Daun said to him, "Thine is the family which shall install Malay kings, otherwise their installation is invalid. But before one of thy family install a king he shall receive the title Sri Nara di Raja. Then shall he give his ruler a title and whisper the state secret (ciri) in his ear and read the coronation address." Winstedt and Wilkinson, "A History of Perak," p. 119; RKP, SP 9/14, Silsilah Raja Perak Berhubung dengan Syed Syed Cendrieng, fo. 29.

or opposition did not go unnoticed. All district heads and penghulu were in theory required to present themselves at court regularly to give reports, submit taxes and to menghadap, that is, perform the public ceremony which signified formal submission to the ruler.¹⁴⁷ Failure to appear at court was not only seen as laziness and inefficiency. It was a direct insult to the ruler himself. According to Raja Culan, the measures taken against such people by Sultan Iskandar were severe. "If they were hulubalang, they were dismissed, tied up and then put out in the sun (dijemur)."¹⁴⁸ Many others met the same fate because they had aroused Sultan Iskandar's anger, but later the ruler forgave them and restored them to favour. Some, in Raja Culan's opinion, even gained a greater position than they had had before, although a number of new officials were appointed.¹⁴⁸

The anak raja in Perak have been described previously as a potential source of trouble, and it is no coincidence that Raja Culan goes on immediately to state that "all the anak raja in Perak submitted to His Majesty." As later chapters will show, the difficulties Sultan Iskandar faced in regard to the royal princes were to be exacerbated after the accession of Sultan Alauddin in 1773. Indeed, one story current in Perak

146. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 53-54.

147. A Malay legal digest drawn up for the rulers of Johor, Pahang and Perak notes that one of the duties of ministers is to be "daily present in the hall of audience." If they did not come they were to be summoned. Kempe and Winstedt, "A Malay Legal Miscellany," pp. 26-27; Gullick, Indigenous Political Systems, pp. 47-48 discusses the menghadap ceremony and describes it as he witnessed it in 1945 and 1946.

148. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 54.

at the beginning of this century said that Sultan Iskandar was concerned at the number of unemployed princes at court.¹⁴⁹ The Misa Melayu conveys the impression that he was anxious to find occupation for them all in his court. "His Majesty loved the anak raja and gave many of them titles." Raja Kecil, his younger brother, was made Raja Kecil Bungsu; Raja Ibrahim, the new Raja Muda's son, was given the title Raja Kecil Bungsu Muda, which his father had once held; Raja Muhammad, a second cousin of Sultan Iskandar and a son of a Kedah anak raja, was appointed Raja di Baruh, also succeeding to his father's title.¹⁵⁰ At the royal residence, we are told, there were a large number of amusements, aimed at satisfying all tastes. One could hunt elephants, ride horses, fight cocks, play football (sepak raga). Inside the balai, there were games such as chess and draughts and one could hear recitations of poetry or hikayat, or listen to music. The female anak raja gathered in the palace, where "His Majesty told them to enjoy themselves in any way they pleased." There were draughts, ball games, cards, dances, and "everything was busy and exciting, evening and night. The sounds of merriment never ceased in the palace of Sultan Iskandar."¹⁵¹

But one day, the text continues, Sultan Iskandar's daughter, Raja Sabda, became very ill. As another text explains, Raja Sabda's mother was a gundik, and, according to Raja Culan, she had been about three years old at the time of her father's betrothal to Raja Budak Rasul.¹⁵²

149. Wilkinson, A History of the Peninsula Malays, PMS II, 77.

150. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 55.

151. Ibid., pp. 55-56.

After Sultan Iskandar's accession, she continued to live at Pulau Tiga while her father went upstream to the large istana at Brahmana Indra. When news arrived of Raja Sabda's illness, Sultan Iskandar left for Pulau Tiga immediately and, when he saw how ill his daughter was, summoned all those skilled in medicine to come. There were some who practised Arabic medicine (tabib), those who worked with spirits (pendekaran), people with second sight, both men and women, each of whom brought his own particular skills. Alms and vows were also made to the Prophet, the saints, and to Sultan Iskandar's ancestors (segala nenda baginda yang telah mangkat).¹⁵³

In an age when even a minor disease could prove fatal, every resource the country could offer was exploited. In 1781, when Sultan Alauddin became ill with an abscess on his neck, all the heads of the outlying districts were summoned to court to discover if any cure was known.¹⁵⁴ Similarly, a text from Kedah relates that, at a time when the ruler was sick, those with knowledge of magic (bomoh and pawang) were called down to the royal residence from all the taluk rantau.¹⁵⁵ No illness was regarded lightly, and, says Raja Culan

during the time that his daughter was ill, Sultan Iskandar was extremely sad and did not eat night or day. The orang besar could not present themselves at court because His Majesty did not come out to

152. Ibid., p. 33. Silsilah Melaka Kerajaan Negeri Perak, fo. 30, line 3.

153. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 56-57.

154. KA 3474 OB 1781, Meyer to de Bruyn, 25 Jan. 1780, KA 3491 OB 1782, Meyer to de Bruyn, 10 June 1780.

155. Musa Lubis, Marong Mahawangsa, p. 103.

his balai. Raja Sabda was sick for a few days, but with the help of Allah and his Prophet, the intercession of the saints, the daulat of the ruler's ancestors and all the medicines, the health of Raja Sabda was restored.¹⁵⁶

As in 1779, when the resident reported that the illness of the Raja Muda's son had delayed a trip to the ulu, sickness of any prominent person could severely restrict court activities.¹⁵⁷ If this involved the ruler himself, administration would simply stop unless alternative arrangements were made. It was only with Raja Sabda's recovery, remarks Raja Culan, that Sultan Iskandar once more held audience and attended to the administration again.¹⁵⁸

It is only at this point in the narrative that the Laksamana, who has already figured in the Dutch sources, appears, and it is useful to remember that this is still prior to the renewal of the treaty in March 1753. According to Raja Culan, "there was a man of Haru, called Nakhoda Pumah, who had been Laksamana during the previous reign." He administered Kuala Perak and was head of the people living around Tanjung Putus, but had never been formerly installed as Laksamana. Sultan Iskandar decided to give him his title with the customary ceremony in order "to increase his loyalty." The Laksamana was therefore summoned to Pulau Tiga. A perahu and escort were sent to accompany him, as well as the

156. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 57.

157. KA 3446 OB 1780, Meyer to de Bruyn, 13 June 1779. In 1780, when Sultan Alauddin was ill, all the principal orang besar were kept at court and therefore did not go upstream to buy tin. The resident noted a marked decline in tin deliveries. KA 3491 OB 1782, Meyer to de Bruyn, 10 June 1780.

158. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 57.

usual gift of clothes. In a public audience, the ciri was read out, Tun Pumah was given the title Laksamana Orang Kaya Kaya, sprinkled with rosewater and given sirih. While Sultan Iskandar was at Pulau Tiga, he also installed another court figure, a Minangkabau, as Fakh (expert in Islamic law). He too was presented with suitable clothes and a fitting title Raja Indra Pahlawan.¹⁵⁹

Some days after these appointments, Sultan Iskandar returned to Brahmna Indra. It was now a hundred days after Sultan Muzafar's death, the end of the official mourning period. There remained certain matters which still required attention, such as the erection of a suitable gravestone. When this was done, a canopy and fence were built around the grave enclosure, made of wood and decorated with tin.¹⁶⁰ The beauty of his predecessor's grave, it is clear, was a direct reflection of a ruler's prestige. In 1765, when Sultan Iskandar himself died, the Dutch resident noted that his brother had sent to Aceh for a gravestone.¹⁶¹ Again, in 1792 after the death of Sultan Alauddin, his successor named a particular Chinese craftsman in Melaka, whose services he desired for the construction of a suitable grave.¹⁶² At the same time, a funeral was another occasion when the ruler's wealth was openly displayed and to economise on the smallest detail would have led to considerable loss in

159. Ibid., pp. 57-58. The ciri is the secret formula read at installations. See W. E. Maxwell, "An Account of the Malay 'Chiri,'" JRAS, XIII (1883), 80-101.

160. Ibid., p. 58.

161. KA 3104 OB 1768, Wiederholt to Schippers, 17 March 1766.

162. KA 3852 OB 1793, Raja Muda and Nobles to de Bruyn, 7 Sept. 1792.

prestige. In 1816 the ruler of Perak estimated that the funeral of his wife and two children had cost \$2,500.¹⁶³ Raja Culan takes care to emphasise that the appropriate ceremonies were observed, with prayers held for three days and nights, a buffalo killed to feed those people taking part, and alms distributed. With the successful conclusion of these ceremonies, says Raja Culan, Sultan Iskandar was fully acknowledged as the ruler of Perak.¹⁶⁴

The death of a ruler inevitably involved rearrangements in the court hierarchy, the supervision of rites conducted with the funeral, and ceremonies in which oaths of loyalty were given and new appointments made. Such matters absorbed Sultan Iskandar's attention for several months after his accession and it was only towards the end of 1752 that he could turn his mind to other concerns. The primary consideration was the site of the royal capital. In Malay states which had a strong fleet, the most logical place for the royal residence was at the port. As long as defences were maintained, there was no reason to move away. In Perak, however, no ruler had ever made his capital downstream at any of the trading sites accessible from the kuala. Since the capital was not synonymous with port or trading centre, there was nothing to prevent frequent changes of royal residence. For the previous two hundred years, each successive Perak ruler had chosen a site for his residence somewhere on a stretch of about thirty miles along the Perak River, between Kota

163. SSR G34/57, Raja of Perak to Gov. of Penang, 27 Aug. 1816 (FCCP 7 Nov. 1816).

164. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 59.

Lumut and Kuala Kangsar. This deliberate choice to live inland has been explained in terms of security but it is a striking comment on the new peace provided by the Dutch that Sultan Iskandar chose to move his capital downstream to an island called Pulau Cempaka Sari, at the confluence of the Perak, Kinta and Keroh Rivers. Never had a capital been established so far downstream. The entire episode of the move to a new site thus becomes not merely a tribute to Sultan Iskandar, but to his conviction that, during his time, Perak's peace would be secure.

The story is now related to how His Majesty wished to move his place from Brahmana Indra, because he was not happy to live in the same place as his father. His Majesty thought day and night, wishing to think of a place to build a negeri for his zaman. One place which Allah revealed to His Majesty was Pulau Cempaka Sari, because this place had often been used by his Majesty for relaxation, and His Majesty was very attached to this place.¹⁶⁵

Accordingly, Sultan Iskandar summoned his anak raja and orang besar and told them

I have given orders according to adat in regard to Marhum, who is deceased. . . . Now I do not wish to remain here any longer, because I am not happy to have the ubut played close to al-Marhum's grave. I wish to move away from Brahmana Indra. It would be fitting for me to build a new place for my zaman, so that it will be possessed by (didapati) my grandchildren in the days to come.¹⁶⁶

Sultan Iskandar gave instructions that the new town was to be built as speedily as possible, since he wished to make the move within two months' time. People were summoned for kerah duties, and under the supervision of the Raja Muda and the orang besar, they went down to Cempaka Sari.¹⁶⁷

165. Ibid.

166. Ibid., p. 60.

As we have already seen in the previous chapter, it was during the construction of the new town, while so much activity was going on upstream, that Piro Muhammad seized the opportunity to spread malicious slander (fitnah) about Sultan Iskandar. The interpreter succeeded in frightening the resident so much that he wrote to Batavia, and the Kompeni Holanda sent an envoy to ascertain the truth of Piro Muhammad's accusations. "But Sultan Iskandar paid no attention to Piro Muhammad's lies and went on with the construction of his capital." In fact, he came down to Pulau Cempaka Sari himself to supervise the clearing of the ground and the establishment of the negeri according to adat.¹⁶⁸

It will be remembered that it was in March 1753, before the town or even the fort was completed, that Thomas Schippers arrived in Perak as an envoy from Melaka. Because of uncertainty about Dutch intentions, says Raja Culan, the audience was postponed until a fort could be built. Malay suspicions, however, proved unjustified. Though it was thought that the Dutch had come only to "speak harshly," they conducted themselves in a perfectly suitable manner, lifting their hats, bowing and paying homage to Sultan Iskandar. When they looked on his face and beheld his greatness and the numbers of his followers, the Dutch "no longer dared to entertain evil designs towards His Majesty."¹⁶⁹

The letter they had brought from Batavia was read out by the perdana menteri and the words were pleasing. The presents offered were of varied kinds, all extreme-

167. Ibid., pp. 60-61.

168. Ibid., pp. 61-62; see below, pp. 195-203, Chapter III.

169. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 62-64.

ly beautiful. All the panglima in the envoy were honoured with sirih by His Majesty, and this they received with great respect and signs of homage. Their conversation was well-worded and their speech elegant and refined.¹⁷⁰

The Dutch, indeed, were so awed by Sultan Iskandar's greatness that they behaved with great humility and did not dare to say anything hostile. Their requests were not numerous and, Raja Culan notes, were not as great as before. They only wished to buy three hundred bahara of tin, which was to be supplied in three days time. On the fourth day five hundred bahara were brought down and the Dutch bought the entire amount.

After they had bought the tin, Sultan Iskandar ordered a letter to be written for the Captain at Batavia, which was to be accompanied by presents. This was prepared by the Raja Muda and the orang besar according to adat. The Raja Muda had also received gifts from Batavia, and he too sent a suitable reply.

When all was ready, the Commissioner prepared a letter [contract] to increase the loyalty between the Dutch and the Raja of Perak. This was presented to Sultan Iskandar, and he ordered his letter of agreement to be delivered to the Dutch.¹⁷¹

The agreement was strengthened by promises from the Raja Muda and the nobles concerning the buying and selling of tin. The Dutch and the

170. Ibid., p. 64. The Dutch took such court visits, including the taking of sirih, in their stride after a hundred and fifty years in the area. Alexander Hamilton, the English country trader, expresses the distaste some Europeans must have felt. "His Majesty [the king of Kedah] will honour the stranger with a seat near his royal person and will chew a betel and put it out of his royal mouth on a little gold saucer, and sends it by his page to the stranger, who must take it with all the signs of humility and satisfaction and chew it after him and it is very dangerous to refuse the royal morsel." Hamilton, A New Account, II, 40.

171. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 65.

people of Perak exchanged a copy of the agreement and when this was done, the Commissioner and the Malay Captain asked permission to return to Melaka and then to Batavia to pay homage to the Company.¹⁷²

When the seven sloops had sailed away, Sultan Iskandar continued with the construction of his new capital "and there are numerous stories about this zaman." One assumes that the Malays had watched with interest the building of the Dutch fort in 1748, as they were to do in 1761,¹⁷³ and the construction of the new fort probably reflected some Dutch influence. It was about forty depa square, says Raja Culan, with cannon ranged about it, both inside and out. There were guard houses and rows of rifles, and everything was constructed strongly and well.¹⁷⁴ The description of Perak's arsenal is not merely an idle comment. The armaments of a Malay state, and especially its cannon, were a measure of the country's prestige. The accumulation of old and often malfunctioning cannon by Malay rulers puzzled Dutch observers, but to Malays the number of cannon a country possessed was an indication of its spiritual potency and good fortune.¹⁷⁵ Cannon were thought to have unique powers and Raja

172. Ibid.

173. Cramer noted that the Malays were trying to copy the loopholes in the walls of the Dutch fort. KA 2954 OB 1763, Cramer's Report, 12 June 1761.

174. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 65.

175. C. A. Gibson Hill. "Notes on the old Cannon found in Malaya and known to be of Dutch origin," JMBRAS, XXVI, 1 (1953), 145-175; Teeuw and Wyatt, Hikayat Patani, II, 152-154; Anderson, Political Considerations, pp. 195-196. In 1786 a Dutch trader in Terengganu remarked that the guns there were lying on the ground without mounting, a comment also made by a Frenchman in 1769. One of the principal

Culan later refers to Anak Perak (Son of Perak) the "lucky cannon" which was placed in the bow of Sultan Iskandar's boat.¹⁷⁶ When Jan Visboom came to Perak in 1759, he remarked that Sultan Iskandar's hall of audience was surrounded by about forty cannon.¹⁷⁷

In addition to the fort, Sultan Iskandar also supervised the construction of three istana, "but they were not big, only about six or seven rooms each." After the ruler's return to Brahmana Indra, the Raja Muda continued with the building of the new fort and, across the river, opposite the island, a town and port were constructed.

All the people from the old port moved there. There were people of all kinds of races, Keling, Malay, Bugis and Minangkabau. The port was very busy. The Chinese lived by themselves. Rows of houses grew up opposite Pulau Cempaka Sari.¹⁷⁸

The new town, which was to be called Bandar, had probably changed very little in the seventy years that passed between the writing of the Misa Melayu and James Low's report in 1826. The British envoy mentioned that he "went on shore at Bandar, a large straggling village containing about two hundred houses, about fifty of which are inhabited by Chinese."¹⁷⁹

175. (cont'd.)

reasons behind the gestures of the ruler of Kedah to the English in 1776 was a desire to regain the three hundred cannon which the Bugis had stolen during their attack. KA 3653 OB 1788, Report by Dirk Wolff, 30 Nov. 1786; John Dunmore, "French Vistors to Trengganu in the Eighteenth Century," JMBRAS, XLVI, 1 (1973), pp. 147, 148, 152, 156; Bonney, Kedah, pp. 34, 37, 49, 38.

176. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 124.

177. KA 2885 OB 1761, Visboom's Report, under 1 June 1759.

178. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 66.

179. Low, "Observations on Perak," p. 500.

As Raja Culan describes it, the move to the new town was a great event. A special houseboat,¹⁸⁰ was constructed to carry Sultan Iskandar and his wife, which had windows, upturned crockets, spires and was carved and decorated with pictures of fish, birds, naga, shells, flowers, coloured red and flecked with gold. Seri Nara di Raja, the head of the court pages was in charge of the construction, and he had recruited the services of "everybody who was clever in carving and painting." The most skilful was a Bugis, one of Sultan Iskandar's attendants, called Panglima Tobak.¹⁸¹

When the houseboat was completed, the court made ready to depart. The royal houseboat was decorated with yellow cloth, and umbrellas, and the regalia was placed inside. A large number of perahu were prepared to carry down Sultan Iskandar's goods, but even though they were heavily laden, they were insufficient and there was much that was left behind.

Sultan Iskandar waited for the most auspicious moment as fixed by the planet Jupiter (mushtari) and at noon on the designated day he and the court set off. For the anak raja it was a pleasure trip, but Raja Culan's picture of their enjoyment is sobered by his description of the

180. Low described these as being "about forty feet long, by six broad, about two-thirds of the length towards the stern are covered with a pent-roof of palm leaves, sufficiently high to admit a person to stand upright. The sides are formed of matted work and the interior is divided into two apartments, the sternmost one being used as a dormitory. The deck consists of open lath work covered by mats. As such a boat or canoe is formed of a single tree, hollowed and expanded by the application of fire, the gunwale would only be about six inches from the surface of the water. They therefore add a rim of the same width. . . ." Ibid.

181. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 66-67.

attendants and slave girls who "wept because they were being parted from their parents and family."¹⁸² As the procession set off downstream, the nafiri was blown from Sultan Iskandar's boat and the redap, rebana and biola were played. The bentara sang songs and pantun composed especially for the occasion.¹⁸³

A balai with windows, crockets upturned
 The Sultan's craft sets off
 An emerald on a mountain peak
 A string of glistening diamonds.¹⁸⁴

The journey downstream, continues Raja Culan, took some time, and when evening fell the perahu all dropped anchor at a beach which in the past had been a favourite picnicing spot for Sultan Iskandar's father and grandfather. The Raja Perempuan, Raja Budak Rasul, who, it will be remembered, was little more than a girl, enjoyed herself far into the night, playing with the other anak raja.

The next day Sultan Iskandar ordered the anchor raised and continued his journey, stopping at Pulau Tiga, where his daughter Raja Sabda lived. Sultan Iskandar stayed here for a week, because he wished to fulfil certain vows he had made when his daughter was ill. After the ceremonial lustration of Raja Sabda had been completed, His Majesty left Pulau Tiga and set off downstream for Pulau Cempaka Sari. "All the people of His Majesty's palace at Pulau Tiga . . . and all the anak raja accompanied Sultan Iskandar."¹⁸⁵

182. Ibid., pp. 67-68.

183. A redap is a small drum; a rebana is a timbrel; a biola is a violin. A pantun is a four line verse in which the symbolism and allusion of the first two lines make the meaning of the second couplet clear.

184. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 68

As the procession approached Pulau Cempaka Sari, cannon were fired in welcome and a party came down to the wharf to meet the ruler. Sultan Iskandar then went up to his new palace and inspected the work, finding the arrangement exactly as he had wished. "His Majesty changed the name of Pulau Cempaka Sari to Pulau Indra Sakti and the port was named Bandar Makmur. A pantun was composed which ran thus:

In the zaman of Sultan Iskandar
A negeri was built at Pulau Cempaka
A fine market with a port
A place for traders to buy and sell

A negeri was built at Pulau Cempaka
Entitled Pulau Indra Sakti
Foreigners came to buy and sell
And pay homage to His Majesty.¹⁸⁶

To this pantun Raja Culan adds "another, offered by the person who wrote this hikayat," in which he paints the bright future of Sultan Iskandar's new town. Sultan Iskandar surely had the same hopes when he gave the settlement the name of Bandar Makmur, that used over a century before by Sultan Iskandar Muda of Aceh and made famous in the seventeenth century text, the Hikayat Aceh.¹⁸⁷ It also appears that the island's new title, Indra Sakti, was equally significant. A history from Kedah, the Marong Mahawangsar, attributes the original founding of Perak to a prince who, in order to select a site for his capital, fired a silver arrow from his bow, which was called Indra Sakti.

The arrow flew upwards with a humming sound like a bee flying around a flower, and disappeared. Then

185. Ibid., pp. 69-70.

186. Ibid., p. 71.

187. Lombard, Le Sultanat d'Atieh, pp. 223, 238.

the arrow fell to a spot on the island and because of this the island was called Pulau Indra Sakti.

The prince ordered a fort and ditch to be built and established his negeri there, building a palace complete with a fort. . . . The negeri was called Perak, because the arrow which fell there was of silver (perak).¹⁸⁸

Another account of the founding of Perak's first capital relates how the ancestor of all Malays, Demang Lebar Daun, gave his grandson a silver bow and took him to the top of Bukit Si Guntang, saying, "Shoot, and where the arrow falls you shall be king. Call the country Perak, that is, silver." And the arrow flew for seven days and seven nights and fell at Pulau Indra Sakti.¹⁸⁹

In the Misa Melayu, the founding of Pulau Indra Sakti is depicted as ushering in a new age of greatness in Perak. Raja Culan's attention focuses almost totally on Sultan Iskandar's activities within the court and his administration of the country. The court, the capital and the king himself form what Geertz has called "the exemplary centre." The welfare of the state proceeds from the excellence of the capital and the brilliance of its court, the basic function of which is "to disseminate civilisation by displaying it."¹⁹⁰ For Perak this was an age of refinement and elegance, and over 150 years later the court of Sultan Iskandar was remembered for its splendour and the impressiveness of its cere-

188. Musa Lubis, Marong Mahawangsa, p. 87.

189. RKP SP 9/14, Silsilah Raja Perak Berhubung Dengan Syed Cendrieng, fo. 35; Winstedt and Wilkinson, "A History of Perak," p. 119.

190. Clifford Geertz, Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia (New Haven, 1968), p. 36.

monies.¹⁹¹ It is in this context that the following episodes from the Misa Melayu should be considered.

One day, we are told, Sultan Iskandar took the court tuba fishing. Tuba, a poison extracted from plant roots, was often used for river-fishing in traditional Malay society. Tuba was mixed with lime and then poured into a river, stupifying the fish which then rose to the surface. Trapped by a barricade erected across the river, they were then gathered into nets by spears and scoops.¹⁹² Such expeditions were not undertaken without considerable preparation and involved a marshalling of all the court's resources. Sultan Iskandar first summoned two of the famous pawang, Sang Paya Indra and Sang Paya di Raja who, when asked which was the best river, recommended Sungai Budiman.¹⁹³ While the pawang made ready their fish traps, Sultan Iskandar ordered the Raja Muda and the court to prepare all the necessary equipment. Tuba was then collected from rantau areas and anak sungai all over the country.

Like other state occasions, a tuba fishing expedition also provided an opportunity for the ruler to marshal the ranks of the court

191. Wilkinson, A History of the Peninsula Malays, p. 99. Wilkinson served for several years in Perak as secretary Sir Ernest Birch, whom he calls "the last real representative of the Residents of the school of Sir Hugh Low." Birch fostered a knowledge of Malay life and customs among his subordinates and at that time Perak was a centre for British work on Malaya. Wilkinson, Malay English Dictionary, I, 111.

192. Ibid., II, 1239; J. Argyll Campbell, "An Experimental Investigation Concerning the Effects of Tuba (*Derres Elliptica*) fish poison," JSBRAS, LVII (July, 1916), 129-137.

193. Sungai Budiman runs into the Kinta River at Pulau Indra Sakti (1010 E, 4°08' N).

members. At such times each person's place in the hierarchy and his social distance from the Sultan was publicly demonstrated by the clothes he wore, the place he sat and the order in which he was served food or sirih.¹⁹⁴ A promotion in the hierarchy, symbolised by a change in clothing (persalinan), thus meant that in every court activity an individual's new status would be given due honour. There was no situation when rank went unnoticed. Now, we are told, the scoops and serampang (barbed tridents) of the court were distributed according to the social position of the recipient. The anak raja had gold scoops, the young nobles (anak orang baik and anak tuan) had ones of gold and copper alloy (suasa). Sultan Iskandar's attendants had scoops of silver, while those of the palace servants and the ordinary people were made of copper, tin and wood, "each one according to what was fitting."¹⁹⁵

We have no knowledge of how many people were involved in the expedition, but it could well have been as many as a thousand.¹⁹⁶ There is, however, a stress on youth--anak raja and young nobles--and in a world where idle young men were a continual drain on court finances and a potential source of dissidence, this description of gainful employment is a significant political statement. As long as the court was sufficiently wealthy to stage expensive ceremonies and finance pleasure

194. See Errington, A Study in Genre, pp. 65-66.

195. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 71-72. For a discussion of court dress in the Perak court as an indication of rank, see Wilkinson, PMS, Life and Customs, II, 48.

196. In 1781 Sultan Alauddin, Sultan Iskandar's brother, took a thousand people and sixty kakap on a trip to the ulu. KA 3491.OB 1782, Meyer to de Bruyn, 18 May 1781.

trips, an ambitious young man could hope to earn the ruler's favour and win fame and fortune. These occasions can be seen as vital in providing a sense of participation and involvement of the entire court in the zaman-making process.

After all was made ready, says Raja Culan, the royal party set off. When they reached Sungai Budiman, camp was set up while the pawang erected the fish traps and prepared the tuba. The tuba was then lowered into the water to the sound of drums and a few minutes later the stupefied fish rose to the surface. All the anak raja, both men and women, the court servants and the slaves, crowded into the water to spear the fish and scoop them into the nets. There was great noise and excitement, the women shrieking and squealing, falling into the water, tearing their clothes and struggling with one another "because everyone enjoyed catching fish enormously." By evening, a large number of fish had been killed and after a meal the camp was broken up and the party returned to the istana.¹⁹⁷

A few days later, Raja Culan goes on, the court went tuba fishing again, this time to Sungai Timah. The party stopped briefly at Kuala Kinta, where Sultan Iskandar called a previously nameless promontory Tanjung Balai Berjuang. The tuba fishing over, the court returned to Pulau Indra Sakti, which was growing increasingly busy and crowded. "There were large numbers of foreign traders who came from many different countries, all bringing different kinds of gifts. The greatness and glory and wealth of Sultan Iskandar increased."¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁷. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 73-74.

Although Governor Dekker was disappointed with the tin deliveries during the first years of Sultan Iskandar's reign, the Misa Melayu indicates that there was no lack of money in the Perak court. Lavish entertainments were not cheap, and yet in the period since his accession, Sultan Iskandar had held a succession of ceremonies connected with the funeral, new installations, and his daughter's illness. As Raja Culan continues with his story, it appears that Sultan Iskandar was able to maintain his previous level of expenditure and even extend it. We are left to draw what is an obvious conclusion: the tolls and revenues from the tin trade were finding their way into the royal coffers.

As the day for the feast of the pilgrims, Hari Raja Haji, drew near, for instance, Sultan Iskandar was concerned because there was no mosque on Pulau Indra Sakti. The Raja Muda and the orang besar, who had already successfully supervised the laying out of Bandar and the building of the new istana, were placed in charge of the mosque construction. After its completion on 10 Zul-hijjah (Hari Raya Haji 18 September, presumably 1754) the entire court participated in the elaborate services and prayers which were held to mark the holiday. The anak raja and orang besar attended a formal reception in the balai and an impressive procession of elephants was made to the mosque where further formalities were observed.¹⁹⁹

The building of the mosque leads us to a brief discussion of the

198. Ibid., p. 74. Sungah Timah is situated in the ulu Kinta area,
103° 16' E, 4° 21' N.

199. Ibid., pp. 74-78.

role of Islam in Perak. Unlike other Malay states, such as Patani, Melaka, Pasai, Kutai and Kedah, there is no story in Perak of a ruler's conversion. Sultan Muzafar, the founder of the dynasty, established himself in Perak well after the introduction of Islam to the area. A son of the Melaka ruler, Sultan Muzafar would himself have been Moslem, and thus from its very inception, Perak fell inside the pale of Islam. Certainly there can be no doubt that Perak Malays felt themselves to be true members of the community of the faithful. The Misa Melayu suggests, for example, that by this stage the mukim, or community of people gathered around a mosque, was already regarded as an administrative unit.²⁰⁰ The mukim was under the command of a penghulu, whose duties, according to an old Perak law code, concerned the upkeep of the mosque as well as civil administration.²⁰¹ Although Perak did not attract the same number of wandering religious figures as ports like Melaka, Aceh, Johor and later, Riau, it was not a backwater.²⁰² Sultan Alauddin Syah of Perak, who became ruler of Aceh in 1575, was renowned for his patronage of religion.²⁰³ Surely Perak, a vassal of Aceh when it was a centre

200. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 95.

201. Rigby, Ninety-Nine Laws, pp. 27, 43, 44, 51.

202. For references to religious activity in Aceh, see Lombard, Le Sultanat d'Atjeh, pp. 159-164. See also Hans Overbeck, "Silsilah Melayu dan Bugis dan Sakalian Raja-Raja-nya," JMBRAS, IV, 3 (1926), 366-367, 380; in the mid-eighteenth century a number of students from Terengganu went to study in Riau, which had attracted a number of religious men. Ernst Ulrich Kratz, Peringatan Sejarah Negeri Johor: Eine Maleische Quelle Zur Geschichte Johor in 18 Jahrhundert (Wiesbaden, 1973), p. 72.

203. Teugku Iskandar, Bustanu's Salatin, p. 33.

for Islamic studies and debate, would have been affected by the new religious ideas being put forward in the Acehnesse court. A text from Kedah, for example, says that during this period Islamic tracts, brought to Aceh by "famous Aram ulama" were sent to Kedah via a mission.²⁰⁴ It seems reasonable to assume that Perak was affected in a similar manner. Even in the mid-eighteenth century, Aceh was still considered a religious centre, a suitable place to obtain a gravestone for a Perak ruler²⁰⁵ and the imam of Perak during the reign of Sultan Alauddin, Sultan Iskandar's brother, was an Achenese by birth.²⁰⁶

The ruler of Perak was considered to be the khalifah, God's regent on earth, and the maintenance of religion was considered one of his special duties. He was expected to contribute to the welfare and development of religion by supporting mosques and religious teachers. Young princes like Raja Culan studied under an imam, and it was felt that a ruler should be learned in religious matters. Sultan Muzafar, Sultan Iskandar's uncle, was thought to be very wise in this regard, and by some was considered a saint.²⁰⁷ Over a century later, Maxwell was told that Sultan Muzafar had gone to Mecca and back every Friday, bringing three green dates as proof.²⁰⁸ In 1826, when Low visited to Perak, he remarked

204. Musa Lubis, Marong Mahawangsa, pp. 195-196.

205. KA 3104 OB 1768, Wiederholt to Schippers, 17 March 1766.

206. Silsilah Raja-Raja Perak II, fo. 13, lines 1-7.

207. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 50.

208. Maxwell, "A History of Perak from Native Sources," (1882), p. 107, n. 1.

on the strictness with which Islamic ceremonies were observed. "[They say] prayers three or four times a day and on the weekly fast days the Raja assembles all his officers and attendants in his mosque and repeats along with his imams and they select passages from the Koran."²⁰⁹

In Sultan Iskandar's reign, as the Misa Melayu shows, religion was given equal attention. Even the Dutch commented that puasa, the fasting month, was carefully observed, as were Fridays, the day of prayer, and religious holidays.²¹⁰ Boats, for example, were not loaded on a Friday and in 1761 an envoy was surprised that Sultan Iskandar agreed to see him in the fasting period, since this was contrary to previous experience in Perak.²¹¹

The building of the mosque on Pulau Indra Sakti represents yet another pearl in the necklace, one more episode which adds to the brilliance of the zaman. This is equally true of another achievement which is vastly different from the construction of a mosque but just as impressive: the sending of an envoy to India to stimulate the elephant trade. We know from Dutch sources that Sultan Iskandar was concerned to ensure his revenue from the well established and lucrative sale of elephants and Raja Culan also remarks that Sultan Iskandar had a great many elephants which he was anxious to sell. The ruler therefore decided to send a personal envoy to India to encourage traders to come to Perak.

209. Low, "Observations on Perak," p. 502.

210. KA 3306 OB 1775, Werndly's Day Register, under 10 Dec. 1773; KA 3196 OB 1771, de Wind to Schippers, 15 Feb. 1769.

211. KA 2954 OB 1763, Cramer's Report, 12 June 1761; KA 3166 OB 1770, de Wind to Schippers, 8 Jan. 1768.

As his representative, he chose Tambi Kecil, "a man who had one wife in Perak as well as one in India." Tambi Kecil was ordered to enquire if any merchants and traders in Benua Keling (Southern India) wished to come to Perak and to bring them back with him.

As Raja Culan's account shows, Tambi Kecil's connections in Perak and India were excellent qualifications and he amply justified the faith Sultan Iskandar had placed in him. When he arrived in India he "discussed the matter with all the ship captains and all the merchants and asked who wished to take his ship and trade in Perak in order to buy elephants." If anything critical was said about Perak, Tambi Kecil made no attempt to deny the accusation but spoke honestly, presumably persuading the merchants of the advantages to be gained by trade there. His efforts were successful, for, as Raja Culan goes on, one merchant, Nakhoda Pakir Sai'ib Maba²¹² said he was willing to accompany Tambi Kecil back to Perak. Arrangements were made and the ship left as soon as the winds were favourable. Reaching the coast of Perak, the ship anchored at Pulau Sembilan and Tambi Kecil, together with several trusted members of the crew, went ahead to make obeisance to Sultan Iskandar. At Pulau Indra Sakti, they were given an audience and Sultan Iskandar was so pleased at the success of the mission that he rewarded Tambi Kecil with the title Raja Mutabar Khan.

212. It seems almost certain that this is the same individual described as "the Moor, Nachoda Fachir Sahija" (sic) who is listed as coming to Perak to buy elephants in 1754. KA 2731 OB 1755, Dekker to Batavia, 24 March 1754, fo. 25. A Nachoda Pachir Saihab from Porto Novo is also listed as coming some years later to trade pots, linen and slat for elephants. KA 3075 OB 1767, Wiederholt to Schippers, 7 Nov. 1765.

After the customary serving of sirih, Raja Mutabar Khan, the Laksamana and the Syahbandar were despatched to Kuala Perak to accompany the Indian ship upriver. The Raja Muda, Raja Kecil Besar, hulubalang, officials and their attendants all went down with their perahu to act as escort.

And all the foreigners were there in large numbers, accompanying His Majesty. The Dutch Captain also accompanied the Raja Muda. Indeed, there were so many perahu escorting the Raja Muda that they could not be counted. After reaching Kuala Perak, the Raja Muda anchored his vessel, which bore the title Panji Segara. The guards amused themselves and the royal slaves and the people all gathered sea shells.²¹³

The Laksamana, the Syahbandar and Raja Mutabar Khan went aboard the Indian ship, which then sailed into the river.

The next day Nakhoda Pakir Sa'ib Maba was welcomed by the Raja Muda himself, and was then towed upstream after the royal vessel. The party anchored at Kuala Bidor during which time the Raja Muda and his retinue were entertained aboard the Indian ship, their arrival marked by the firing of several rounds of cannon. The Raja Muda then went back to Pulau Indra Sakti to inform Sultan Iskandar of all that had occurred.

After two or three days, the nakhoda sailed up to the ruler's residence, accompanied by all the orang keling living in the town, to pay homage to the Perak ruler. The nakhoda presented Sultan Iskandar with all kinds of gifts and was duly honoured with sirih. He left the balai in the afternoon, but returned later with many more strange and exotic presents, the like of which "had never been seen before in Perak."

213. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 78-80.

After spending some time in Perak, the nakhoda bought several elephants, and two more were given to him by Sultan Iskandar as gifts. When the monsoon season arrived, all the elephants were loaded on to his ship and the nakhoda set sail for his own country.²¹⁴

Raja Culan does not spell out for us the profits which must have come to Sultan Iskandar for this venture, but the VOC records have repeatedly shown the importance of the elephant trade in the ruler's income. Is it a coincidence that the next episode concerns the lavish ceremonies held at court during the Raja Perempuan's pregnancy? Once again the court acts as a model of civilised behaviour; once again the ruler is shown receiving the allegiance and services of his subjects, which he rewards with gifts, titles and honours.

Sultan Iskandar had been living at Pulau Indra Sakti for some time, says Raja Culan, when his wife became pregnant. After seven months Sultan Iskandar decided to carry out the ceremonial lustration and ordered the building of a bathing pavilion seven stories high (balai pancapersada).²¹⁵

The gong was beaten three times as a sign that the Raja was beginning the festivities . . . all the people in the country gathered at Pulau Indra Sakti . . . where they could enjoy themselves in all kinds of ways. There were amusements like nothing which had ever been seen before by the people of Perak. The Dutch, the Chinese and the Indians all came to offer entertainment, all varied and different.

Everyone crowded to the entertainments and the fort was busy, inside and out. All the roads, the

214. Ibid., pp. 80-82.

215. An old law code dictates that the bathing pavilion should be nine stages high for a raja, five for an orang besar and three for an ordinary person. Rigby, Ninety-Nine Laws, p. 56.

market, the port were filled with people and not one person more could be packed into the balai.²¹⁶

Inside the istana, there was music and games, feasting and dancing, including dances from Kedah and Aceh, as well as traditional Malay ones. The most outstanding feature of the entertainment, however, was a menora group from Kedah.

The menora is a dance drama still popular on Malaysia's east coast and in southern Thailand. In the eighteenth century menora was admired in Perak, and possibly found there,²¹⁷ but the best troupes came from areas under Thai influence, like Kedah. Even in 1816 the ruler of Perak wrote to the Governor of Penang, begging his friend "to assist me in getting a mandora, having good people to the number of about sixteen."²¹⁸ The novelty of a menora would ensure the success of any celebration and any expense involved was therefore justified. Raja Ibrahim, the son of a Kedah anak raja, had who been in charge of the construction of the pavilion, was also ordered to write to Kedah and ask for menora. He accordingly sent a letter to his relatives and, when arrangements had been finalised, the envoys, Sri Indra and Nakhoda Jumaat, set off for Kedah.

216. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 82-84.

217. There is a Kampung Menora on the Perak River some miles south of Kuala Kangsar.

218. SSR G34/57, Raja of Perak to Gov. of Penang. The Hikayat Malim Dewa ed. R. O. Winstedt and A. J. Sturrock (Singapore, 1908), p. 111, also mentions a menora group at a wedding. The menora is a dance drama still popular on the east coast of Malaysia. It demonstrates a strong Thai influence, and the cycle of stories appears to have been adapted from popular Buddhist tales. See Mubin Sheppard, "Manora in Kelatan," JMBRAS, XLVI, 1 (1973), 161-170; Henry Ginsburg, "The Manora Dance Drama: an Introduction," JSS, 60, 2 (1972) 169-182.

Midway through the celebrations they returned, bringing the menora troupe, which was left at Tanjung Putus while the envoys went upstream to tell Sultan Iskandar that their mission had been successful. Sultan Iskandar ordered extra rowers to be added to the boats so that the menora could be brought upstream as quickly as possible. On the way, they stopped at the wharf of the Paduka Sri Rama, who headed the procession which brought the performers to court. He was given robes of honour, as was Sri Inda, and Nakhoda Jamaat was awarded the title Megat Setia Muda. The members of the group were given gifts of cloth and placed under the charge of Raja Ibrahim. The court, says Raja Culan, were delighted (gemar) with the performance of the menora.

There were other amusements as well. The Dutch, for example, "stood in a line and fired their guns." The music of the Chinese was "very good, like the sound of frogs in a marsh after a fall of rain." Chinese acrobats, boxers and snake-charmers filled observers with amazement, as did the sight of female impersonators.²¹⁹ The Indians also took part. Dressed like demons, "as large as elephants and as high as a coconut tree," they danced and jumped, making jokes which amused their audience greatly. But among all the entertainment offered, Raja Culan considers that "the finest and most well received as the menora."²²⁰

Sultan Iskandar had arranged all these festivities and his subjects showed their appreciation by bringing their own gifts. These were carried to the palace in a procession headed by the Raja Kecil Tengah

219. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 86.

220. Ibid., pp. 86-87.

and the Raja Kecil Besar:

And all those who had processed with their gifts into the palace were welcomed by His Majesty in a suitable manner. The people in the procession looked extremely fine, each with his own manners and appearance which was different from the others. There were people from the ulu and people from the hilir. . . .

Indeed, everything was so impressive, with the flags flying and the guns firing, that they looked "like people going to war." All those who had taken part were given robes of honour suited to their rank. "If they were raja, they were given the clothes of a raja; if orang besar, the clothes of an orang besar; if hulubalang, the clothes of a hulubalang."²²¹

The forty days of celebrations commenced and in this time the bathing pavilion was made ready. To find a suitable description, Raja Culan turns once again to the beautiful and harmonious phrases which would have been familiar to his audience from other hikayat, such as the story of Banjar. The apex of the windows, he says, was picked out in gold, and the crockets with silver and gilt. Ivory pillars were joined by carved horn and painted in red. The walls were of yellow mirrors and the roof of clear glass, but the main feature was four carvings of naga on the roof, made by the most skilful craftsmen. The naga had gilded scales, jewelled horns and eyes made of red pearls and from their mouths water spouted to the bathing place below.²²² According to Raja Culan, Sultan Kskandar's pavilion was so exquisitely made that it appeared to be the work of some heavenly beings.²²³

²²¹. Ibid., pp. 87-89.

²²². Compare this description with that in Ras, Hikajat Bandjar, pp. 315-317.

When all was ready, the henna-staining ceremony was carried out, which lasted for three days. On the fourth day the Raja Perempuan was bathed ceremonially in the presence of the entire court. "It was all so beautiful that nothing had been seen to resemble it in times past." The ceremonies were concluded by a great feast and, after all was over, the people returned home sadly "for at that time, everyone enjoying being at Pulau Indra Sakti."²²⁴

The impression that Raja Culan, and certainly Sultan Iskandar, regarded his zaman as an exceptional time becomes even stronger in the following episode concerning the improvements made to the royal capital. The negeri, we are told, was now even busier, with streets and shops around the fort, a place which was famous for its cheapness, a market where traders could come to buy and sell and bargain for all kinds of goods. Not long afterwards, Sultan Iskandar decided to build a mahalingai, a palace, on Pulau Indra Sakti.

What prompted Sultan Iskandar to undertake this new project? According to Raja Culan, it was a desire to perpetuate the memories of this time.

Sultan Iskandar said to the Raja Muda and the orang besar, "I have built a negeri at Pulau Indra Sakti complete with a fort and ditches, according to the adat of kings of former days. Now I wish to build a mahalingai for my palace, because no ruler of past times has built one as I am going to do. The reason behind my desire to construct this, is so that my zaman will be talked about in days to come (zaman kita disebut orang kemudian kelak).²²⁵

223. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 87.

224. Ibid., pp. 88-90.

Once again, the Misa Melayu indicates that Sultan Iskandar looked to glorious periods in other states for standards on which to model his own reign. The building of a mahaligai by the rulers of Melaka, Aceh, and a prince of Nagara Dipa is described in the Sejarah Melayu, the Hikayat Aceh and the Hikayat Banjar. It has already been suggested that these accounts, or similar ones, were well known in Perak and in this context the description of the mahaligai built by Sultan Iskandar assumes added significance. According to Raja Culan, it was the ruler who provided the inspiration for the mahaligai and directed its construction, because, as the Raja Muda and orang besar explained, "we do not know how to make it, because we have never once seen what our lord describes. From the time of your ancestors, no one has built a mahaligai for his palace. . . . But kings of former times constructed such things, for we have heard the storeis in hikayat."²²⁶

Sultan Iskandar assured them that, with the help of Allah, they would be able to carry out his orders and his subjects were summoned downstream so that the work could commence. Meanwhile, the Raja Muda and the orang besar returned to their homes to supervise timber cutting. According to custom, the person in charge of the construction was the Orang Kaya Besar, who then delegated the task of collecting wood and materials to the Sri Adika Raja, the head of the ulu districts. Craftsmen, wood carvers, and painters were summoned and they, together with

225. Ibid., p. 90.

226. See Brown, "Malay Annals," p. 87; Teugku Iskandar, Bustanu's Salatin, pp. 30, 58, 59, 60; Ras, Hikajat Banjar, p. 275.

the labourers, were placed under the Penghulu of Pacat, Seri Amar di Wangsar, who was one of the Orang Kaya Besar's officials.

But although there were so many craftsmen, it was His Majesty who knew the most about the construction of a mahaligai. All the workmen found the task extremely difficult, because they had never seen such a thing. If anything was done, it was with the ruler's order.²²⁷

While the building was in progress, continues Raja Culan, three of the orang besar, the Bendahara, the Temenggong and the Menteri, stopped working and returned their swords of office. First, they offered them to Sultan Iskandar, who refused to accept them. They then went to the Yang di Pertuan Tua, Sultan Muzafar's widow, since all three officials had been appointed during her husband's reign. The Yang di Pertuan Tua accepted their resignations and returned the swords of office to Sultan Iskandar, who then consulted with his ministers in order to find suitable replacements. All the anak ceteri and pemegatan,²²⁸ the nobles eligible to become orang besar were considered, but none was thought fitted for the post because they all lacked sufficient akal (intelligence, understanding) and it was possible that their loyalty was not great enough (nadzarnya pun barangkali kurang). "So Sultan Iskandar Zul-karnain Khalifatu'r-Rahman discussed the matter with his younger brother the Raja Muda. The Raja Kecil Tengah was ordered to become Bendahara, and after he was entitled Raja Bendahara, all the duties of the Bendahara were given to him. . . . And it became known in other countries that the Raja Muda and Raja Bendahara were now governing in Perak."²²⁹

227. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 91-92.

228. Those holding the title of megat. See above, n. 66.

This puzzling episode by no means explains Sultan Iskandar's decision to promote his younger brother to the post of Raja Bendahara or throws any light on the demotion of the Bendahara, Syarif Abu Bakar. According to a story retold by Wilkinson, the Bendahara was irritated during the construction with contrary directions and undeserved criticism. He resigned to show that no other Bendahara could do better. Raja Alaudin, the Raja Kecil Tengah, finished the building and Sultan Iskandar declared himself satisfied.²³⁰ Another version says that the title was taken away from the Bendahara Abu Bakar because Sultan Iskandar was concerned about opposition from descendants of the Megat family, who had formerly held this office. It did not mean that the Syarif family had fallen from favour. Indeed, in 1761, when the court went on a pleasure trip, Syarif Abu Bakar is mentioned as one of the leading nobles and a genealogy records that his son later succeeded as Menteri.²³¹

If the incident was a particularly difficult one for Raja Culan to describe, he may have sought refuge in the use of a model which would have been well-known in Perak. An episode in the Sejarah Melayu concerns the construction of a new palace for Sulan Maneur Syah after Hang Kasturi, a traitor, had been killed in the former royal residence. The new mahaligai was in Bentan and therefore under the head of that area, the Bendahara Paduka Raja. The workmanship of the mahaligai was superb,

229. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 92-93.

230. Ibid., pp. 93-94.

231. Ibid., p. 130. See also Syed genealogy, Winstedt and Wilkinson, "A History of Perak," p. 144.

but Sultan Mansur, inspecting the kitchens, noticed that one of the cross-beams was undersized, and concluded that "the Bendahara was in rather a hurry." When the Bendahara was told of this criticism, he immediately came himself and rectified the mistake, thus providing an example of how a loyal servant should act. If disagreements had arisen over the mahalingai at Pulau Indra Sakti, and if the Bendahara did indeed resign, those who listened to the hikayat in after years would have been subtly reminded of a similar situation and what a former Bendahara had done.²³²

Certainly, the Misa Melayu makes it clear that the appearance of the completed mahalingai vindicated Sultan Iskandar's decision to place his brother in charge. "This mahalingai was extremely beautiful and made in a marvellous fashion. No one had ever seen one like this, except in the zaman of Sultan Iskandar who had built a mahalingai in Perak and a fort at Pulau Indra Sakti." When finished, it was seven stories high, its apex and crockets made of black iron. The walls were coloured blue, picked out in red, carved and fretted with panels of glass. The trellis work was of polished ivory, horn and ebony, inlaid with gold, silver and lazuardi. Bells which tinkled in the breeze were hung around the roof and around the walls paintings were hung; a city complete with a fort, an istana, a boat with its cargo, weapons, sampan, sailing ships, clouds, waves, rocks, fish and birds.

The building was completed in time for the celebrations for the Prophet's birthday and Sultan Iskandar summoned all the civil and religious officials to his new mahalingai. On each of the seven levels,

²³². Brown, "Malay Annals," p. 87.

prayers proper for the occasion were read. At the top were the most honoured, the raja and the syarif; on the second level were the ulama, the men learned in religion, with their secular counterparts, the orang besar. Below them were the imam, the mosque officials and the court attendants; on the fourth level were the khatib and the hulubalang, followed by the bilal (muezim) and the penghulu of the various mukim; on the sixth level were the lebai and alim, with the ordinary people and on the lowest were the itinerant travellers and religious mendicants (fakir) together with the foreign traders.²³³

Sultan Iskandar then received the obeisance of all the religious and civil officials and distributed hundreds of reals as alms. This was followed by a feast with numerous special dishes, like nasi Khabuli (rice and chick peas) and sweet cakes. The mahaligai itself was decorated with yellow cloth and carpets were placed on the floor in preparation for Sultan Iskandar to take up residence. The next day, after the appropriate ceremonies, the ruler and his family moved to the new mahaligai. The Amar di Wangsar, the head of Pacat and senior hulubalang, was apparently considered to have carried out his task well, despite the replacement of the Bendahara. He was given robes of honour and the title Maharaja Tentu Wangsa.²³⁴

Having dealt with what might be called Sultan Iskandar's "building program" in his new capital, Raja Culan then turns to a discussion of

233. The ulama are the men learned in religion; the imam are mosque officials; the bilal is the caller to prayer; lebai are Indian holy men; alim are Islamic scholars.

234. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 94-96.

other administrative matters. A disciplined attention to matters of state had long been considered a hall mark of kingship in Southeast Asia, and Sultan Iskandar was a true heir of this tradition. According to Raja Culan, the Perak ruler received his subjects three times a day. Early in the morning, after the dawn prayers (subuh) he sat in the balai lepuh (verandah) with all his relatives and the court attendants. Here he remained until about nine o'clock, after which he ate. Until midday he sat in the balai rong (audience hall) and following the noon prayers he went to the larger reception hall.²³⁵ One wonders what the nature of these audiences were. It is perhaps helpful to look at Low's comment regarding Sultan Iskandar's grand-nephew in 1826:

The Raja is a very quiet person and very indulgent to his subjects. The routine of his life admits not of much variety. He hears complaints and settles business early in the morning, breakfasts about ten and dines about sunset or later.²³⁶

Dutch sources suggest that during these sessions Sultan Iskandar heard petitions from individuals covering a wide number of subjects: the behaviour of the Dutch resident, runaway slaves, debts owed, the conduct of district heads. Sultan Iskandar's decisions were not regarded lightly. It is impressive to read in a Dutch report that an ulu chief came down to Pulau Indra Sakti, a distance of over a hundred miles, to seek royal intervention in his quarrels with Patani migrants.²³⁷ This contact with

235. Ibid., p. 97.

236. Low, "Observations on Perak," p. 502. The view that a daily routine was part of statescraft had come to Southeast Asia from India. See R. Shamasastri (trans.), Kautilya's Arthashastra (Mysore, 1951), pp. 36-37; G. Buhler (trans.), The Laws of Manu (Delhi and New York, 1971), pp. 221, 251-252.

outlying areas is reiterated in the Misa Melayu when Raja Culan records that "one day, when his Majesty was sitting in the balai, a person from the ulu came to report that an elephant had been caught near Padang Asam" (near Kuala Kangsar). As soon as Sultan Iskandar heard this, he went upstream with all the necessary equipment, "for it is the custom of Malay-kings to love fighting elephants."²³⁸

This trip upstream brings us to another feature of Sultan Iskandar's administration and perhaps the key to his success as a ruler; the multiplicity and diversity of the affairs he considered worthy of his attention. As Raja Muda Sultan Iskandar had made a number of trips upstream as the ruler's representative.²³⁹ When he became Sultan it was clear that he would not be content to sit back and let others govern for him, even in areas many miles away. The ruler was now personally involved in the administration, his activities confined not merely to the building of palaces, forts, and a new capital, but extending into every area of the kerajaan. While the Dutch records praise Sultan Iskandar's management of the ulu area, the Misa Melayu catalogues his trips to a number of outlying districts.

The Malay phrase for such expedition is pergu bermain-main (to go and enjoy oneself) and this is echoed in the Dutch word speeltochtje (pleasure trip). But their purpose was not just amusement, for while the ruler was engaged in pastimes like elephant hunting or tuba fishing, he

237. See below, Chapter VI, p. 441.

238. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 97. See also Appendix C.

239. Ibid., pp. 28, 30, 44.

was also carrying out a personal inspection of the area.²⁴⁰ In a sense he was "showing the flag" and it was during such trips that the reality of the ruler was made splendidly manifest to people in remote districts who might otherwise have been only dimly aware of his existence. One of the themes of the Misa Melayu is the interaction between Sultan Iskandar and his people, and during those royal progresses through the country, he moved among his subjects, personally dispensing justice, receiving tribute and accepting declarations of loyalty. Even when he returned to his capital, there was no loss of activity, for there was constant activity at court and people from the rantau areas were frequently summoned downstream for kerah duties, to participate in some festivity and to receive the ruler's kurnia or bounty.

The trip taken to the ulu to hunt elephants is a typical combination of pleasure with administrative duties. Leaving the Raja Muda and Raja Bendahara to take care of affairs at Pulau Indra Sakti, Sultan Iskandar went upstream with the rest of his court. When he reached Pacat, all the hulubalang, the ulu officials and their followers gathered "each

240. This custom can be seen in other states. In the Mikayat Raja-Raja Pasi, we are told that "Sultan Malik'l-Mahmud said to his chiefs and ministers, 'I would like to go on holiday (bermain-main) up the river and look at the settlements and villages, while we spend our time trapping elephants and hunting.'" Hill, "Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai," pp. 68-69, 129. When the ruler of Aceh, Sultan Iskandar Thani, makes a trip to the coast, "His Majesty enjoyed himself catching fish and receiving all the envoys and all the nakhoda and bestowing gifts on all the hulubalang and rakyat," Teungku Iskandar, Bustanu's Salatin, p. 54. A Dutch envoy to Riau in 1772 reported that Daeng Kemboja had just returned from a speeltochtje to the islands just outside the Riau River. KA 3310, Secret Day Register of G. L. Velge, envoy to Riau, under 9 Oct. 1772, foll. 60-61.

one bringing gifts according to his ability." The elephant was trapped and brought to Sultan Iskandar. "There was another elephant which was brought to His Majesty and one more which was killed." The Syahbandar also came upstream, bringing a tuskless male elephant (gajah mengkona) which he had just trapped, and this was put into stocks at Pacat with the other elephants. His Majesty went upstream to Sayung and was welcomed by the Sri Maharaja Lela and all the hulubalang from the ulu territories--Sayung, Kota Lama, Padang Asam and Sungai Siput. A balai was built on the beach for the royal party and the people gathered with their gifts.

The wives of the hulubalang also came to make obeisance with their female followers and they too brought gifts. There were a great number of offerings from the hulubalang and inhabitants of the ulu; bags of gifts and coconuts were piled up. Several score of rafts were loaded and added to those were presents from the Sri Adika Raja, the Syahbandar Muda and the people of Pelus.²⁴¹

Sultan Iskandar stayed at Sayung for three days, during which he was entertained by the Sri Maharaja Lela. Unexpectedly, however, the Sri Maharaja fell ill and a woman was given the task of holding the royal sword (pedang perbujangan). She suddenly fell down in front of Sultan Iskandar and, when they saw this, all the anak raja laughed and copied her. Sultan Iskandar, whom Dutch records show was always conscious of court protocol, immediately gave the sword to someone else.²⁴² It is an intimate detail like this, recorded from the Misa Melayu about a trip to

241. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 98-99.

242. Ibid., p. 99.

ulu Perak, that adds substance to the memories of Sultan Iskandar as a ruler who insisted on a properly conducted court.²⁴³

Following the elephant hunt, the Misa Melayu continues, a great feast was held. Prior to Sultan Iskandar's departure, the women of the Sri Maharaja' Lela's household gave him further gifts, tin and coconuts, which were all piled on a raft. Three days later, the Panglima of Larut arrived with his followers, the people of Bukit Gantang, Pematang and Pengkalan, who also brought presents. "After seven days at Sayung, all of hulubalang in the rantau area had come to make obeisance, each with their gifts."²⁴⁴

Just before Sultan Iskandar left Sayung, an event occurred which Raja Culan chose to include in the hikayat even though it affected him more than Sultan Iskandar. In this touching account of the fate of a pair of young lovers we are reminded once again that Raja Culan is concerned with real people, not mythical figures in some romance. We cannot but be impressed by the degree of power which a district chief like the Sri Maharaja Lela could yield, far greater, it appears, than the authority of a leading anak raja.

At Sayung, writes Raja Culan, there lived a woman called Siti Sara, the daughter of a Kling man called Lebai Hanap. She had married another Kling, Sri Raja Khan, but had divorced him. Several other men had proposed marriage, but she did not wish to wed anyone in that district. A person from Lower Perak, Abdullah, the son of Imam Panjang,

243. Wilkinson, A History of the Peninsular Malays, p. 99.

244. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 100.

Raja Culan's former teacher, came upstream to ask Siti Sara to marry him and she accepted his proposal. The Sri Maharaja Lela gave his approval, but later he rejected the tanda pinang, using insulting words, for he wished to marry Siti Sara himself. Because she would not agree, the Sri Maharaja Lela took her by force "since he was the penghulu of the ulu district." Still Siti Sara refused to marry him and, in desperation, Abdullah turned to the Raja Kecil Besar, Raja Culan, his father's former pupil (anak murid). In vain Raja Culan appealed to the Sri Maharaja Lela and his assistant (kapit), Raja Bijaya Dewa. When it became clear that Siti Sara could not be persuaded to marry him, the Sri Maharaja Lela was so angry that he presented her to Sultan Iskandar as a slave. "Sultan Iskandar took Siti Sara and left to go downstream. When he reached Pacat, he stayed there to wait until the elephants in the stocks had become tame."²⁴⁵

At Pacat, however, Sultan Iskandar became very ill. After three days he showed signs of recovery and his attendants therefore summoned all those people famous for their skill in medicine. Among the tabib who came to Pacat was a man named Nakhoda Wan Saja. He erected a tent on the beach and there held a seance, casting spells and calling up the jin (spirits). His efforts to cure Sultan Iskandar were, unfortunately, unsuccessful. The Raja di Hilir, the Raja Tua and the other anak raja brought the ruler downstream to Pulau Indra Sakti, where he was taken to the mahaligai. All the people in the istana, including Sultan Muzafar's widow, the Yang di Pertuan Tua, gathered because "they were all

245. Ibid., pp. 100-101.

concerned to hear that His Majesty was very ill." The Raja Muda and the Raja Bendahara summoned further specialists to attempt cures, and they also offered prayers to the Prophet, the saints and the ancestors (kutub). Alms were offered to the fakir and the Raja Muda even paid a member of the Syed family a hundred reals to offer prayers for Sultan Iskandar's recovery. Finally, "because of the help of Allah and his prophet, the prayers of his subjects and the daulat of His Majesty," Sultan Iskandar regained his health.²⁴⁶

A period of thansgiving was observed by the court and the foremost members each held their own ceremonies to fulfil vows which they had made during Sultan Iskandar's illness. Once again, there was a tremendous display of wealth. The Yang di Pertuan Tua sponsored a ceremony which lasted for three days, in the course of which Sultan Iskandar was bathed ceremonially and presented with robes of honour. A week later, the Raja Perempuan, Sultan Iskandar's wife, held another festival which lasted seven days and nights, during which she honoured her husband in a similar way, giving him "a sarong and headcloth of striped bandanna cloth and a jacket made of crimson geramaut cloth," all of which we can imagine were fully abreast of the current fashion.²⁴⁷ After the lustration was over, the ruler received the homage of his people, distributing reals and cloth to the religious officials who had

246. Ibid., p. 102.

247. Ibid., pp. 102-106. In 1785 Governor de Bruyn commented on the constantly changing Malay taste with regard to dress and colours and styles of cloth. Harrison, "Trade in the Straits of Malacca in 1785," p. 60.

conducted the ceremony. In the weeks that followed, the Raja Bendahara, the Menteri and the Temenggong all held royal lustration ceremonies, the detailed descriptions of which are obviously intended to convey the elegance and refinement of Sultan Iskandar's court. A royal illness, like a wedding, funeral, or any other court activity, was source of some expense not only for the ruler, but for his family and the foremost ministers. The elaborate sets of clothing, the feasts, the payments of religious officials, are all evidence of the new wealth that was flowing to Perak because of the Dutch contract. These were not something which could be undertaken by a poverty-stricken court. In Raja Culan's words, "the greatness and glory of His Majesty increased, as did the fame of the country."²⁴⁸

One of the closing sections of the prose section of the Misa Melayu is a description of Ary Verbrugge's mission to Perak in 1756. As we have seen in a previous chapter, the Malay account not only interlocks with the report sent by the Governor to Batavia, but provides a glimpse into the thinking of the Perak assembly. In view of the apparent loss of Verbrugge's original report to the Governor, the Malay account casts further light on the recurrent problems which beset Perak-Dutch relations. The inability of the VOC to attract responsible and honourable men, especially at the lowest levels, has already been discussed. Captains of Company ships, for example, had frequently been described as downright boors, while the best of crews were rough, ignorant, irreli-

²⁴⁸. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 106.

gious and quarrelsome.²⁴⁹ Even a resident, hand-picked by the Governor, could not always be trusted to treat the Malays in a fitting manner. It will be remembered that in 1747 the Laksamana had complained that some of his people had been clapped into irons by the Company head on Pangkor; three years later, another garrison commander was accused of firing at women in passing perahu.²⁵⁰

According to Raja Culan, as similar incident occurred during the 1756 mission. The Menteri and Syahbandar had been placed in charge of the new weighing station at Kuala Bidor. The Syahbandar used to travel backwards and forwards from his home to the weighing station and was thus forced to pass the Dutch ketch anchored there. One day he was stopped by the Captain, who asked him to come aboard. The Syahbandar refused because he felt that, if the Captain wished to speak to him, he should come to Kuala Bidor. The Captain, annoyed, ordered his sailors to give chase and the Dutch boat came abreast of the Syahbandar just as he reached the mouth Sungai Bidor. The sailors called out rudely, "Why didn't you come just now, when the Captain called you? Is there a tiger in the ketch?" The Syahbandar infuriated them by replying, "It's certainly true that I didn't want to stop at the ketch; there aren't any tigers, I know, but there are a lot of pigs!" The Dutch were so angry that they tried to take the Syahbandar to the Captain immediately, but, says Raja Culan, the Syahbandar refused to go "because he was a great hulubalang."²⁵¹

249. Boxer, The Dutch Seaborne Empire, pp. 70-72.

250. See Chapter III, p. 192 and KA 2673 OB 1752, Melaka Resolutions, 29 June 1750, fo. 211.

When all this was reported to the Captain, he ordered his sailors to fire at the Menteri and Syahbandar in order to frighten them. The Syahbandar managed to slip away to Pulau Indra Sakti, where he told Sultan Iskandar everything that had happened. Sultan Iskandar was furious and refused to allow any tin to be taken down to Kuala Bidor. "If they wish to quarrel," he said, "we will fight, for they have fired on our orang besar just as if they wish to test our manhood." He was even more angry when the Menteri, who had escaped the Dutch by hiding in a swamp in the Bidor River, appeared at court the next day with his story of how the Dutch had treated them.

The Raja Bendahara and the orang besar were very apprehensive at what might eventuate as a result of Sultan Iskandar's anger with the Dutch and the Laksamana went down to talk to the Captain. The latter was extremely fearful when told of Sultan Iskandar's fury, and humbly begged the ruler's pardon. He excused his crew's behaviour by saying that it was all an accident; they had only meant to fire at a monkey in a tree, and this happened to be in the same direction as the Syahbandar.

When the Laksamana reported this at court, Sultan Iskandar's anger was somewhat appeased and, at the suggestion of the Raja Bendahara and the orang besar he agreed that three hundred bahara of tin could be taken down to Kuala Bidor under the charge of the Laksamana. No sooner had the Laksamana left, however, than Sultan Iskandar had second thoughts which we, with our knowledge of Sultan Iskandar's style of government, can see as characteristic. He decided to go downstream himself to supervise

the negotiations with the Dutch. "These Dutch people," he thought, "are very clever and they have been trying to frighten me. I had better go downriver myself."

At a meeting with the frightened Dutch commissioner and Captain at Kuala Bidor, Sultan Iskandar accepted the homage of the Dutch and discussed with them the loss of a Company employee, who had been killed by pirates. This passing reference, possibly to an attack on a Company ship in Larut in 1755,²⁵² also serves to point up the degree of uncertainty which still existed in Perak-Dutch relations as a legacy of the Raja Alim incident and Dekker's failure to establish a working relationship with Sultan Iskandar as his successors, Boelen and Schippers, were to do. When the Commissioner asked for a sampan and "four strong rowers" so that he could look for the men who had been attacked, Sultan Iskandar replied

"Very well; I just want to go down to Tanjung Putus and amuse myself. I can order people to go out to sea and collect shellfish, and they can also look for our friend's people who were attacked. . . ." When the Dutch heard this, the Commissioner and Captain were very afraid. "What is the real intention of the raja in going down to Tanjung Putus?" they wondered.

Sultan Iskandar, says Raja Culan, only wished to observe "the cleverness of the accursed Dutch." When the Laksamana heard this, he offered to go down to Tanjung Putus instead but Sultan Iskandar told him, "I intend to go down and amuse myself."²⁵³

When Sultan Iskandar arrived at Tanjung Putus, all the people

252. KA 3474 OB 1781, Meyer to de Bruyn, 5 Jan. 1780.

253. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 107-112.

came, bringing "presents of many different kinds." After he had been there for a few days, he sent some people to look for those who had attacked the Dutch, but they could not be found.

His Majesty then left to return to Pulau Indra Sakti, and after he had returned to his palace, His Majesty and his wife lived happily for some time in the mahaligai.

The story is now told of the Raja Perempuan, who wished to go upstream to Brahmana Indra to visit the grave of her father, al Marhum Haji Allah.

Sultan Iskandar, when he heard the request of the Raja Perempuan, agreed, and decided that this could be done while they visited "all the rantau areas of the ulu." A great procession left Pulau Indra Sakti by boat for Brahmana Indra, where Sultan Iskandar once again received the homage and tribute of his loyal subjects. From here the court made the trip to Sultan Muzafar's grave, taking bouquets of flowers with them. After some time spent enjoying themselves at Brahmana Indra, Sultan Iskandar and the Raja Perempuan returned to Pulau Indra Sakti.²⁵⁴

The final episode in this section of the hikayat deals with the death of the Raja Perempuan, who would still have been a young woman, barely twenty years old. Dutch records only hint at Sultan Iskandar's grief. In July 1758 Resident Meyer complained that he had not been given an audience with the ruler "because of the queen's death."²⁵⁵ The following month he informed Melaka that it was difficult to obtain tin because the Malays who would normally have been mining had been kept downstream for some time by Sultan Iskandar, occupied with the construction of a grave "over the body of the dead queen."²⁵⁶

254. Ibid., pp. 112-113.

255. KA 2827 OB 1759, Meyer to Dekker, 18 July 1758.

The Misa Melayu, however, describes the death of Raja Budak Rasul in moving terms.

One day, the happiness of His Majesty was changed to sadness. With the will of Allah, the Raja Perempuan became very ill. A great hubbub broke out in the country because Her Majesty was ill. After a few days, the Raja Perempuan died. All the raja, hulubalang and the people of Perak came to Pulau Indra Sakti. His Majesty was stricken with grief and sadness.²⁵⁷

The funeral was conducted "according to the custom of great kings: the nubat was silent for twenty days as a token of remembrance and hundreds of people gathered to say prayers. For a hundred days religious services were held around the Raja Perempuan's grave.²⁵⁸

With this episode, the prose section of the hikayat dealing with Sultan Iskandar's reign virtually ends. According to the text, Sultan Iskandar was so unhappy after the death of the Raja Perempuan that he decided to take a trip to sea to divert his mind from his grief. The Perak Resident's letters, however, show that well over two years separated the end of the mourning period in October 1758 from the time when Sultan Iskandar left for Larut on February 15, 1761. It is perhaps not surprising that events during this period were not discussed, for, as the following chapter will show, 1759 and 1760 were not particularly easy years. Even a brilliant zaman has some low spots. But the first half of his reign had provided Sultan Iskandar with a confidence and

256. Ibid., Meyer to Dekker, 7 Aug. 1758.

257. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 114.

258. Ibid. Note that the nubat was silenced for only seven days when Sultan Muhammad and Sultan Muzafar died. Ibid., pp. 32 and 53.

assurance which carried him through to 1761, when he made his trip to Larut, which Perak Malays probably considered the greatest event of his reign.

The Misa Melayu succeeded in its purpose of commemorating Sultan Iskandar's reign for posterity. We are shown Sultan Iskandar as Raja Muda, moving progressively closer to the throne, defeating his enemies, marrying the princess, gaining the ruler's favour and achieving the renown which was expected of a prince whose name was worthy to be celebrated in a hikayat. With his succession to the Perak throne, the succession of fame-engendering events begins. Each state occasion, be it the construction of a mosque or the installation of a chief, entails a display of wealth, a marshalling of the court and a mobilisation of the state's resources so that the occasion can be exploited to the full. The Misa Melayu conveys the impression that this reign was above all a time of expectancy, excitement, participation. Worthy servants were rewarded, outlying areas were visited, court ceremonies sponsored. Achievements provide the material for hikayat, and hikayat ensure that the achievements will live on. Even to-day Perak Malays remember Sultan Iskandar's reign as a zaman mas, a golden age.²⁵⁹

259. Haji Buyong Adil, Serjarah Perak (Kuala Lumpur, 1972), p. 37.

Chapter V

THE TESTING OF THE ALLIANCE IN 1759 AND

THE RETHINKING OF 1761

Until 1759 the ability of the VOC to defend Perak from its enemies was never questioned. In 1750, Sultan Muzafar had boasted that he now feared no one since he was protected by the Company's post on the river.¹ Raja Culan similarly subscribed to the view that the Dutch had come to "guard the kuala."² Each time anyone from Perak passed Tanjung Putus, he would have been visibly reminded of Dutch military strength. In 1748 the fort was described as a wooden structure, surrounded by a canal twelve feet wide and an earthen parapet, in which twelve cannon were set.³ By May 1759, when Visboom arrived in Perak, various improvements had been made. There was now scaffolding at various points to provide for a better lookout; the post itself was surrounded by a double row of palisades

1. KA 2753 OB 1751, Dekker to Batavia, 20 Feb. 1751 (Res. 29 June 1750, Fliesholt's Report, 7 May 1750), fo. 211.

2. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 29.

3. KA 2610 OB 1749, Albinus to Batavia, 30 Jan. 1748 (Res. 7 June 1747), fo. 248. In 1754 Batavia approved the building of a stone fort in Perak because some damage had been caused by flooding, but Verbrugge's report after his visit in 1756 indicated that this was not necessary, since the fort was then in "a very good defensible state." Realia, II, 182; KA 2801 OB 1758, Dekker to Mossel, 26 Aug. 1757, foll. 47, 51.

and protected by 34 cannon of various sizes. Visboom, indeed, considered the fort over-defended. "Twenty cannon of two to four lbs., with four swivel guns on a ship in the river are sufficient defence, even in the greatest extremity."⁴

This blatant demonstration of armed strength may have given Perak Malays a false sense of security, reinforced by the ostentatious life-style of the Europeans which would have been described by Perak traders returning from Melaka.⁵ In Batavia, a VOC employee remarked, "luxury simply cries aloud. The houses are furnished regardless of cost . . . one woman with all her fineries on wears more jewelry than twenty duchesses at court."⁶ In the opinion of the same observer, however, Melakan society outshone even that of Batavia.

The Governor here is a much greater being than the Governor-General of Batavia. He is styled "Edele Heer." And the Councillors of Police are in much higher consideration than a Member of the Indies Council at Batavia; they roll about in gilt coaches, wear velvet coats, etc.: things which at Batavia are only permitted to Members of the Council.⁷

4. KA 2885 OB 1761, Visboom's Day Register, under 23 May 1759.

5. See, for example, the faithful reporting of details in Raja Ali Haji's description of an envoy's visit to Batavia in 1822. Raja Ali Haji, Tuhfat al-Nafis, pp. 282-286.

6. P. C. Hoyneck van Papendrecht, "Some Old Private Letters from the Cape, Batavia, and Malacca, 1778-1788," JMBRAS, 11, 1 (1924), 13. See also Boxer, The Dutch Seaborne Empire, pp. 225-227; Stavorinus, Voyages to the East Indies, pp. 249-282, 301-323.

7. Papendrecht, "Some Old Private Letters," p. 20. In Batavia a rigid dress code prevailed. Velvet coats, for example, could only be worn by those with a rank higher than that of senior merchant. Stavorinus, Voyages to the East Indies, p. 304.

This glittering life style concealed not only from Malays but from most Dutchmen the fact that the Company was dying. Later historians have seen the 1730's as the turning point in VOC fortunes⁸ and even at the time some perceptive Dutch officials realised that Company affairs were not going well, although they did not appreciate how badly. A contemporary observer compared the VOC to a sick man, infected with a creeping disease which, if not cured in time, would prove mortal. 'It cannot be denied,' says Mr. Imhoff in his Considerations of the year 1742, 'that the present state of the East Indies Company wears a much more disadvantageous aspect, and is not by far in so flourishing a condition, as in former times.' Mr. Mossel writes to the same effect in 1752.⁹

It was during the 1750's that the slow but inexorable decline of the VOC became evident in Melaka's relations with the Malay states. For the Company officials there, as well as Malay observers, the effects of the Bugis siege of 1756-57 had come as something of a shock. Melaka, it appeared, was also vulnerable. Nothing could be kept secret in the Malay world, and it would have been well known that Governor Dekker had appealed desperately to both Siak and Riau for help.¹⁰ In a later report to his superiors, he attributed his failure to launch an offensive to the weakness of the garrison, and the official journal kept during the siege shows that he could command neither the courage nor the loyalty of his troops.¹¹

8. Cornelis de Heer, Bijdrage tot de Financieele Geschiedenis der Oost-Indische Compagnie (The Hague, 1929), pp. 69-72.

9. Stavorus, Voyages to the East Indies, pp. 409-420.

10. Netscher, De Nederlanders, p. 91.

Melaka's vulnerability was also apparent in its dependency on outside sources for provisions. The Dutch did not encourage cultivation and an Englishman later commented that "Melaka labours under every inconvenience that an island does."¹² When piracy or siege cut the lines of supply to the rice areas of Java, Siam and Cambodia, the town lay helpless.¹³ Without adequate ships, Melaka could neither enforce its pass system, patrol against piracy, or prevent the incursions of other Europeans into its monopoly areas.¹⁴ Inefficiency and corruption impeded the Company's activities at the lowest levels. In 1759, during his visit to Perak, Visboom argued that the smuggling from rivers such as Larut, Kurau and Kerian could have been prevented if the crews on Company ships had acted responsibly. "But they find it much easier," he complained, "to anchor in some bay or another to catch fish and shoot birds, rather than cruising backwards and forwards. In my 27 years of service in Celebes and Sumatra's West Coast, I have frequently seen how the captains neglect their duties and what easy lives they lead."¹⁵

Sultan Iskandar may have observed failings on the part of individual VOC employees, but he was naturally unaware of the Company's grow-

11. Netscher, "Twee Belegeringen," pp. 302-306.

12. Walter Lennon, "Journal of a Voyage through the Straits of Malacca," JSBRAS, VII (June 1881), 62.

13. Ibid., p. 310; KA 2884 OB 1761, Boelen to Batavia, 23 Feb. 1760, foll. 15, 30-31, 22

14. Netscher, De Nederlanders, p. 99. In 1756 Melaka had 689 militia and Company servants; by 1761 this number had dropped to 492. Resandt, De Gezaghebbers, p. 16.

15. KA 2885 OB 1761, Visboom's Day Register, under 25 May 1759.

ing internal weakness and had not been greatly disturbed by the siege of 1756-57. For him, the sudden realisation of Dutch weakness came in November 1759, when Selangor Bugis arriving to trade gleefully reported that the entire Dutch garrison in Siak had been murdered by the ruler, Sultan Muhammad.¹⁶ This was bitter pill for the Dutch, who had helped to place Sultan Muhammad, Raja Kecil's son, on the Siak throne only four years before. In return, the Company had been granted a monopoly of the trade there and permission to establish a guardpost on Pulau Contong, an island at the mouth of the Siak River.¹⁷ In size and defences, there was a marked similarity between this post and that of Tanjung Putus in Perak. Seven months before, Visboom had remarked on the number of cannon and the strength of the palisades which protected the Perak post, and the Melaka Council likewise considered Pulau Gontong well-guarded.

The wall was four or five feet thick, and the surrounding area was totally cleared of trees and brush for a distance of a one lb. cannon shot. There was also a garrison of 53 men, among whom were only four natives, and sufficient ammunition. Pulau Gontong was thus considered in good enough condition to defend itself against a native enemy. Apart from this, in front of the fort was a small Company ship with five Europeans and two natives, and a hired private boat, with four Europeans and seven natives.¹⁸

Melaka's only doubts concerned the competency of the resident, but it was nonetheless a rude shock when their reservations were suddenly justified. On November 7, 1759, he allowed over a hundred armed Minang-

16. Ibid., Meyer to Boelen, 20 Nov. 1759.

17. Netscher, De Nederlanders, pp. 84, 105.

18. Ibid., p. 104.

kabau to enter the post, even though only five of his own men had any weapons.¹⁹ In the words of the Tuhfat al-Nafis, "Sultan Muhammad sprang down with the speed of a tiger . . . all the young men ran amuk and killed the soldiers at Pulau Gontong."²⁰ Of the entire contingent of 72 men, only seven escaped.²¹

This sudden attack once again raised questions of Dutch preparedness, and rumours spread wildly. Sultan Muhammad's ships were reported to be everywhere "from Melaka southwards" and Governor Boelen nervously calculated the town's strength. He had less than eight hundred men in the garrison, and did not even feel capable of helping outlying posts if they were attacked because of lack of "militia, sailors and vessels."²² Supplies were also endangered, and the Governor begged Batavia to ensure that "the Chinese, and especially the Siamese and Cambodian ships with their precious rice, do not fall into the hands of these pirates."²³ Sultan Muhammad appeared convinced of his advantage and, in a confident mood, wrote to the Bugis leaders, Daeng Kemboja and Raja Syed of Selangor, informing them of the rout of Pulau Gontong and asking for their support in a further assault on Melaka.²⁴

19. Ibid., pp. 105-106

20. Raja Ali Haji, Tuhfat al-Nafis, p. 105.

21. Netscher, De Nederlanders, p. 106.

22. KA 2884 OB 1761, Boelen to Batavia, 23 Feb. 1760, foll. 37-38.

23. Ibid., fo. 15.

24. Ibid., foll. 30-31; Meyer to Boelen, 3 Jan. 1760.

The news of the attack on Pulau Gontong reached Perak in less than two weeks, brought by incoming traders, but it was not until January 1 that official confirmation arrived. Even then the danger of pirates forced the Governor to send his missive not by a Company ship, but via a small Malay perahu.²⁵ During these weeks all communication with Melaka was cut off and Resident Meyer had no way of knowing what was happening. Speculation ran high, and "tidings of the rout of a Company post was on everybody's lips."²⁶ In an atmosphere of uncertainty and mistrust, the Bugis and those who opposed the Dutch treaty did not hesitate to stir up greater feelings of suspicion. With each incoming trader came fresh rumours of Dutch collapse and, in desperation, Meyer finally despatched an "urgent letter" to Melaka. Only a day had passed before the harassed resident received word that his messenger had probably fallen into the hands of a fleet of "thirty baluk, large and small, now anchored outside the river."²⁷ His apprehension increased when he heard that this fleet was under the command of the "notorious pirate, Syed Osman," the son-in-law of Siak's Raja Alam. Perak traders returning from Selangor reported that he had been there with six large ships, strongly manned and well-equipped with heavy iron cannon and rentaka, to which he had added guns and gunpowder bought from the English. Most frightening, however, was the news that Syed Osman planned to sail to Kedah with part of his fleet

25. KA 2885 OB 1761, Boelen to Batavia, 23 Feb. 1760, foll. 22-23.

26. Ibid., foll. 24-25.

27. Ibid., Meyer to Boelen, 21 Dec. 1760. In fact, the Malay messenger reached Melaka safely and brought back the Company missive confirming the attack on Pulau Gontong. As above, note 21.

and come into Perak on his return trip "to pay us a visit." The pirates were at present cruising around Pangkor, Dinding and Bernam, and although rice supplies were still coming through Meyer was convinced that Syed Osman, allied with Raja Alam of Siak, would attack Perak or at least waylay the Company ship due to arrive shortly with its cargo of reals,²⁸

This was not the only bad news brought by the returning traders. They also reported that Sultan Muhammad had sought Bugis help against Melaka, boasting that "he could maintain war for six years" and could defeat the Company as well as any state allied to it.²⁹ Meyer's suspicion of the Bugis was so ingrained that he could not believe the added report that Daeng Kemboja had refused to become involved. The resident argued that both the Bugis and their English friends would gladly see the Dutch driven out of Perak and he feared that plans for an attack on the Company post would not lack for support from within Perak itself. In Meyer's view, the VOC garrison, and probably Perak as well, was threatened on all sides and the resident said bluntly that he did not know "who was friend and who was foe."³⁰

Meyer wrongly believed that he was the only person concerned at this dangerous situation. Upstream, in the royal residence at Pulau Indra Sakti, Sultan Iskandar was also taking stock of affairs. His view, however, differed from that of the resident, who was absorbed only by the immediate problems. Sultan Iskandar placed this new threat to the VOC

28. Ibid., Meyer to Boelen, 3 Jan. 1760.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid.

and himself within the perspective of his own knowledge of recent Company history. A pattern seemed to be developing. In 1756, for example, Raja Alam had captured 33 crew members of a Company ship which had gone to Batubara to buy rice.³¹ Two years later, Melaka had been attacked by the Bugis and the cruising of Larut had been suspended. In February 1759 Sultan Iskandar had requested help against the ruler of Kedah, who had confiscated a cargo worth three thousand reals. On this occasion the resident had told him that the Company had no ships for cruising and no men to spare, although the Governor was prepared to act as mediator in Perak's quarrel with Kedah.³²

Now everything fell into place and led to one conclusion; Perak should not rely only on the Dutch for support in case of attack. Eighteen months later, in June 1761, Sultan Iskandar gave a Dutch envoy a clear statement of his views on this issue.

The king protested that as long as the Honourable Company had maintained a post on the Perak River, he had always tried, as much as it was in his power, to cultivate its friendship and to preserve the contract intact. Because of this, the neighbouring kings, especially those of Kedah and Selangor, were not only constantly jealous, often trying to persuade him not only to break the contract, but also to evict the Honourable Company from his kingdom. He had always boldly rejected them and then they had not scrupled to show hostility towards him. . . . He had absolutely no intention of going over to their side, for they had threatened to come and harass him in his own kingdom. He had not been much disturbed, because he had relied on the Company's help, and indeed, whenever the Company had left one or two ships on guard

31. Netscher, De Nederlanders, p. 84.

32. KA 2885 OB 1761, Meyer to Boelen, 7 Feb. 1759; Boelen to Meyer, 23 March 1759.

or cruising in or around the River, the rulers of Selangor and Kedah had respected him. The Company, however, had decided to end the cruising and for a long time no ships had been maintained on firewatch. Since this time, the kings of Selangor and Kedah had raised their heads again, and once again dared to threaten that they would come and attack him. They would have no better opportunity to do this than when the Company was occupied elsewhere.

Although he had paid little attention to these threats and did not believe in them fully, he began to think of the circumstances in which the Company had been placed in the last few years. First was the attack in Batubara, where Raja Alam had murdered so many Europeans, and following this, supported by the people of Selangor and the Bugis of Linggi, he had invaded Melaka. And later on came the unfortunate attack in Siak.³³

It was not until March 1761 that Meyer learnt the extent to which Sultan Iskandar had been disturbed over the Pulau Gontong affair and the threats of Syed Osman and his father-in-law, Raja Alam. His nobles told the resident that at this time "His Majesty . . . convened an urgent assembly, in which he proposed that three kubu be built downstream. This was approved by the nobles."³⁴

Reappraisal and reassessment of the alliance between Perak and the Company was not confined to the royal balai. To many Dutch officials, the attack by Sultan Muhammad was merely added proof that no Malay was sincere in his promises of friendship. Certainly, it had a marked effect on Governor Boelen's attitude towards the Perak Malays. In early January Meyer received a letter from the Governor describing the attack. Boelen placed the blame entirely on the shoulders of the Pulau Gontong

33. KA 2954 OB 1763, Cramer's Report, 12 June 1761.

34. Ibid., Meyer to Boelen, 20 March 1761.

commander, who had placed "too great a trust in the native." Had he not been killed, he would have been severely punished.

It is to be hoped that this deplorable case shall be enough to open the eyes of the remaining residents and be a lamentable example . . . so that no native, whoever he might be, shall be trusted in the slightest. Yes, we recommend Commander Meyer in particular and the whole garrison in general to be watchful and on their guard both day and night.³⁵

The fort itself was to be strengthened with added defences, and several soldiers would be sent as reinforcements. Meyer himself was instructed not to leave the fort for any reason, and if Sultan Iskandar wished to speak to him, a representative should be sent instead.³⁶

Boelen's wariness was also reflected in his letter to Sultan Iskandar, in which he gave official confirmation of the massacre. The Perak ruler was not only requested to forbid both Raja Alam and Sultan Muhammad entry to Perak, but he was also asked to enforce measures for the protection and safety of the Perak garrison.

Our commander in Perak has been ordered to be watchful so that you and the good inhabitants of Perak who, since the Company's establishment there, have lived more freely and more peacefully than before, shall not suffer should violence be met with violence. This is all done in the hope that Your Majesty, from your side, will contribute what you can to what will be found to be in your own and the Company's interests. Meanwhile, we ask that Your Majesty will, in a courteous but serious manner, by beating of the gong, forbid all your subjects to go near the Company's post between sunset and sunrise, so that the people who, in spite of this edict, try to enter at such times, can be viewed as enemies.³⁷

35. KA 2885 OB 1761, Boelen to Meyer, 7 Dec. 1759.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid., Boelen to King of Perak, 7 Dec. 1759.

Sultan Iskandar, Meyer reported, was "very disturbed" to hear that the rumours about Pulau Gontong were indeed true, and was most anxious to help.³⁸ However, he himself was placed in an extremely difficult position, for no Company ship had arrived with reals for over two months and, with Syed Osman lurking outside, there was no knowing when it would be sufficiently safe to send such a valuable cargo. Sultan Iskandar had already done what he could to help. In November, when Meyer explained that he would not be able to pay for tin, the ruler had agreed to buy up his subjects' tin himself.³⁹ This offer raised further problems, since Sultan Iskandar's price was less than that offered by the Dutch, and the resident was forced to maintain constant watch to prevent smuggling. He therefore asked for a loan of two thousand reals from the royal treasury but with this request Sultan Iskandar could not comply. As he explained to the Governor, "I do not have any money either."⁴⁰ He had been willing to buy tin in expectation of the imminent arrival of a Company ship, but by the end of November none had appeared and he refused to deliver on credit.⁴¹ The situation was complicated by the growing shortage of rice, for although supplies were coming from Kedah, his subjects had no reals for trading. Sultan Iskandar, however, was sympathetic with the VOC's predicament. He realised, he said, that Melaka was "not at peace" and was now occupied with other matters. The only solution was for him to

38. Ibid., Meyer to Boelen, 3 Jan. 1760.

39. Ibid., 20 Nov. 1759.

40. Ibid., and King of Perak to Boelen, 26 Nov. 1759.

41. Ibid., Meyer to Boelen, 20 Nov. 1759.

send four baluk of his own under the Orang Kaya Besar. They could take tin to Melaka and bring back rice.⁴²

There was some delay in the departure of this expedition and the end of 1759 saw no change in the Company's position in Perak. When the miners came down from the ulu with tin to sell, they not only found that the resident had no money, but were also met with stories of Dutch collapse. It is understandable that they should try to find outlets downstream to other markets rather than make the long, arduous return journey with their tin.⁴³ The rebellious smuggling of the common people was cause enough for concern, but more serious was the opposition of Sultan Iskandar's own brothers, the Raja Muda and the Raja Bendahara.

Dutch sources give no further help in explaining Sultan Iskandar's elevation of his half-brother, Raja Alauddin, from Raja Kecil Tengah to Raja Bendahara than does the Misa Melayu. Even the date of his appointment is uncertain. In February 1758 we find the first mention of this title, a passing reference in the resident's letter.⁴⁴ During the same year the Raja Bendahara is mentioned again on three occasions, working with his brother the Raja Muda in delivering the royal tin and going on a trip to Pangkor.⁴⁵ For a brief period he also took over the duties of both Laksamana and Syahbandar.⁴⁶ No official notification was given to

42. Ibid., King of Perak to Boelen, 26 Nov. 1759; Meyer to Boelen, 3 Jan. 1760.

43. KA 2885 OB 1761, Meyer to Boelen, 21 Dec. 1759.

44. KA 2827 OB 1759, Meyer to Boelen, 5 Feb. 1758.

45. Ibid.; Meyer to Boelen, 10 March 1758; 16 Dec. 1758.

Melaka until February 1759, when Resident Meyer was told that from this time on, the government would be under the ruler himself, his two brothers, and the Orang Kaya Besar.⁴⁷

The office of Bendahara had not been an important one in Perak for some time, and the fact that it was not controlled by one lineage, but had become a post which the ruler awarded to friends, relatives, or supporters, limited its independence. It is perhaps relevant to note that Meyer was informed of the new role of the Raja Bendahara in the government in the same month in which Sultan Iskandar discovered the dishonesty of some of his nobles.⁴⁸ At a time when members of the assembly were cheating the Dutch and even the ruler's own relatives were smuggling, Sultan Iskandar probably felt the need to have trustworthy men around him. If he hoped for loyal support from the Raja Bendahara, however, he was disappointed, for he was now faced with two powerful raja, both likely candidates for the position he himself held and each with his own source of strength. The Raja Bendahara found his interests had more in common with those of the Raja Muda, who was known to oppose the Dutch alliance. In February 1759, for example, when Sultan Iskandar apologised for the delivery of fouled tin, blaming the miners, the Raja Bendahara made no effort to add his support. "In my opinion," he wrote, "the shame

46. KA 2885 OB 1761, Raja Bendahara to Boelen, 7 Feb. 1759.

47. Ibid., Meyer to Boelen, 7 Feb. 1759.

48. Ibid. In an angry letter to Sultan Iskandar, the Governor had complained that "some of Your Majesty's nobles" had hollowed out slabs of tin, "filling them up with rubbish." KA 2885 OB 1761, Boelen to King of Perak, 18 Jan. 1759.

does not fall on us, but on my friend [the Governor] and the Company."⁴⁹ Although the reasons behind Sultan Iskandar's decision to promote his brother remain unclear, the arrogation of the title of Bendahara as a prerogative of the royal family was to have far-reaching implications.⁵⁰ Even at the time, it was a radical deviation from accepted political practice and introduced a new focus of power within the court assemblies.

The ambivalent position of the Raja Muda in Perak society has already been discussed, and it is well illustrated in Sultan Iskandar's own career. During the last years of Sultan Muzafar's reign, Sultan Iskandar, as Raja Muda, had been able to wield effective power, drawing on support from those chiefs and nobles anxious to gain favour with the successor to the throne. In his turn, Sultan Iskandar faced the open hostility of his own Raja Muda, who chafed against the subordinate position in which he was placed and in a number of ways attempted to muster support among the nobles in order to oppose his brother.

Nowhere in the Malay texts does a hint of the dissension between Sultan Iskandar and his brothers emerge, and yet from 1759 until Sultan Iskandar's death in 1765 it was the dominating factor in Perak political life. Raja Kimas, the Raja Muda, was Sultan Iskandar's full brother and almost the same age. In 1761 a Dutch envoy estimated that Sultan Iskandar was about forty, and his brother a couple of years younger.⁵¹

49. KA 2885 OB 1761, Raja Bendahara to Boelen, 7 Feb. 1759.

50. Many of the problems in Perak in the following century, for example, stemmed from the fact that succession to the throne rotated between the three branches of the royal family, one of which held the office of Sultan, another Raja Muda and the third Raja Bendahara.

They had thus grown up with many shared experiences and until Sultan Iskandar's succession would not have been greatly separated by status. During Sultan Muzafar's reign, Raja Kimas had been awarded the title Raja Kecil Muda and, like Sultan Iskandar, had made an entirely satisfactory marriage to the daughter of a previous ruler.⁵²

Sultan Iskandar's accession had brought about great changes. Although Raja Kimas was made Raja Muda, his income and status could not match that of his brother. Sultan Iskandar's normal revenues from taxes, tolls and the sale of tin had been swelled by the income he received from the VOC toll. The effect this had on the comparative wealth of Sultan Iskandar is documented in the differing value of gifts they could send to the Governor. A list from July, 1753, for example, reads:

Sultan Iskandar	700 lbs. of tin, two slaves worth 50 reals each
Raja Muda	341 lbs. of tin
Laksamana	181 lbs. of tin
Syahbandar	178 lbs. of tin ⁵³

The Raja Muda did not even have the assurance that he would one day succeed to the ruler's privileged position, for there was no guarantee that he would outlive Sultan Iskandar. He obviously found the waiting difficult. The Raja Muda had not been at court when Verbrugge arrived in 1756, and for some time prior to 1759 he had been living in the ulu, away

51. KA 2954 OB 1763, Cramer's Report, 12 June 1761.

52. Raja Kimas had married the daughter of Sultan Alauddin, Marhum Sulung Garunggung. He was also a full brother of Sultan Iskandar. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 22, 23; Silsilah Raja-Raja Perak II, fo. 4, lines 7-8, fo. 5, lines 1-4; Silsilah Melaka Kerajaan Negeri Perak, fo. 28^v, line 6.

53. KA 2731 OB 1755, Political Council of Melaka to Batavia, 25 March 1754 (Res. 2 July 1753), fo. 84.

from the capital and the brother with whom he was increasingly at odds.⁵⁴ Visboom described him as "a perverse fellow . . . in all affairs contrary to His Majesty" and the Raja Bendahara, noted a later envoy, "treads the same line as he."⁵⁵ Neither was satisfied with the price offered by the Dutch and in March 1759, with the connivance of the Laksamana, they had succeeded in smuggling their tin past the Company post.⁵⁶

When Visboom arrived the following May, he found that there was antagonism between the two brothers on other grounds. The Raja Muda had secretly bought up supplies of gunpowder in the ulu, where it was being manufactured without Sultan Iskandar's knowledge, and had arranged to sell it to some Chinese. The Dutch were strongly opposed to trade in ammunition, which they felt could easily fall into the hands of "pirates and smugglers," and Sultan Iskandar apparently agreed. Not only had he forbidden the Raja Muda to proceed any further in his negotiations with the Chinese, but had also told the resident to inspect outgoing ships for cargoes of gunpowder in excess of six ganting.⁵⁷

The Raja Muda and Raja Bendahara had also been annoyed by the privileges accorded Sultan Iskandar in the treaty. They claimed that they were of equal rank with their brother and should also receive two

54. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 110; KA 2827 OB 1759, Meyer to Dekker, 16 Dec. 1758.

55. KA 2885 OB 1761, Visboom's Day Register, under 2 June 1759; KA 2954 OB 1763, Cramer's Report, 12 June 1761.

56. See above, p. 228.

57. KA 2885 OB 1761, Visboom's Day Register, under 24 May 1759; KA 3014 OB 1765, Boelen to Batavia, 31 March 1764, fo. 26.

reals toll on each bahara of tin they sold. On occasion they had managed to acquire Sultan Iskandar's cap and had stamped their own tin, thus obtaining 34 reals per bahara as he did.⁵⁸ Until Visboom's arrival, Sultan Iskandar had apparently been unaware of the extent of his brother's disloyalty, but Visboom bluntly laid the facts before him in a public audience attended by at least three hundred people. Sultan Iskandar was greatly discomfitted, much to Visboom's satisfaction. "The king tried to apologise as well as he could with a few excuses, but I clearly saw that he will not willingly tolerate this."⁵⁹

Visboom did not realise the difficulty of controlling the behaviour of any anak raja, much less two who held such high positions. A chief could be dismissed, but the Raja Muda and Raja Bendahara were assured of a privileged status by virtue of their birth. Visboom's public denunciation solved nothing. Governor Boelen, with some insight, tried to strike at the basic point of difference between the brothers--the privileged status of Sultan Iskandar. In August, after Visboom's return, the Governor suggested an alternative method of dealing with the Raja Muda's smuggling. Meyer was told to try and convince Sultan Iskandar that, while it was not necessary to allow his brothers toll for each bahara of tin, they should be permitted to keep the toll on two or three hundred per annum. If this were not granted, the Raja Muda Bendahara would certainly attempt to smuggle their tin, and Sultan Iskandar would thus lose tolls to which he was entitled.⁶⁰

58. KA 2885 OB 1761, Visboom's Day Register, under 25 May 1759.

59. Ibid., under 2 June 1759.

Nothing had been settled by the end of 1759, and in this context, the shortage of reals at the Dutch post became even more serious. During the weeks of uncertainty which followed the first reports about Pulau Gontong, the Raja Muda and his faction constantly harassed Sultan Iskandar for permission to take their tin elsewhere. The Raja Muda claimed he had pressing debts in Selangor where he owed money to Raja Syed, and maintained there was little hope of a Company ship arriving. He had heard, he said, that Sultan Muhammad had attacked a VOC ship bringing money for Batavia and it had exploded. He must have reals, or his people would starve. "But this is just a frivolous excuse" remarked Meyer bitterly. "He in fact intends to do nothing more than to set the older king against us through bad advice."⁶¹

Sultan Iskandar was not as easily swayed as Meyer thought and he still retained the loyalty of the principal ministers in the court. Most notable of these was the Orang Kaya Besar, who had already caught Dutch attention in 1753.⁶² He had a long history of court service. His name is given in the Misa Melayu as Tan Marasin, and he was first appointed Orang Kaya Besar Sri Maharaja when Sultan Muzafar moved downstream from Kuala Kangsar. Raja Culan notes that Tan Marasin was a favourite with Sultan Muzafar, who "loved him, because he was skilled in speaking and learned in discourse."⁶³ Raja Culan also tells us that it was in the

60. Ibid., Boelen to Meyer, 7 Aug. 1759.

61. Ibid., Meyer to Boelen, 3 Jan. 1760.

62. See above, p. 211.

63. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 26, 50.

home of the Orang Kaya Besar that Sultan Iskandar waited when he went to Brahmana Indra to ask for the hand of Sultan Muzafar's daughter. Here he and his followers had been entertained in the home of Sultan Muzafar's "old servant" until they were summoned to court.⁶⁴ At the subang, or ear piercing ceremony which followed the betrothal, the Orang Kaya Besar, it will be remembered, was chosen to bring in the henna for the henna staining.⁶⁵

During Sultan Iskandar's reign, the Orang Kaya Besar, regarded as the elder statesman, continued to carry out the duties of treasurer (bendahari), secretary, and director of the royal household. As such, he wielded a great deal of influence, which increased with time.

Orang Kaya Besar, an old wazir
Appointed by the former king
Foremost is he, wisest too
Loved is he by our gracious lord.

Treasury Minister is he
In the country's government. . . .⁶⁶

We are later told that he was given the title Panglima Dalam, in charge of the royal residence, and acted as assistant to the Raja Bendahara. They were allowed to see the Yang di Pertuan any time they wished, both in the morning and in the evening, and on any matter, public or private.⁶⁷ Quite suitably, it was he who was placed in charge of the construction of Sultan Iskandar's new mahaligai.⁶⁸

64. Ibid., pp. 37-38.

65. Ibid., pp. 41-42

66. Ibid., p. 131.

67. Ibid., p. 147.

Dutch records also describe the responsible position of the Orang Kaya Besar. In 1754 he had been sent to Kurau to investigate the smuggling there, and four years later, when there were problems in the ulu, it was the Orang Kaya Besar, whom the ruler trusted most, who led an expedition to enquire into the situation.⁶⁹ The loyal service of this old minister had been duly rewarded. He had been given general charge over the ulu and in February 1759 had been named as an administrator of the entire kingdom, together with Sultan Iskandar and his two brothers.⁷⁰ The Raja Bendahara's letter of the same month, refusing to accept responsibility for the debased tin, contrasts markedly with that of the Orang Kaya Besar.

I keep firmly to the contract, which I will not abandon.
I pray God night and day that he will cause no rupture
between my good friend [the Governor] and our Malay
king, for as long as there is a sun and moon. That is
my prayer. And if there are any other troubles in Perak,
I can look to no one other than my friend.⁷¹

When Everard Cramer came to Perak two years later, he discussed the principal ministers with the court scribe, who told him that the Orang Kaya Besar supported the Dutch treaty and was definitely a person on whom the Company could rely.⁷² In a private conversation with Cramer, the Orang Kaya Besar himself pledged his allegiance to the interests of

68. Ibid., p. 91.

69. See above, p. 223.

70. KA 2885 OB 1761, Meyer to Boelen, 7 Feb. 1759.

71. Ibid., Orang Kaya Besar to Boelen, 7 Feb. 1761.

72. KA 2954 OB 1763, Cramer's Report, 12 June 1761.

both the VOC and Sultan Iskandar.⁷³ He appears to have been a rational man, exercising a moderating influence on court discussions. The extent of Sultan Iskandar's confidence in him is shown by the fact that the Orang Kaya Besar was the only minister permitted to enter the royal apartments.⁷⁴

Sultan Iskandar had also chosen his scribe well. Visboom had found him a discreet and responsible person, "a great confident of the king," a man of honour who would not stoop to stealing documents from his master, as Visboom wanted him to do.⁷⁵ Later, when Cramer arrived in Perak in 1761, he praised the scribe as "one of the truest and most sincere people that I have met among this nation."⁷⁶ Four years afterwards, as Sultan Iskandar, sick and tired, was faced with what he knew would be a wearisome Dutch audience, he turned for assistance not to his brothers, or even his ministers, but to his faithful scribe.⁷⁷

In 1759, however, all this was in the future, but it was during the difficult period following the Pulau Gontong attack that the scribe more than justified Sultan Iskandar's trust. With the Orang Kaya Besar, the Menteri and the Temenggong, the scribe not only provided Sultan

73. Ibid. The Orang Kaya Besar assured Cramer that "living and dying, he was a true ally of the Company" and compared their relationship to that of a husband (the VOC) and a wife (himself).

74. Ibid.

75. KA 2885 OB 1761, Visboom's Day Register, under 2 June 1759. Visboom wanted the scribe to bring him Sultan Iskandar's copy of the treaty secretly so that he could make comparisons with that of the Company.

76. KA 2954 OB 1763, Cramer's Report, 12 June 1761.

77. KA 3075 OB 1767, Cramer's Report, 4 Sept. 1765.

Iskandar with the support and advice he need to confront his brother's disobedience, but acted as the confidential messenger between resident and ruler, shuttling backwards and forwards with the latest reports.

The extent of the Raja Muda's opposition first reached the attention of Meyer on December 19, when the scribe came to the fort with a royal message. The Raja Muda was determined to take his tin out. At first he had insisted on leaving immediately, but had finally been persuaded to wait another two weeks. At this very moment, however, he was in process of making ready his perahu.⁷⁸

While Meyer downstream pondered on his possible response, Sultan Iskandar was holding frank discussions with his closest advisors, men who supported both him and the Dutch alliance. When it became apparent that no reals would arrive, he summoned these men to a meeting to talk over the possible results of the Raja Muda's obduracy. If the latter did take his tin to Selangor, the Dutch would probably regard this as a breach of the contract. What would they do? On December 25, the court scribe was therefore sent downstream once again to sound out the resident's feelings and to explain Sultan Iskandar's present predicament. Would the Raja Muda be allowed to pass, since there were no reals? If this request were refused, how would the Dutch deal with him?

The scribe also spelt out for Meyer the growing exasperation of the court at the continuing shortage of money. Although Sultan Iskandar was most displeased with the Raja Muda's behaviour, he too needed reals. He would wait until the next new moon, he said, and if no ship had ar-

78. KA 2885 OB 1761, Meyer to Boelen, 21 Dec. 1759.

rived by this time, he and all his subjects would be forced to take their tin elsewhere. His brother, however, was so impatient and so determined that Sultan Iskandar feared for the safety of the garrison, should he be prevented from leaving.⁷⁹

It says much for Meyer's courage that, even with the example of Pulau Gontong, he refused to avoid a confrontation with the Raja Muda. Anyone who took his tin out, he said, would be regarded as an enemy of the Company, as a man willing to place the kingdom in danger, and jeopardise both the reputation of Perak and that of its ruler. He also made deliberate efforts to shore up the loyalty of the ruler's advisors, in what had become a most difficult situation, by presenting them with gifts--a piece of linen for the Orang Kaya Besar, Javanese tobacco for the Temenggong and various penghulu.⁸⁰

Rather than see his brother try to force his way past the Dutch post, Sultan Iskandar tried one more attempt at mediation. He once again summoned the Raja Muda, and in the presence of his most trusted ministers, offered to give him money to pay his debts. The gift of one thousand reals temporarily satisfied the Raja Muda,⁸¹ but by the beginning of January he was again pressing his brother for permission to take his tin out. The situation was critical, since the Raja Muda had already gone downstream to load his tin. The Orang Kaya Besar, Menteri and Temenggong, ostensibly on a pleasure trip, were sent down by Sultan Iskandar to watch and report on his rebellious brother's activities.⁸²

79. Ibid., 3 Jan. 1760.

80. Ibid.

It is clear that the Raja Muda would have proceeded with his plan, and it is extremely doubtful if Sultan Iskandar could have prevented him, even though such behaviour on the part of any other subject would have merited the severest punishment, and possibly death. There also seems little doubt that, had the Raja Muda been successful, he would have been emulated by a number of other nobles. In his letter of January 3, Meyer put the position in a nutshell. "From one thing and another, Your Excellencies can easily see that the interests of the Company in this kingdom are on a very shaky footing."⁸³ It must have been with heartfelt relief that the resident watched the Company ship sail upriver on January 3 with its cargo of precious reals and drop anchor near the fort.⁸⁴ A week later, Sultan Iskandar, as he had promised, brought down his store of a hundred bahara of tin.⁸⁵

After two months of crisis, the tension had been abruptly dispelled by the arrival of the Company ship, which had brought not only reals but extra ammunition and 29 militia as reinforcements.⁸⁶ The Dutch

81. Ibid.

82. Ibid., 24 Jan. 1760. Meyer was doing his best to prevent smuggling, but requested another ship to be sent, because his small boats could not watch the smaller streams along which tin was taken to a safe place, and then carried overland. From an anchorage in the middle of the river, it was also difficult to see small perahu slipping by the banks at night.

83. KA 2885 OB 1761, Meyer to Boelen, 3 Jan. 1760.

84. Ibid., 24 Jan. 1760.

85. Ibid.

86. KA 2884 OB 1761, Boelen to Batavia, 23 Feb. 1760, fo. 24.

garrison no longer lived in daily fear of their lives and Sultan Iskandar's problems with his brother were temporarily solved. To show Dutch appreciation of the Perak ruler's support during the trying months of November and December, Governor Boelen sent him a gift of six ells of red velvet, four pieces of scarlet cloth, and some spices.⁸⁷

By the end of February 1760, the situation in Perak had returned to something approaching normal. Governor Boelen had feared that the presence of Syed Osman and Raja Alam in Perak waters would interfere with rice supplies from Java and Kedah, and possibly cut off communication with Perak itself, but the fleet had since sailed north, probably with the aim of attacking ships coming from the Coromandel Coast. Negotiations were afoot, however, to reconcile Raja Alam with the Company, and Boelen hoped that this would reduce the threat of piracy.⁸⁸ Sultan Iskandar, satisfied that the immediate danger was past, was able to turn once more to administrative matters, especially in regard to the ulu. Of necessity, his attention since the previous necessity had been absorbed by events downstream, but on February 29 the resident reported that Sultan Iskandar had already left for a trip to the ulu areas, and he did not return until mid-March.⁸⁹ The Perak ruler obviously felt that the alliance

87. KA 2885 OB 1761, Boelen to King of Perak, 16 Feb. 1760.

88. KA 2884 OB 1761, Boelen to Batavia, 23 Feb. 1760, foll. 21, 26. Meyer had earlier reported that there were "troubles" in Kedah, in which a Syed, an uncle of Syed Osman, was taking a leading part. The Syahbandar of Siak was also in Kedah, and the disputing parties had bought cannon and ammunition from the English. KA 2885 OB 1761, Meyer to Boelen, 3 Jan. 1760.

89. KA 2885 OB 1761, Meyer to Boelen, 23 March 1760.

was safe and that he could leave the Dutch to guard the kuala with confidence.

1760 also saw an easing of relations between Sultan Iskandar and his brothers. On Boelen's instructions, the resident made several efforts to persuade Sultan Iskandar to cede to the Raja Muda and Raja Bendahara the toll on two or three hundred bahara of their annual tin delivery. Sultan Iskandar could not agree that this would be a wise move. He argued that it would be too great a concession on his part, one which would undermine his prerogatives. If it were granted as a privilege, his brothers might later demand it as a right.⁹⁰ As a compromise, he suggested that from time to time permission could be given to the Raja Muda and Raja Bendahara to receive 34 reals the bahara, as he did, but the conceding of this should remain the ruler's prerogative.⁹¹ As a result of this arrangement, the Raja Muda showed a new amenability. On June 27, the resident noted that he had delivered ninety bahara of tin to the post, included in which was fifty from the Raja Bendahara. On Sultan Iskandar's instructions, the two princes were both paid 34 reals

90. KA 2884 OB 1761, Boelen to Batavia, 26 Dec. 1760, fo. 85. Sultan Iskandar probably remembered the opposition of the Laksamana and Syahbandar after the two reals accorded them by Sultan Muzafar had been rescinded. See below, p. 222.

91. In June 1760 and again in 1761 Meyer told the Governor that by special orders from Sultan Iskandar, he had paid the Raja Muda and Raja Bendahara 34 reals the bahara. KA 2885 OB 1761, Meyer to Boelen, 12 July 1760; KA 2954 OB 1763, Meyer to Boelen, 20 March 1761. This apparently remained the custom, for in 1780, when Meyer returned to Perak as resident, he again reported that Sultan Alauddin had several times allowed the Raja Muda, Raja Bendahara and Sultan Muda to retain the two reals toll which would have normally gone to him. KA 3474 OB 1781, Meyer to de Bruyn, 5 Jan. 1780.

per bahara. The Raja Muda then sailed further downriver on a pleasure cruise, but submitted to the customary inspection without objections when he passed Tanjung Putus on his return trip.⁹²

While affairs in Perak were now proceeding smoothly, Governor Boelen in Melaka was attempting to restore some equilibrium to the Company's relations with other Malay states. The attack on Pulau Gontong had abruptly terminated Dutch friendship with Sultan Muhammad of Siak, and the death of Sultan Sulaiman Syah in 1760 combined with the triumphant return of the Bugis to Riau made even the VOC alliance with Johor uncertain.⁹³ If Melaka wished to avoid isolation in the Melaka Straits, a new ally must be sought. Secondly, it was necessary that some means be found of controlling the piracy of Siak anak raja, who were endangering the entire trade in the area, especially towards the south.⁹⁴ In Boelen's eyes, the only possible ally was Raja Alam, who, ousted from his homeland, hated his half-brother Muhammad and had already made overtures to the Company. With the hope of gaining Dutch support for an attack on Siak, Raja Alam and Syed Osman came to Melaka in September of 1760. When the paucity of their following and their lack of equipment became apparent, however, the Governor and Council made it clear that they would not think of any alliance until Raja Alam had recruited additional allies. After applying unsuccessfully to Daeng Kemboja, Raja Alam was finally

92. KA 2885 OB 1761, Meyer to Boelen, 12 July 1760.

93. Netscher, De Nederlanders, p. 109.

94. Ibid., p. 110.

able to return triumphantly to Melaka with a hundred men he had obtained from Rembau.⁹⁵

None of these developments could be kept secret. Sultan Muhammad was furious, and on November 12 a letter from him arrived in Melaka, full of threats against the Company and resentment towards the proposed alliance with Raja Alam.⁹⁶ Nor was Sultan Iskandar unaware of what was happening. To him, the Company's manoeuvring must have appeared inconsistent, to say the least. Less than a year before, Raja Alam and Syed Osman had threatened to attack Perak, but now they had suddenly been declared the Company's friends. Sultan Iskandar found the whole situation confusing and consequently, within a few days of the arrival of Sultan Muhammad's letter, the Governor received another from the ruler of Perak. While asking for some clarification of the VOC's present policy, the letter from Sultan Iskandar showed clearly that he considered Perak, among all the Malay states, to be the Company's most loyal and faithful friend.

This letter stems from a pure, white heart and comes from me, Sultan Iskandar Zulkarnain Khalifatu' Rahim, who reigns over the kingdom of Perak Daru-r Rizwan. The ruler of us all grant that this letter reaches the hands of my friend, the Governor, in safety. My friend sits on an elevated place and administers the Company's affairs in the land of the Castle of Melaka with his Councillors. I hope that they will direct all future matters and try and prove their goodness even further and not deviate from their promises in anything, always differentiating the good from the bad. . . . God grant that your state may become greater, richer, and mightier.

95. Ibid.

96. Ibid., p. 111.

I understand that my friend the Company is in some difficulties. I therefore ask, who are the friends of the Company? They are likewise my friends. Who are its enemies? They are also my enemies. I ask that my friend give me this information so that I may know who has done evil to my friend, since the country of Perak and Melaka are truly and sincerely one. I have not forgotten our contract, which we made in former days, and I will not deviate from it, as long as the sun and moon shine and as long as egrets are white and crows black.⁹⁷

On looking back over the years since his accession, Sultan Iskandar could justifiably have felt that he had done everything he could to maintain the contract. As long as reals were available, he could control his brothers and other rebellious elements within the court. It was only when the Dutch failed to meet their obligations that he was confronted by open defiance. Governor Boelen was quite ready to admit this, and in his missive of 26 December 1760, the last for the year, he summed up the situation in Perak in the following words:

At present the king behaves in a more amicable and friendly manner toward the Company (at least he appears to do so) and one would have less cause to doubt his sincerity if a few very powerful nobles, especially the Raja Muda and the Bendahara, both his brothers, also behaved as he does. But, on the contrary, they are constantly attempting to carry out their tin to Selangor, encouraged by the Bugis, at the instigation of the English. The king will not permit this, and, as long as he remains firm in these sentiments and we have enough Spanish reals here to pay for their tin, there is no doubt that the greatest part of that mineral shall come to the Company.⁹⁸

97. KA 2885 OB 1761, King of Perak to Boelen, 6 Nov. 1760. Sultan Iskandar's unswerving dislike of both the sons of Raja Kecil throws doubt on the report received "from the youngest of two natives" the previous July that he had sent five ships with goods and ammunition, to Sultan Muhammad. Certainly the Governor did not place much credence in this report. KA 2885 OB 1761, Report by the youngest of two natives of a captured baluk, 22 July 1760.

In many ways Boelen's assessment was accurate, but the problems which developed in the crisis year of 1761 were not connected with the shortage of reals, nor yet with the rebelliousness of the Raja Muda. This time they concerned a much more basic question in the relationship between Perak and the VOC--the degree to which the Company could properly interfere, or even advise in matters not directly related to the tin trade. To this point, no governor had really attempted to direct Perak's relations with its neighbours, partly because there had never been any real conflict. Sultan Iskandar's open resentment of the Selangor Bugis, when he saw behind much of the smuggling, was highly pleasing to the Melaka Council. Similarly, they were not sorry to hear of his quarrels with the ruler of Kedah, their only fear being that these might erupt into war and involve the Company.⁹⁹ Only once, in 1758, Governor Dekker asked resident Meyer to obtain a copy of a letter to Sultan Iskandar, one from Batubara concerning the purchase of Perak gunpowder. Sultan Iskandar had flatly refused to comply, saying simply that "this was not customary among the Malays."¹⁰⁰

The events at Pulau Gontong, in heightening Dutch suspicion of Malays and strengthening Malay doubts about Dutch power, focused attention more sharply on the question of allies. The hasty realignments which followed the events of November 1759 created strange bedfellows.

98. KA 2884 OB 1761, Boelen's comments on extract from Missive, Heeren XVII to Batavia (10 Oct. 1758), 26 Dec. 1760, foll. 195-196.

99. KA 2861, Secret, Boelen to Batavia, 19 Oct. 1759.

100. KA 2827 OB 1759, Meyer to Dekker, 7 Aug. 1758.

Raja Alam, only a year before a sworn enemy of the Dutch was now, by the treaty of January 1761, bound to them in lasting friendship.¹⁰¹ Preparations were sent in motion for an invasion of Siak, the mixed forces of Europeans, Bugis, Malays and Minangkabau led by Raja Alam himself, Syed Osman, Jan Visboom and Ary Verbrugge, all well known in Perak.¹⁰² Sultan Iskandar could have been pardoned for his bewilderment at Dutch policy, for the two Dutchmen, he remembered, had come to his court as honoured envoys; on the other hand, it was only a few weeks since Raja Alam and Syed Osman had threatened to attack Perak as well as the VOC post.

Sultan Iskandar found the Company's volte face difficult to accept, and he did not feel that Raja Alam's contract with the VOC eliminated him as a potential enemy. If the Governor had a short memory, the ruler of Perak did not. Three months later Sultan Iskandar told a Dutch envoy that, in his opinion, Raja Alam's gestures towards the Dutch had been motivated by self-interest rather than true contrition.¹⁰³ Perak might also be attacked from other quarters and Sultan Iskandar began to ask himself if the Dutch garrison would be able to repel an unexpected assault from Siak, Selangor, or Kedah. The performance of their counterparts at Pulau Gontong indicated that they would not. In the words of Raja Culan

101. Netscher, De Nederlanders, pp. 112-115. Sultan Muhammad had died in Siak in November 1760, and was succeeded by his son Raja Ismail.

102. Ibid., p. 115.

103. KA 2954 OB 1763, Cramer's Report, 12 June 1761.

Well I know the Dutch are there
 But their hearts are lacking strength.¹⁰⁴

In December 1759, when Raja Alam and Syed Osman were lurking outside kuala Perak, Sultan Iskandar had discussed with his nobles the feasibility of erecting a kubu downstream. Though this plan had been set aside with the easing of tension, it had not been forgotten. On January 19, just three days after Raja Alam signed his treaty with the VOC, Meyer was informed that Sultan Iskandar, "the Raja Muda, Raja Bendahara, Orang Kaya Besar, Temenggong, Menteri and all the principal courtiers" had arrived at the fort, with twelve baluk and forty smaller boats, each one well manned.¹⁰⁵ The garrison's apprehension at seeing about five hundred men within a few yards of their post can readily be understood if it is remembered that only a little over a year before the occupants of the fort at Pulau Gontong had looked out to see a similar sight.¹⁰⁶ If Meyer was disturbed at the arrival of this fleet, however, he was horrified when Sultan Iskandar announced that he intended to build three kubu, one at Tanjung Putus for himself, and two others, one for the Raja Muda and another for the Raja Bendahara.¹⁰⁷

Sultan Iskandar had foreseen Dutch objections and had come prepared to combat them. He stressed that the decision to build these kubu in no way signified a change of heart towards the Company, but that he

¹⁰⁴. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 120.

¹⁰⁵. KA 2954 OB 1763, Meyer to Boelen, 20 March 1761.

¹⁰⁶. Netscher, De Nederlanders, pp. 104-105.

¹⁰⁷. KA 2954 OB 1763, Meyer to Boelen, 20 March 1761.

considered it "very necessary, as the river might be invaded at any time by an enemy."¹⁰⁸ If kubu were built around the Dutch fort, then the people of Perak and the Company soldiers could fight together to protect the country. In fact, said Sultan Iskandar, he might even move the entire court downstream.¹⁰⁹

Far from reassuring the resident, this explanation, and especially the last statement, threw him into a panic. Meyer did his best to persuade Sultan Iskandar against proceeding with a plan which he told his superiors would bring the fort and its occupants into "the greatest peril." His protests were of no avail. Sultan Iskandar immediately ordered the area surrounding the prospective sites to be cleared and one can imagine the sinking hearts of the garrison as they watched the daily arrival of people summoned from upstream to help with the construction of the kubu. These newcomers had taken up residence with the Malays living nearby, and had "added to the following of the king . . . which now amounts to about two thousand people."¹¹⁰

Despite Meyer's years of experience in Perak, he could not accept Sultan Iskandar's explanation, for this activity, or that of his nobles. The resident had even given the latter gifts to elicit further information, but their only reply was a repeated assurance that the ruler's aim was simply to unite his strength with that of the Dutch so that they

108. Ibid.

109. Ibid.

110. Ibid.

could together make a bold stand against any would-be invader.¹¹¹ Meyer remained unconvinced. He was still sure that the Malays planned to take the post by surprise and launch "a disastrous attack against our fort," possibly under the pretence of delivering tin. To prevent this, the resident feverishly ordered the construction of a wall around the tin scales, with only a small opening through which tin could be passed. Those among the garrison not kept busy weighing the large amounts of tin brought down by Sultan Iskandar remained inside the fort with their weapons at the ready "so that everything is prepared and at hand to receive the uninvited guests should they pay us a visit."¹¹²

Nothing had occurred to lessen their apprehension when another problem developed less than a month later. Sultan Iskandar told Meyer that he intended going to sea for a "pleasure trip," and because his purpose was amusement rather than trade, he did not wish to submit his ships for inspection. The reason, he said, was in order that "his royal sovereignty would not be held in low esteem, especially by the surrounding kings."¹¹³ Once again, Sultan Iskandar's own conception of fitting behaviour for and towards a ruler had conflicted with the contract terms, which provided for the inspection of every vessel passing the post. Meyer's desperate efforts to recruit support among the court, or at least persuade Sultan Iskandar to wait until Melaka could be consulted, were unsuccessful. It was obvious that the ruler would not change his mind

111. Ibid.

112. Ibid.

113. Ibid.

and Meyer, after an urgent meeting within the post, decided that it would be foolish to try and prevent him.¹¹⁴ On February 15, therefore, the court left, the fleet consisting of 35 baluk, all with battery and heavy cannon, as well as forty smaller ships, their departure marked by the customary firing of cannon from the bulwark of the fort. As they sailed down the river, they were trailed not far behind by a small Company boat manned by the constable's mate and a Malay "under pretense of fishing." The two men returned four days later with the news that no ships had left for Selangor, contrary to Meyer's expectation, and that the entire fleet had sailed on to Pangkor.¹¹⁵

Although Meyer was certainly in no need to appreciate the fact, Sultan Iskandar's very departure was, in one sense, a compliment. As he told the resident, "I am an ally of the Company and will remain so. I am therefore leaving women, children and indeed, my entire kingdom behind, because I trust the Company."¹¹⁶ With his friends guarding the kuala, the ruler could afford to make an unprecedented trip to Larut, long one of the most troublesome districts in Perak. As the Dutch later learnt, Sultan Iskandar had decided to make this personal inspection because he was convinced that tin was still being smuggled out from Larut and the surrounding area.¹¹⁷

114. Ibid. and Resolution taken in Perak post, 14 Feb. 1761 (sent to Boelen 2 April 1761).

115. Ibid.

116. KA 2954 OB 1763, Report by Johan Dubendorffer, Sergeant, and Frederick Hollskamp, Constable's Mate, 14 Feb. 1761.

117. Ibid., Cramer's Report, 12 June 1761.

To appreciate the significance of this voyage, it must be re-emphasised that Perak Malays were not a sea-going people. A trip by the ruler even as far as the kuala was made very rarely and, indeed, Sultan Iskandar later told a Dutch envoy that such an event had never occurred before and he doubted whether it would happen again.¹¹⁸ This comment was not far from the truth. In 1778 the wife of Sultan Alauddin asked if the court might take a trip downstream, as she had never seen the sea, even though the capital, Rantau Panjang, was at most two days travel from the kuala.¹¹⁹ Nearly fifty years later, Sultan Iskandar's grand-nephew, then about forty years of age, informed a British envoy that neither he, his brother, nor his cousin, the Raja Kecil Tengah, had ever seen the sea.¹²⁰ It is little wonder then, that Sultan Iskandar, obviously pleased with Raja Culan's previous efforts, commissioned another work to preserve the memories of this great event, the royal trip to sea.

The long poem, Syair Ikatan Raja Ke Laut, was the result.¹²¹ But while it supplies delightful details of fishing, shipboard entertainment and picnics ashore, the lighthearted gaiety felt by a court at play, the Company records convey the fear and suspicion still felt by the Dutch garrison at Tanjung Putus. A baluk was equipped with food for eight days, and the constable's mate, three European milita, and four Malays

118. Ibid.

119. KA 3446 OB 1780, Meyer to de Bruyn, 9 Dec. 1778.

120. The Burney Papers (Bangkok, 1910-1914), II, 3, 79.

121. See Appendix A.

were sent off under the command of a Sergeant Dubendorffer to spy on the court's activities, again on the pretext of fishing.¹²²

Within two days the Company baluk had caught up with the court at their anchorage in Dinding Bay. On their arrival, the crew also saw another ship, recognisably English, in the distance. By February 23 this too had dropped anchor in the Bay. The Dutch baluk, supposed to be discreetly spying, became embarrassingly obvious. First, the English captain sent a small boat manned by a European and an Indian, to ask if the King of Perak was nearby; not long afterwards, Sultan Iskandar himself sent two envoys to Dubendorffer to keep him abreast of events. The envoys informed the sergeant that they intended to pay the English ship a visit. For the rest of that day, and during the morning of the 24th, Dubendorffer watched a succession of visits between Sultan Iskandar's vessel and that of the English, but he could not see who was involved or, naturally, learn anything of the discussions on board.¹²³ It is only in Raja Culan's syair that we learn of the transactions which took place. Two cannon "so beautiful they had no equal" were bought by Sultan Iskandar from the English captain, using tin which he had, despite his promises, taken out past the fort.¹²⁴

By February 26 the English ketch had already left Dinding Bay and Sultan Iskandar was preparing to sail northwards.¹²⁵ A few days later,

122. KA 2954 OB 1763, Meyer to Boelen, 20 March 1761.

123. Ibid., Dubendorffer's Report, 1 March 1761.

124. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 166-168.

125. Dubendorffer spoke briefly with the Captain of the English ketch,

Meyer heard that Sultan Iskandar had reached Larut and that the English ketch was in Selangor.¹²⁶ No further information was received about the activities of the Perak ruler until his return almost a month later on March 21.¹²⁷

Once again, it is only the Malay text which provides the intimate details of what happened during Sultan Iskandar's memorable trip to the Larut district. Here he was welcomed by the local officials, including the Laksamana, Amar Pahlawan, and Raja Setia Lela. They, like the other penghulu in the area, had come to meet Sultan Iskandar, bringing their followers.

Folk from Jebung, Pentang gathered
Morning, night, they paid their homage
With the gifts they carried with them,
Bananas, sticks of sugar cane.

.

Penghulu of Rawa, Minangkabau
Obeisance made, brought slaughtered ox
Coconuts and woven baskets
Island-like and small this place,¹²⁸

The Laksamana ordered a buffalo killed and held a great feast, to which all the Raja and orang besar were invited. During the month that the court stayed in Larut, those who had accompanied Sultan Iskandar

125. (cont'd.)

who said that he had come from Bengal and that he had stopped at Dinding to replenish his supplies of wood and water. He also said he was sailing to Melaka and claimed to be a friend of Senior Merchant N. A. Lebeck, a member of the Melaka Council. KA 2954 OB 1763, Dubendorffer's Report, 1 March 1761.

126. KA 2954 OB 1763, Meyer to Boelen, 20 March 1761.

127. Ibid., 24 March 1761.

128. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 165-175.

amused themselves by fishing, "seeking their fortune" at sea, fighting cocks, flirting with the local women, and trading.¹²⁹ Sultan Iskandar, meanwhile, busied himself with administrative matters. From near and far people came to give tokens of their allegiance, not only from Larut itself but from Bukit Gantang and the Kuala Kangsar area, which were over two days travel away.¹³⁰ Raja Culan also suggests that some of these people had specific problems to discuss with the ruler, or petitions to present to him, and assures us that each one was given a fair hearing.

Penghulu through the morning, evening
Brought presents, gifts of many kinds
Woven bags and coconuts strung
Many stalks of pinang, sirih.

After all was finished quite
Obeisance, homage, paid our king
In royal eyes each man the same
Some had come to talk to him.

Sultan Iskandar also made extensive changes in the Larut administration. He later told the Dutch that he had been concerned about the extent of smuggling there and the syair indicates that the reforms he instituted were aimed at tightening central control over the Larut district.

Tuanku Sultan, excellent king
With his brothers all together
Changed the name of Sungai Pengkalan
Negeri more fitting for its title.

Appointed folk to buy and sell
Bestowed upon them capital. . . .

129. Ibid., p. 173.

130. In 1875 Frank Swettenham took two days to go from Bukit Gantang to Kuala Kangsar, even though a road had been built by then. C. D. Cowan, "Swettenham's Perak Journals, 1874-76," JMBRAS, XXIV, 4 (1951), 94.

There was a Bugis man unmatched
 Appointed was he mata-mata
 Skill at trading already known
 Predictably a wealthy man.

He had money, more was given
 And the title Sri Lela Indra
 He'd been in some huru-hara
 Body flawed because of this.

Now he was ordered by baginda
 Money given for every matter
 Should any trader come to him
 He will purchase merchandise.¹³¹

The Dutch never learned of these developments in Larut, but the increased tin delivery of the years after 1761 indicates that Sultan Iskandar, as in the ulu, had chosen his representative well. The pleasure trip itself must have been spoken of many times in after years, not only in the court, but in the little villages of Larut, Bukit Gantang, and Kuala Kangsar. Several years before Sultan Iskandar had placed the stamp of his zaman on one small river, Sungai Timah, by giving a title to a previously nameless promontory.¹³² One can imagine that the beaches of Teluk Sera and Pantai Remis, and even more the kampung of Larut and Matang, would have acquired a similar reputation as places which Sultan Iskandar had honoured by a visit. During this, his most ambitious pleasure trip, Sultan Iskandar had shown the flag in remote districts all along the coast. In the same tradition as his ancestors, the founders of Perak, he had beaten the bounds of his kingdom, establishing his authority in rarely visited, inaccessible places, demonstrating that the

131. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 174-175 and Appendix A, stanzas 416-423.

132. See above, p. 302.

prestige of the Perak ruler could stretch from the royal residence to the farthest settlements under his jurisdiction.

Meyer naturally had no knowledge of the significance of Sultan Iskandar's trip to sea. His letters describing the building of the kubu and the ruler's refusal to allow inspection of his ships reached Melaka on April 13. Boelen regarded the situation as serious, for, although there had been no hint of violence on Sultan Iskandar's part, the kubu were still an unpleasant reality. Why had they been built? Although Boelen admitted that Sultan Iskandar's fears about Raja Alam were not unjustified, other explanations sprang to his mind. Did Sultan Iskandar expect a combined Company-Siak attack on Perak? Should one see behind the kubu the influence of Selangor, Kedah, or perhaps even the English? Did Sultan Iskandar fear the return of his cousin, Raja 'Alim, still a Dutch supported exile in Batavia? Was he hoping to force the VOC to pay a higher price for the tin?¹³³

As 1759 had shown, Governor Boelen felt a climate of suspicion and uncertainty was the worst possible for any fostering of amicable Perak-Dutch relations. At that time he had regard the unclarified position bequeathed to him by Dekker as intolerable and had immediately despatched an envoy. By his own admission, he placed great value on such personal discussions which he considered could play a vital role in "stifling suspicion at birth."¹³⁴ The success of Visboom's mission had served to

133. KA 2954 OB 1763, Melaka Resolutions, 3 April 1761, fo. 159; Instructions to Cramer, 11 April 1761.

134. KA 3045 OB 1766, Boelen's Report on Melaka, 25 Jan. 1765, foll. 139-140.

strengthen this belief and thus, in April 1761, when word arrived that affairs in Perak were again posing problems, Boelen once more decided to send a representative there. He chose as his envoy another member of the Melaka Council, Everard Cramer, a junior merchant who had successfully negotiated a treaty with Rembau two years before.¹³⁵ A week later Cramer, equipped with lengthy instructions, set sail.¹³⁶

Cramer's mission, more than any other during Sultan Iskandar's reign, is of interest because it provides some insight into the ruler's understanding of his role as sovereign. When Cramer arrived in Perak, Sultan Iskandar was ill "with pains in his legs," but, while waiting for an audience, Cramer had several illuminating discussions, not only with court favourites such as the scribe and the Orang Kaya Besar, but with ordinary Malays as well. Perhaps the frankest meetings, however, were with the senior minister, the Orang Kaya Besar, who told Cramer that he was speaking directly on Sultan Iskandar's behalf, since custom forbade a private interview between ruler and envoy. But despite such restrictions, said the Orang Kaya Besar, Sultan Iskandar wanted Cramer to know that he was truly sovereign and ruled as he thought fit, without welcoming contradictions. Cramer could also rest assured that no whisper of these behind scenes discussions would reach the court, which the ruler did not wish to learn "more than was publicly dealt with." The secrecy of these meetings between the old minister and the Dutch envoy meant that both could speak freely and without inhibition.¹³⁷

135. Stapel, Corpus Diplomaticum, pp. 80, 155, 185, 218.

136. KA 2954 OB 1763, Instructions to Cramer, 11 April 1761; Cramer's Report, 12 June 1761.

The Orang Kaya Besar told Cramer that Sultan Iskandar failed to understand the Company's objections to the kubu. He could not abandon them on the Governor's instructions, for this would make him a figure of contempt in the eyes of his own subjects. Sultan Iskandar's greatest concern, however, was the opinion of "surrounding kings," namely Sultan Muhammad Jiwa of Kedah and the Bugis leaders of Selangor. These people, he said, were continually trying to stir up trouble between him and the Company and to draw him away from the contract. Their most effective weapon was to accuse Sultan Iskandar of being merely a Dutch vassal, to goad him by saying "that he governs on behalf of the Company, which dictates the laws, and that he can do nothing in his kingdom without their permission." To take down the kubu at Melaka's orders would simply prove their point.¹³⁸

While Sultan Iskandar so jealously guarded his sovereign status, it is obvious that there was only a fine line dividing an independence, maintained only by an alliance with a stronger state, from vassalage pure and simple. The line, nonetheless, did exist, and clearly the relationship between Sultan Iskandar and the VOC was vastly different from that between his forebears and the court of Aceh. Melaka governors never referred to Perak as a Company possession, and Sultan Iskandar himself repeatedly impressed on Dutch authorities the limits of the VOC contract. His insistence on the fact that the Company's authority in Perak began and ended with the treaty terms was so great that Governor Schippers (1764-1772) referred to it as a Perak obsession.¹³⁹

137. Ibid., Cramer's Report, 12 June 1761.

Sultan Iskandar's sensitivity over the question of his own independence was even more pronounced when Cramer met him personally in a public audience. "What will the people of Selangor and Kedah think of me," he asked, "except that I am subordinate to the Company and dare not do anything without its prior knowledge and approval?"¹⁴⁰ The value placed by Sultan Iskandar on his own freedom of action dominates Cramer's report.

It also became apparent, both in Cramer's meetings with the Orang Kaya Besar and in the royal audiences, that Sultan Iskandar genuinely feared an attack on Perak. Melaka itself had warned him to be watchful and he had felt added vigilance was necessary at a time when the Company "had its hands full here and there." Dutch failure to maintain cruising had indicated to him the extent of their preoccupation and he had therefore decided to construct his own kubu in the Tanjung Putus area, where such defences had traditionally been built.¹⁴¹ Sultan Iskandar was not only concerned about Raja Alam and the Selangor Bugis; he was also troubled about the hostility of the ruler of Kedah. The latter had already seized a Coromandel ship loaded with linen, payment for elephants bought in Perak the previous year. Mutual harassment had been continuing for many years, ever since Sultan Muhammad Jiwa had lent indirect, if not actual, support to Raja 'Alim.¹⁴² Sultan Iskandar was by no means guilt-

138. Ibid.

139. KA 3075 OB 1767, Schippers' Instructions to Cramer, 12 Sept. 1765.

140. KA 2954 OB 1763, Cramer's Report, 12 June 1761.

141. Ibid.

less, but it was only through discreet enquiries that Cramer discovered Sultan Iskandar had instigated the capture of the Coromandel ship by his own confiscation of a cargo of Kedah opium. The envoy showed his diplomatic skill by carefully easing around this issue, assuring Sultan Iskandar that the Dutch would willingly act as mediators although they did not wish to become involved in a war with Kedah.¹⁴³

He then set about convincing Sultan Iskandar that the Company's post was sufficient deterrent to Perak's enemies and here again all Cramer's negotiating abilities were called into play. In his anxiety to assure Sultan Iskandar that the building of kubu was unnecessary, Boelen had touched another sensitive spot. "Before the Company established itself in Perak," the letter ran, "or had a post there, the river downstream was made so unsafe by pirates and raiders that Your Majesty and your ancestors were forced to seek safety in the mountains."¹⁴⁴ When this was read out, Sultan Iskandar's expression changed, and it was the first point he took up in the ensuing discussion. In his vehement rejection of the Governor's view of Perak, he spoke with the assurance of a ruler descended from a long and proud lineage established in a kingdom which now had two centuries of experience behind it. Boelen's letter, Sultan Iskandar protested, had depicted his ancestors "as though they

142. In 1749, at the height of the Raja 'Alim dispute, Governor Albinus mentioned that Raja Iskandar was "somewhat estranged" from the ruler of Kedah. KA 2634 OB 1750, Albinus to Batavia, 19 Oct. 1749, fo. 359.

143. KA 2934 OB 1763, Cramer's Report, 12 June 1761.

144. Ibid. and Boelen to King of Perak, 11 April, 1761.

were coming crying from their graves," and accused him of retreating to the mountains, something he had never done.¹⁴⁵ Such an accusation might apply to other rulers, who had suffered from the piracy of the Siak princes, Raja Alama and Raja Buang [Sultan Muhammad], and Bugis like Daeng Kemboja. These people, said Sultan Iskandar, with apparent contempt, did not have a country of their own and pirated in various areas, bringing great harm to the Company. They had shown their "evil natures" in the killing of so many Europeans, whereas Sultan Iskandar had never wished for anything except friendship and peace between himself and the Dutch.¹⁴⁶

It was only with the assistance of the Orang Kaya Besar, who said the apparent insult was probably because of a bad translation or poor reading, that Cramer was able to turn once again to the issue in question. After much discussion and two days of audiences, a compromise was finally reached, one which had been thrashed out in previous meetings between the Orang Kaya Besar and the envoy. The kubu would be allowed to deteriorate normally, repairs would not be maintained, no gunpowder would be taken in, and they would remain under the charge of one of Sultan Iskandar's personal servants.¹⁴⁷

While the fate of the kubu was slowly being resolved, Cramer also turned his attention to other affairs, most notably Sultan Iskandar's

145. Ibid., Cramer's Report, 12 June 1761. Sultan Iskandar was quite correct. According to the Company's own records, it was Sultan Muzafar who had retreated upstream.

146. Ibid.

147. Ibid.

pleasure trip. When Cramer raised this subject, the Orang Kaya Besar explained that the ruler's primary aim had been to make a personal inspection of the Larut area, where he felt there had been considerable smuggling. Cramer's inability to appreciate the importance of Sultan Iskandar's sea trip is understandable. He had no knowledge of the administrative reforms which had been instituted, and the uniqueness of the event, although stressed by both ministers and ruler, interested Cramer less than the possible results it might bring about in the future. By refusing to submit to an inspection of his ships, Sultan Iskandar, argued the envoy, had established a dangerous precedent which could well be put to ill use by his successor.¹⁴⁸

This obvious allusion to the anti-Dutch policies of the likely heir, the Raja Muda, would not have fallen on deaf ears. Sultan Iskandar was faced with constant murmurs of discontent from his brother, but was unable to dismiss him as he could a minister. In 1759 it had been apparent that the ruler had made every effort to compromise with the Raja Muda, but when Cramer arrived in Perak two years later, the breach between the brothers had noticeably widened. One of the reasons was Sultan Iskandar's rejection of a marriage between his daughter and the Raja Muda's son. Although Sultan Iskandar's marriage with the Raja Perempuan, Sultan Muzafar's daughter, had produced no children, he did have others by gundik, or secondary wives. A marriage with one of these anak gundik was not to be despised. According to Raja Culan, Raja Sabda, the daughter of a commoner woman, was a particular favourite of Sultan Iskandar.

148. Ibid.

She married her cousin, Raja Syerif Bisnu, who was adopted by Sultan Iskandar and later raised to the position of Sultan Muda.¹⁴⁹ The husband of the ruler's daughter could expect his fortunes to blossom and during his first visit to court, Cramer mentions "a Raja De Hee, who has been made a Raja by the king, from which it is understood that he will be married to the king's daughter. This has caused much jealousy, since the Raja Muda desired her for his son."¹⁵⁰

At the same audience, Sultan Iskandar informed Cramer that it would no longer be necessary to send individual letters to himself, his brothers and the Orang Kaya Besar, as had been done previously. "He alone was sovereign," he said; only one letter need be sent, and he would distribute the gifts as he saw fit.¹⁵¹ By depriving them of one of their most valued moments, the public acceptance of the governor's respect, Sultan Iskandar had essentially reduced the status of his brothers to that of senior ministers. It is brief references such as this which convey a picture of a more assured Iskandar, gradually assuming greater control over his court, unwilling now even to tolerate the vagaries of his brothers.

Certainly he had reason enough to doubt their loyalty. The Dutch

¹⁴⁹. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 33, 56-57; Silsilah Melaka Kerajaan Negeri Perak, fo. 30, lines 1-8. According to this text, after the death of the Raja Perempuan, Sultan Iskandar married her saudara (sister or near relative) Raja Tengah Bungsu, but she also died childless. Silsilah Raja-Raja Perak II, fo. 6. Raja Sabda Rasul was possibly his only daughter.

¹⁵⁰. KA 2954 OB 1763, Cramer's Report, 12 June 1761.

¹⁵¹. Ibid.

had long recognised the Raja Muda as an opponent of the contract, and Cramer spent some time interviewing various people with the explicit purpose of gathering information about the Raja Muda and his connections with Kedah and Selangor.¹⁵² In the privacy of the Dutch fort, prompted by the offer of a few reals as a reward, rumours about the ruler's brother were whispered to the Dutch envoy.¹⁵³ He was said to be untrustworthy and to be plotting something underhand; it was even suggested that he had his eyes on the throne itself. Such an attempt would be difficult, however, said Cramer's informants, since the Raja Muda's following could not begin to equal that of Sultan Iskandar's.¹⁵⁴ Cramer must have been somewhat disconcerted to discover that these conversations were not as secret as he imagined. Information went the other way as well, and, in their letters to Governor Boelen, both the Raja Muda and Raja Bendahara stressed their loyalty to the Company and asked that he would pay no attention to stories repeated by "bad people."¹⁵⁵

If Cramer, after only a few days in Perak, was able to gain such damning information about the Raja Muda, it can be assumed that it had also come to the notice of Sultan Iskandar. When Cramer alluded to the

152. Ibid. After his return, Cramer submitted a careful list of the gifts he had given in order to elicit information. It included a silver box given to the scribe, worth 35 reals, and 20 reals given to various Malays. KA 2954 OB 1763, Melaka Resolutions, 4 Aug. 1761, fo. 271.

153. KA 2954 OB 1763, Cramer's Report, 12 June 1761.

154. Ibid.

155. Ibid., Raja Muda to Boelen and Raja Bendahara to Boelen, both dated 28 April 1761.

implications of Sultan Iskandar's refusal to submit to inspection, the ruler readily agreed to compromise. Should he plan a trip to sea in the future, he would first inform the resident and then wait on Tanjung Putus in comfort while the ships were inspected, after which he would be able to leave immediately.¹⁵⁶ Cramer had hoped to obtain some written commitment concerning the compromises which had been made, "but the king will not agree to any amplification of the old contract and will absolutely not discuss it. He had to be satisfied with the king's word."¹⁵⁷

From the point of view of both parties, Cramer's mission was a great success. Governor Boelen was once more persuaded of the Perak ruler's goodwill, and he was therefore prepared to make added efforts to insure the survival of their alliance. A small boat was sent to Perak to stand guard in the river "as much to please the king as for the fort's security."¹⁵⁸ A month later, in August, Raja 'Alim's request to return to Perak was categorically refused; to grant this would only serve to re-awaken Sultan Iskandar's suspicions towards the Company.¹⁵⁹ Sultan Iskandar's fears about Dutch commitment to Perak's defence were set at rest and his doubts about the Company's strength would have been assuaged by

156. Ibid., Cramer's Report, 12 June 1761. The arrangements were rather complicated. The ruler would come down in one ship and change to another previously inspected by the resident. KA 2916 OB 1762, 2nd Reg., Boelen to Batavia, 4 Sept. 1761, fo. 56.

157. KA 2916 OB 1762, 2nd Reg. Boelen to Batavia, 4 Sept. 1871, fo. 56.

158. KA 2954 OB 1763, Boelen to King of Perak, 24 July 1761; Melaka Resolutions, 7 July 1761, fo. 259.

159. KA 2954 OB 1763, Melaka Resolutions, 4 Aug. 1761, fo. 284.

a letter received from the Governor in July, informing him of the conquest of Siak by VOC forces.¹⁶⁰ This victory gave a great boost to Dutch morals and would have heartened its allies. A day of thanksgiving was declared in Melaka "for the great blessing that God Almighty has so graciously given us. [God grant] that He will be pleased to make us more and more fitted, so that we will always be prepared to strive bravely in His holy name, and for our true religion and our dear Fatherland."¹⁶¹

For three years after Cramer's mission, events in Perak were generally undisturbed. Sultan Iskandar's reign was later remembered as a golden age, and it was in the years 1762 to 1764 that the apogee was reached. Unfortunately, the records fail us. The resident's letters from Perak for 1762 have been lost,¹⁶² and the Misa Melayu deals only briefly with events after Sultan Iskandar's return from his pleasure cruise in March 1761. And yet the very paucity of Dutch records attests the peaceful situation which prevailed in Perak during these years. Perak was simply not a trouble spot. In March and September 1762, in October 1763 and again in March 1764, Governor Boelen assured his superiors that "everything is in a very quiet and peaceful situation. . . . There is nothing more to report in Perak than that everything is very peaceful and the tin collection is more frequent. . . . A complete quiet prevails, there is nothing in particular to mention. . . . The

160. Ibid., Boelen to King of Perak, 24 July 1761.

161. Netscher, De Nederlanders, p. 127.

162. I am grateful to Mev. Miriam Verkuijl-van den Berg for her efforts to locate these letters.

tin collection is frequent. . . . The Perak king holds to a true maintenance of the contract. The Company's position there is solid and undisturbed."¹⁶³

During this period, Sultan Iskandar could finally relax and enjoy the fruits of his efforts in past years. Smuggling ceases to be mentioned in the Dutch records, an almost unknown phenomenon. This development was probably due to stricter controls placed on outgoing traders¹⁶⁴ and to the reformed administration in Larut and the ulu. Royal revenues were coming in, piracy had lessened, and even the usual irritant of Selangor was absent since the Bugis, possibly acting under instructions from a more co-operative Daeng Kemboja, were now also selling their tin to the Dutch.¹⁶⁵ The descriptions of Sultan Iskandar's rule prior to 1761, as given in the Misa Melayu, must apply even more to the later period. We can imagine, for example, that the wedding of his daughter, Raja Sabda, was a great occasion, when Sultan Iskandar could freely share with his subjects the benefits of the wealth the Dutch treaty had brought him.¹⁶⁶ Again, the Misa Melayu tells us that, after the establishment of his new capital in 1753, Sultan Iskandar took care that a mosque was

163. Zeeland Papers, 1761-1762, 5203/1365/5528, Boelen to Batavia, 29 March 1762, fo. 102; Sept. 1762, fo. 29; 1762-1763, 5204/1704, Boelen to Batavia, 29 March 1762; 1764, 5296/1365/5530, Boelen to Batavia, 31 March 1764; KA 3014 OB 1765, 1st. Reg. Boelen to Batavia, 17 Oct. 1763.

164. "No Malay, Chinese or Moor can go out of the river without the permission of the king and his ministers." KA 3075 OB 1767, Wiederholt to Schippers, 13 May 1765.

165. KA 3014 OB 1763, Boelen to Batavia, 11 Oct. 1763.

166. See note 136 above.

built in time for hari raya haji.¹⁶⁷ In the years of peace which prevailed during the latter part of his reign, Sultan Iskandar was also able to turn his attention to the spiritual welfare of those not so fortunate as to live near the capital. In April 1763, for example, he personally came down to Tanjung Putus to order the building of "a new temple, just above the kubu of the Raja Muda."¹⁶⁸ The building program continued. Raja Culan's syair ends with a pantun seloka,¹⁶⁹ describing a new palace built by Sultan Iskandar after his mahaligai had been destroyed. By this stage it should not surprise us to learn that the name Merchu Alam given to the new istana, has been made famous in the Bustanu's Salatin as the palace of Sultan Iskandar Thani of Aceh.¹⁷⁰ According to tradition, "Merchu Alam was "so big that an elephant could pass beneath it."¹⁷¹ Sultan Iskandar's subjects also benefited during this period of undisturbed prosperity. They had time to harvest their rice, trap elephants, and of course, mine tin, the revenues from which filled their own pockets, as well as the treasuries of Sultan Iskandar and the coffers of the VOC.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁷. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 74-75.

¹⁶⁸. KA 2982 OB 1764, Wasbeek to Boelen, 2 June 1763.

¹⁶⁹. A pantun seloka has a rhyme scheme abab. The first line of each stanza is repeated or slightly changed in the third line of the following stanza. See Appendix A, stanzas 481-488.

¹⁷⁰. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 183, 185; Teugku Iskandar, Bustanu's Salatin, p. 38.

¹⁷¹. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, Winstedt's notes, p. 195.

¹⁷². See, for example, KA 2982 OB 1764, Wasbeek to Boelen, 2 June 1763, Boelen to Wasbeek, 15 Dec. 1763.

The only flaw in this happy state of affairs was the endemic inability of the Dutch to maintain the supply of reals to Perak. Although 12,000 reals were sent in February 1763, these were exhausted by November,¹⁷³ and Sultan Iskandar was once again forced to come to the Company's assistance by buying up his subjects' tin.¹⁷⁴ The shortage worsened in 1764, and by July the situation had deteriorated so greatly that Wasbeek, the resident, said he could not persuade the tin suppliers to wait any longer for a Company ship.¹⁷⁵ Sultan Iskandar himself was becoming annoyed, because reals were vital for trade. "The Spanish reals in Perak are just like the tide, which rises in the morning and falls in the afternoon, and when it rises in the afternoon, it falls in the morning. The country of Perak produces nothing but tin; even the smallest piece of cloth must be brought from outside. I will accommodate my friend for two weeks or a month longer, but the foreign merchants coming to Perak can no longer be disappointed."¹⁷⁶ In desperation, Governor Boelen despatched a cargo of Surat rupees, which Sultan Iskandar reluctantly agreed to accept.¹⁷⁷

This was the situation in October 1764, when David Boelen was released from his post in Melaka prior to his new appointment as Governor of Makassar.¹⁷⁸ Although Sultan Iskandar was sorry to see him go, he

173. KA 2982 OB 1764, Boelen to Wasbeek, 21 Feb. 1763; Wasbeek to Boelen, 12 Nov. 1763.

174. *Ibid.*, Wasbeek to Boelen, 12 Nov. 1763.

175. KA 3045 OB 1766, Wasbeek to Boelen, 7 July 1764.

176. *Ibid.*, King of Perak to Boelen, 7 July 1764.

177. *Ibid.*, Wasbeek to Boelen, 21 Aug. 1764.

was delighted that his acquaintance of former years, Thomas Schippers, had been chosen to succeed.¹⁷⁹ The question of reals, however, continued to be a nagging problem. Schippers was only able to send a thousand although, as Sultan Iskandar told him, fifteen or twenty times that number were needed.¹⁸⁰ Perak's ability to produce tin was now far outstripping Dutch capacity to buy and, in his retiring report, Boelen, like Dekker before him, pinpointed the supply of reals as the crucial issue in Perak's relations with the Company. He had done what he could to place "affable, docile and friendly" residents in Perak and to encourage the elephant trade, but all these efforts would be brought to nought if those who made their living from mining tin were not paid promptly.¹⁸¹

In contrast to these years of relative calm, 1765, the last year of Sultan Iskandar's life, was not an easy one. The intermittent shortage of reals continued, and Sultan Iskandar was once more asked to accept rupees instead.¹⁸² The Dutch even suggested that the price of tin be lowered, something which the ruler would not begin to consider.¹⁸³ Pirates once more threatened the safety of Perak traders and fishermen. In December 1764 Sultan Iskandar again offered to assign one or two ships

178. Resandt, De Gezaghebbers, p. 223.

179. KA 3045 OB 1766, King of Perak to Schippers, 22 Oct. 1764.

180. Ibid.

181. Ibid., Boelen's Report on Melaka, 25 Jan. 1765, foll. 139-142.

182. KA 3075 OB 1767, Wiederholt to Schippers, 13 May 1765. Sultan Iskandar insisted that his toll be paid in reals.

183. Ibid., 9 Feb. 1765.

of his own if the Company would renew cruising.¹⁸⁴ In the following March, a Penghulu Pareh, son of the Laksamana of Linggi, allied with a Selangor man, Encik Anting, stole three cannon from the ruler's kubu. This brazen theft was not directed so much at Sultan Iskandar as at a Kedah anak raja named Nambang, a half-brother of the ruler of Kedah, whom Encik Anting had assisted in an unsuccessful attack on Kedah. Raja Nambang had since sought refuge in Perak but had not repaid his former allies. For several weeks the band of pirates and their fleet of "two large baiuk and several smaller boats" threatened alternatively to attack the Dutch fort, Company ships, or Perak itself.¹⁸⁵

Sultan Iskandar refused to bow to their demand that he give up Raja Nambang and was in process of preparing a fleet to drive them away when the Dutch were suddenly drawn into the affair. Panglima Pareh made good his threat and captured a Company ship, the Buitenzorg, in Dinding Bay, killing or enslaving the entire crew.¹⁸⁶ In the subsequent enquiries, it was found that Sultan Iskandar was justifiably annoyed at Dutch negligence, since Meyer's successor, Wasbeek, had never maintained a boat in the river itself "although this had been done by previous residents."¹⁸⁷ While the new resident, Wiederholt, criticised the slowness with which the Sultan Iskandar prepared his fleet, there was a general

184. KA 3045 OB 1766, Wiederholt to Schippers, 16 Dec. 1764.

185. KA 3075 OB 1767, Wiederholt to Schippers, 13 May 1765, 3 April 1765; Cramer's Report, 4 Sept. 1765.

186. Ibid.

187. Ibid., Wiederholt to Schippers, 13 May 1765.

feeling within the court that the Dutch had failed to fulfil their obligations, as the Malays saw it, that of "guarding kuala Perak."¹⁸⁸ Although Panglima Pareh finally left the river, pirates still disturbed the waters between Perak and Siak, and Sultan Iskandar informed Wiederholt that he intended to send out four baluk to patrol the area so that his subjects could fish in safety.¹⁸⁹

The leader of this patrol was to be Sultan Iskandar's son, the Maharaja Muda, but the latter, like his uncle in 1759, betrayed Sultan Iskandar's trust and once again exposed one of the weaknesses of the Perak socio-political system--its inability to adequately absorb unemployed anak raja. The situation was complex because Sultan Iskandar was obligated to support not only young men of his own family, but also anak raja who had drifted to Perak from other courts. Raja Hitam, for example, has been mentioned in 1759 when he assisted the Laksamana in smuggling tin from Larut.¹⁹⁰ He was in fact not originally from Perak, but has secured a position in the court circle through his marriage to sister of Sultan Iskandar and the Raja Muda.¹⁹¹ This latter relationship may explain his involvement in the Larut smuggling, but he was also desperately in need of an income. The Dutch described him as poor, "a consummate scoundrel, consorting with pirates and murderers" and they accused him of having captured several ships at sea.¹⁹² After he re-

188. Ibid., Cramer's Report, 4 Sept. 1765.

189. Ibid., Wiederholt to Schippers, 27 May 1765.

190. See above, p. 228.

191. KA 3075 OB 1767, Wiederholt to Schippers, 13 May 1765.

turned from Larut and was deprived of his pass, Raja Hitam lived quietly, living on Sultan Iskandar's charity and doing little except gambling and fighting cocks.¹⁹³

Raja Nambang was another Kedah prince whom Sultan Iskandar supported. He did so in order to provide himself with a means of controlling Sultan Muhammad Jiwa's hostility, since this prince could become an alternative candidate for the Kedah throne. Raja Nambang had no resources of his own, but was "very poor, and had only a few servants with him, who, like the prince, receive their frugal subsistence from the king."¹⁹⁴ "He must often cook his own rice. He passes his time in laziness, opium-smoking and cock-fighting, and nobody pays him any distinction."¹⁹⁵

As his dealings with the Raja Muda have shown, it was not easy for Sultan Iskandar to control his own relatives, and he showed a certain reluctance to punish anak raja guilty of minor misdemeanours. His summary treatment of others who opposed him contrasts sharply with the relative leniency he showed to members of the royal family. The betrayal of the Maharaja Muda was particularly difficult, since he was Sultan Iskandar's own son. His mother was one of the most favoured gundik, and because of her influence the Maharaja Muda was restored to favour after he had been disinherited because of the heavy debts he had incurred by gambling and

192. KA 2885 OB 1761, Wasbeek and Meyer to Boelen, 27 Aug. 1759.

193. KA 3075 OB 1767, Wiederholt to Schippers, 13 May 1765.

194. Ibid., 13 May 1765.

195. Ibid., Cramer's Report, 4 Sept. 1765.

opium smoking. In 1765 Sultan Iskandar presented his prodigal son with a thousand reals as capital for trade, but the Maharaja Muda maintained that this amount was inadequate. It was impossible to become rich on such a small sum, he said, for in twelve months' time he could make a profit of only two or three hundred reals. He therefore asked for a few ships and men so that he could go to sea and "try his fortune."¹⁹⁶

There is no doubt that the custom of "seeking one's fortune" (men-cari rezeki) on the high seas appeared to most Europeans as outright piracy, but it was a method commonly used by Malay rulers, Sultan Iskandar included, to find an occupation and procure an increase for this otherwise fractious element, the young court nobles. Sent out with the ruler's permission, they were almost certainly provided with certain guidelines as to whom they could attack, and where. In this case, the Maharaja Muda had been given free licence to attack any would-be pirate in the waters between Perak and Siak.¹⁹⁷ In May 1765, therefore, equipped with eight baluk and a Company pass, the Maharaja Muda set sail.¹⁹⁸ Shortly afterwards, news was received that he was attacking ships off the coast of Perak, Selangor, Mergui, Ujung Salang and Tavoy.¹⁹⁹ It was only

196. Ibid., Wiederholt to Schippers, 11 June 1765.

197. Ibid. and Wiederholt to Schippers, 13 May 1765. The Maharaja Muda had also for a flag, but Resident Meyer had refused this, saying that he had only one and besides, the Dutch ships no longer trusted such flags, since many pirates had made their own copies of VOC flags. See Appendix E for a translation of the Maharaja Muda's pass and instructions.

198. KA 3075 OB 1767, Wiederholt to Schippers, 13 May 1765.

199. Ibid., 11 June 1765.

later discovered that he had also captured a baluk, killing the ten men aboard and seizing the cargo.²⁰⁰

Hardly had news of the Maharaja Muda's misconduct arrived in Perak than Sultan Iskandar again faced the rebelliousness of his brother, the Raja Muda. In his letter of 11 June, resident Wiederholt told Governor Schippers that the scribe had come to him secretly with a message from the ruler. Sultan Iskandar, he said, was doing his best to maintain the treaty but his brother "following his old habits" was once again threatening to take his tin out because of the shortage of reals. The Raja Muda had insisted that he needed money and Sultan Iskandar had once more stepped into the breach in order to avoid a confrontation with the Dutch. He even lent his brother three thousand reals "although he knew that he would probably never be repaid."²⁰¹

Boelen's parting advice concerning the value of missions had not been lost on Governor Schippers, who felt that he need to know more about Panglima Pareh, Raja Nambara, and the Maharaja Muda. On June 29, therefore, Everard Cramer was once again despatched to Perak, but he found everything peaceful when he arrived a week later. Sultan Iskandar and the Raja Bendahara were upstream hunting elephants, the Orang Kaya Besar was investigating some disputes in the ulu, and the Raja Muda was downstream supervising the laying out of rice fields near Tanjung Putus.²⁰² State business was proceeding normally and it must have been with some

200. Ibid., 20 Aug. 1765.

201. Ibid., 11 June 1765.

202. Ibid., Cramer's Report, 4 Sept. 1765.

annoyance that Sultan Iskandar, who enjoyed hunting elephants, received the news of the unexpected arrival of yet another mission. He nonetheless came down to Pulau Indra Sakti immediately, leaving most of the court upstream and on July 12 Cramer was granted an audience.²⁰³

This was to be the last time that Sultan Iskandar received a Company envoy. Though sick and tired from his long trip, he typically did not postpone the meeting or delegate his duties to another. As always, court protocol was rigidly observed.

The people assigned to fetch me [Cramer reported] were (apart from the scribe), a penghulu and one of the principal subjects the king had with him, since most nobles had remained in the uplands. I gave the letters and presents to them to the accompaniment of the firing of shots. They were carried on to the rowing boat, which was decorated with umbrellas and pennants, while various native musical instruments were played on board. I went up in the kakap, the militia divided into two boats with the envoys, and we arrived at the king's dalam just after midday.

The king was then informed of my arrival and, after a short delay while the presents were put on the bank, I was escorted by the Temenggong from my boat to the king, while music was played and shots fired. . . .

His Majesty was sitting on a raised place, in a very stately manner, the Raja Muda with his son beside him, somewhat lower, and opposite and still lower, sat a few nobles. The Raja Bendahara had not come. . . .

The presents were placed in order before the king and I offered my compliments, saying that I had been deputised in Your Excellencies' name to assure His Majesty of your complete friendship and sincere regard and affection for himself and the royal family, which he acknowledged with an inclination of the head and asked after Your Excellencies' welfare.²⁰⁴

Cramer noticed immediately that Sultan Iskandar was not feeling

203. Ibid.

204. Ibid.

well, and that it was obviously difficult for him to carry on with the audience. The envoy, anxious to finish his business, continued with his prepared speech, even though the ruler became visibly distressed when the subject of the Maharaja Muda was raised. With a flash of his old fire, he told the envoy that there was no need for the Dutch to involve themselves in this affair. "He had indeed made a contract with the Company concerning tin deliveries . . . but this [matter] only concerned him and his kingdom and he did not have to answer to the Company in any way."²⁰⁵

Four years before, Sultan Iskandar had made the same comment to Cramer in connection with the kubu at Tanjung Putus. His steady refusal to allow any incursion into what he regarded as specifically Perak affairs was impressive in its very consistency. Boelen's successor, Thomas Schippers, was obviously struck by Sultan Iskandar's insistence on his own independence, and did not forget what Cramer had been told. Nine years later, Governor Schippers felt he could not remonstrate with Sultan Mahmud over a Bugis visit since

It is possible he would answer, as his brother did in 1765 over another matter . . . that he had no further obligations to the Company apart from the tin contract and that he alone is master in his kingdom and over his subjects and is not responsible nor has he to account to anyone else in any way.²⁰⁶

It was on this note that Sultan Iskandar ended the audience, saying that he would make ready the appropriate letters and presents for the Governor. He did not dismiss the envoy's remarks from his mind, however,

205. Ibid.

206. KA 3226 OB 1767, Schippers' Instructions to de Wind, 26 Sept. 1765.

despite the fact that he had now contracted a fever. From his sickbed, Sultan Iskandar despatched the scribe secretly to Cramer, with a message that his son would be recalled immediately. The reason, he said, was that he wished to show his good will towards the Company "in every way."²⁰⁷

The following day, Sultan Iskandar's condition had deteriorated still further, but despite his 'pursy,'²⁰⁸ he continued to deal with state matters. It is somehow fitting that Sultan Iskandar's last official act as ruler should be the preparation of a letter to the Governor, the representative of the Company to whom he had been a loyal ally for thirteen years. On the morning of Tuesday 15 July, "a scribe and another messenger came to me [Cramer] in the name of the Raja Muda to inform me that between seven and eight o'clock the previous evening, Paduka Sri Sultan Iskandar had exchanged the temporary life for the eternal."²⁰⁹

In less than three days the whole situation in Perak had been changed. The country was now without a ruler, and the likely successor was known to be an opponent of the Company. At the time, the Dutch did not realise that they had witnessed the passing of an exceptional ruler, or that he had established a high standard for kingship in Perak. It was only later that this reign became a yardstick against which others could be measured, not only by the Dutch, but by the Malays themselves. As Wilkinson remarked nearly 150 years afterwards, "Sultan Iskandar Zulkarnain is regarded by all Perak Malays as a great figure in their history."²¹⁰

207. KA 3075 OB 1767, Cramer's Report, 4 Sept. 1765.

208. Pursy, or perzie in the original Dutch, is a vague term, probably indicating difficulty in breathing.

Sultan Iskandar would have been gratified to know that his name did not die with him. This was not due, as he might have hoped, to any physical monument. The mahaigai "the like of which had never been seen before in Perak" did not even survive his reign; the kubu, too were short-lived. At the time they were built, the resident considered "they would not last long"²¹¹ and, as a result of Cramer's mission in 1761, they were allowed to fall into disrepair. The name Pulau Indra Sakti still survives, but the road is far away from the site of Sultan Iskandar's residence and the once flourishing capital is now a quiet backwater. Sixty years after Sultan Iskandar's death, a British envoy reported that there were only fifteen houses there.²¹² Bandar Makmur also remains, but its significance in Perak history has been all but forgotten.

Nor were Sultan Iskandar's administrative reforms to be any more lasting. As the following chapters will show, his successor, Sultan Mahmud, introduced far-reaching changes in the ulu, and in later years many of those areas over which Sultan Iskandar had fought to maintain his control were lost to Kedah and Patani. What perpetuated Sultan Iskandar's memory in Perak were the stories of his achievements, especially those set down in a written record, the work he had commissioned from Raja Culan. A hundred years later, when William Maxwell was collecting material about Perak history, the Dutch were only vaguely remembered; the

209. KA 3075 OB 1767, Cramer's Report, 4 Sept. 1765.

210. Wilkinson, A History of the Peninsula Malays, p. 99.

211. KA 2954 OB 1761, Meyer to Boelen, 20 March 1761.

212. Anderson, Political Considerations, p. 183.

reign of Sultan Iskandar, on the other hand, was still described as a golden age, when everything was peaceful and prosperous, when chiefs obeyed the Sultan and the people followed their chiefs.²¹³

For the Dutch, the greatness of Sultan Iskandar was measured in terms of their own revenue. Though they grumbled about his insistence on royal prerogative and his sensitivity about VOC interference in affairs unrelated to the contract, they later came to appreciate the extent to which his policy had melded with their own.²¹⁴ Yet Sultan Iskandar could never be accused of being a Company puppet. To outsiders, Perak's fundamental weakness must have been obvious, but Sultan Iskandar never dealt with the Dutch except from a position of strength. He did not beg, he demanded; he did not solicit, he ordered. In all negotiations, the Dutch were invariably placed on the defensive. While Sultan Iskandar knew that tin was such a valued item that access to it could be used as a bargaining point, he did not forget Perak's basic vulnerability. Unlike others in his court, he never allowed the lure of greater profits to dazzle his appreciation of the fact that a weak Perak would always be subject to outside incursions. For this reason, Sultan Iskandar was convinced that he needed a powerful friend. After considering the options open to him, he had decided that the Dutch alliance gave Perak the most benefits, both economically and in terms of security. Having made this decision, he stood fast.

213. W. E. Maxwell, "Notes on Two Perak Manuscripts," JSBRAS, II (Dec. 1878) 187.

214. See, for example, the remarks made by Werndly on the ulu administration, above, pp. 235.

Chapter VI

A NEW DIPLOMACY, 1765-1768

On the 19 July 1765, the body of Sultan Iskandar was interred. All the people, relates the Misa Melayu, gathered at Pulau Indra Sakti, and when all was completed according to "the adat when great rulers die," the tabal was beaten seven times and the body was carried to the newly prepared grave. Prayers were offered, both by the tuan imam and the hundreds of people who gathered to pay their respects. After the burial, Sultan Iskandar was given the posthumous title of al-Marhum Kaharu'llah, "he who has experienced the mercy of the all-dominant."¹

The official mourning period continued for a week, during which time the Raja Muda and Raja Bendahara administered state affairs.² The day after the burial at Pulau Indra Sakti, the resident reported, an Assembly was convened by the Bendahara to elect the new ruler.³ The result was a foregone conclusion, for Raja Kimas, Sultan Iskandar's brother, not only had a large following among the orang besar and anak raja, but as Raja Muda had an overriding claim to the throne. There was no

1. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 185-186.

2. Ibid. and KA 3075 OB 1767, Cramer's Report, 4 Sept. 1765.

3. KA 3075 OB 1767, Wiederholt to Schippers, 20 Aug. 1765; Raja Bendahara to Schippers and Temenggong to Schippers, both received 30 Aug. 1765.

other real contender, and on July 20th he became ruler of Perak under the title Paduka Sri Sultan Mahmud Syah.⁴ The choice of a new Raja Muda, however, was not made so quickly. For some time councils were held daily to debate the issue⁵ and although the Raja Bendahara was favoured it was not until April of the following year that he was formally installed as Raja Muda. The Raja Kecil Besar, Raja Culan, was at the same time elected Raja Bendahara.⁶ Governor Schippers was pleased with both appointments, remarking that "these two people are very popular and well-inclined towards the Company."⁷ From the Misa Melayu we have already inferred that Raja Culan, the court chronicler, was a great admirer of Sultan Iskandar's style of government and especially of his policy towards the VOC. The comments of the resident after Raja Culan's appointment reinforce this impression. "The new Bendahara," wrote Wiederholt, "is a true brother-in-law of the Raja Muda and is well-loved by the people, considered by them to be an upright man, versed in the laws, a man who has great respect for the Company."⁸

Sultan Mahmud succeeded with advantages his brother had lacked. Firstly, his position was much more secure than that inherited by Sultan Iskandar thirteen years before. No other princes claimed a right to rule,

4. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 186; KA 3075 OB 1767, Raja Bendahara to Schippers, received 30 Aug. 1765.

5. KA 3075 OB 1767, Wiederholt to Schippers, 20 Aug. 1765.

6. KA 3104 OB 1768, Wiederholt to Schippers, 5 May 1766.

7. Ibid., Schippers to Wiederholt, 17 May 1766.

8. Ibid., Wiederholt to Schippers, 5 May 1766.

no hostile factions plotted and conspired in the Assembly. There was no questioning of Sultan Mahmud's accession as legitimate heir to the throne. Throughout his reign, both anak raja and orang besar remained a relatively quiescent group. The new Raja Muda was a compliant man, who continued to follow his brother as he had done in past years. A month after Sultan Mahmud's installation, he told the Governor, "I am nothing else than under the command of my lord the present ruler, whose orders I shall obey as a slave his lord."⁹

Secondly, Perak in 1765 was riding on the crest of a wave. No longer did it appear a defenceless state at the mercy of its neighbours, for it could now boast an alliance with the mighty Kompeni Holanda. The twenty years of peace which the alliance had brought, combined with Sultan Iskandar's unflagging efforts to promote the contract had convinced most members of the Assembly that the association with the Dutch was desirable. The high level of achievement which had been reached, the prestige which had come during Sultan Iskandar's reign, was not forgotten. At the time of Sultan Mahmud's succession, Perak was stronger than it had ever been. When Sultan Mahmud spoke of renewing the treaty, there was thus no murmur of dissent in the Assembly.

As Raja Muda, Sultan Mahmud had had many years to observe the effects of the VOC alliance. On the one hand, the value of the Dutch post as a deterrent to enemies had been demonstrated on a number of occasions. On the other, Sultan Mahmud's own interests now argued in favour of renewal. Previously, one of his principal objections to the contract had

9. KA 3075 OB 1767, Wiederholt to Schippers, 20 August 1765.

been the privileges it gave to Sultan Iskandar. Now he had himself succeeded and had thus inherited the ruler's perquisites as well as the sizeable income obtained from the Dutch tolls. From his point of view, there was every reason to maintain the Company connection and Sultan Mahmud did not hesitate in making his decision. When Resident Wiederholt went to court to offer his congratulations to the new ruler less than a week after his accession, Sultan Mahmud promised solemnly that the old treaty would be renewed. "Be of good courage," he said "and do not be upset over the death of my brother, for you shall find everything doubled in me."¹⁰ Three days later he gave added evidence of his willingness to co-operate with the Dutch, for, when the pirating Majaraja Muda returned from his cruise, he was immediately summoned to the royal residence, and Sultan Mahmud readily agreed to proscribe such expeditions in the future.¹¹

Although Wiederholt personally considered Sultan Mahmud to be "more inclined towards the Bugis than his brother had been,"¹² this did not appear to endanger his relationship with the VOC. The new ruler was willing to overlook the feeling of insult aroused by a misplaced seal on a Company letter¹³ and for the first time in over fifty years a mission was sent from Perak to Melaka to announce the death of one ruler and the succession of another.¹⁴ In the letter brought by the envoys, Sultan

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

Mahmud assured the Governor and Council of his unswerving loyalty to the Company and his desire that relations between Perak and the Dutch should resemble "a white untainted bed, where a black spot is never found, remaining unchanged as long as sun and moon give light."¹⁵

With these gestures of friendship, the Governor felt there was little ground for suspicion of Sultan Mahmud, and with some optimism Melaka commenced negotiations for the renewal of the tin contract. In September Everard Cramer left once again for Perak to draw up the new treaty. It was hoped that some benefits could be drawn from Sultan Mahmud's favourable attitude, since Batavia now felt the price paid for Perak tin should be lowered.. Accordingly, Cramer was instructed to attempt to persuade the court to sell their tin for the same price as that in Palembang.¹⁶ If this were not possible, however, he was to agree to the old price of 34 reals the bahara.¹⁷

The treaty was signed in Sultan Iskandar's balai on Pulau Indra Sakti on October 17, 1765.¹⁸ It was impossible for Cramer to obtain any lowering of the tin price, especially when Sultan Mahmud argued that the English were now offering forty reals the bahara.¹⁹ The remaining

14. Ibid., Melaka Resolutions, 30 Aug. 1765, fo. 233.

15. Ibid., King of Perak to Schippers, rec'd. 30 Aug. 1765.

16. Ibid., Schippers' Instructions to Cramer, 26 Sept. 1765. Two years before the Sultan of Palembang had contracted to sell his tin for 13 1/3 rijksdaalders the picul of 125 lbs. (40 rds. the bahara) if it was collected in Palembang and 15 rds. if it was brought to Batavia. Stapel, Corpus Diplomaticum, p. 224.

17. KA 3075 OB 1767, Schippers' Instructions to Cramer, 26 Sept. 1765.

18. Stapel, Corpus Diplomaticum, pp. 255-258. See also Appendix E.

clauses, however, pleased the Dutch, as did the unexpectedly co-operative attitude of the court members. Only a few months before, Sultan Mahmud had been entirely opposed to any continuation of the VOC alliance but now, as ruler, he expressed his determination to stand with the Dutch as his brother had done. "My loyalty remains firm," he wrote to Melaka, "and it cannot be broken, because I will try and behave in the same way as the late king. I will not deviate from the contract in the slightest way, since it has been left as an inheritance, and I can neither add nor subtract a single word."²⁰ More importantly, Sultan Mahmud was able to gain the co-operation of his orang besar, and, during the first year of his reign, the tin deliveries progressed so well that in April 1766 Governor Schippers noted that "the ruler and his nobles are very well inclined towards the Company, and there is reason to believe this shall last."²¹

The Governor, however, did not reckon on Sultan Mahmud's response to the ever-changing situation in the Malay world, and especially to the growing strength of the Bugis. The new ruler of Perak, like his brother before him, had learnt much from previous experience with Daeng Cellak and Daeng Kemboja, and was well aware of what it could mean if the Bugis were antagonised. Only two weeks after his succession the Bugis crew of a perahu from Riau attempted to bribe their way past the customary inspection by the Dutch resident. When they saw that this was im-

19. KA 3075 OB 1767, Schippers to Batavia, 28 Dec. 1765, fo. 31.

20. Ibid., King of Perak to Schippers, 4 Nov. 1765.

21. Ibid., Schippers to Batavia, 10 April 1766, fo. 33.

possible, they resorted to violence.²² Sultan Mahmud promised to do all in his power to punish the wrong-doers, but, when they were finally captured, he refused to surrender them on the grounds that they were "orang Islam" and therefore could not be given over to European justice. Instead, their lives would be spared and they would become his slaves.²³ Despite Wiederholt's protests, Sultan Mahmud was not willing to incur Bugis anger.

This fear of possible repercussions was completely justified in view of Perak's past experiences with the Bugis and the present political situation in the archipelago. Attempts by the VOC to quell the growing economic strength of the Bugis had shown little result and their stronghold in Riau flourished. Moreover, after Sultan Sulaiman's death in 1760, the Bugis had regained total political control of Johor. The Yam-tuan Muda, Daeng Kemboja, was nominally Regent for the child-ruler, Sultan Mahmud, but in fact wielded absolute power. In a letter to the Governor in 1764, Daeng Kemboja had termed himself "Yang di Pertuan, who occupies the throne of Johor and Pahang and all their dependencies,"²⁴ and the following year Governor Schippers reported that Daeng Kemboja's position grew stronger "from day to day," the Malays no longer having any influence in the administration of the country.²⁵ The only real opposition to

22. Ibid., Wiederholt to Schippers, 20 Aug. 1765.

23. Ibid.

24. Netscher, De Nederlanders, p. 166, n. 2; for an analysis of the expansion of Riau during this period, see Dianne Lewis, "The Growth of the Country Trade to the Straits of Melaka, 1760-1777." JMBRAS, XLIII, 2 (1970), 114-130.

the Bugis came from the new alliance between Raja Ismail, ousted from Siak, and his father-in-law, Sultan Mansur Syah of Terengganu. The resulting enmity threatened to involve all the peninsular Malay states.

The currents of hostility in the area were further complicated by a split between Selangor and Riau. Although Riau's prosperity added to Daeng Kemboja's prestige, his personal claim to be the real ruler of Johor and its dependencies met with antagonism from Raja Lumu, the ruler of Selangor. The latter was the son of Daeng Cellak, and thus Daeng Kemboja's cousin, but he had only recently reached an age when he could assume effective control of the negeri.²⁶ Meanwhile, Selangor, like Riau had prospered with the growing English trade,²⁷ and with this increased wealth came the desire for independence from Riau's domination. This inevitably brought Raja Lumu into conflict with Daeng Kemboja, who was determined to maintain control over one of Johor's principal economic assets. The disagreement over the relationship between Selangor and Riau

25. KA 3049, Secret, Schippers to Batavia, 13 Oct. 1765, fol. 59. Compare the attitude of Daeng Kemboja with a seventeenth century Bendahara of Johor, also a regent during the minority of Sultan Mahmud. In 1689 the Bendahara told a Dutch envoy that he could be responsible for major changes in royal privileges while Sultan Mahmud was still a minor. Andaya, The Kingdom of Johor, p. 179.

26. Raja Ali Haji notes that when Daeng Cellak died, neither of his two sons could succeed him, since Raja Haji was too young and Raja Lumu was of the Selangor line. Tuhfat al Nafis, p. 98. During Raja Lumu's youth administration of Selangor was carried out by the Regent, Daeng Lakani and Raja Syed, son of Daeng Marewa. KA 2592 OB 1748, Albinus to Batavia, 3 March 1747, fo. 208; KA 2753 OB 1756, Dekker to Batavia, 30 April 1755, fo. 46; Stapel, Corpus Diplomaticum, p. 152.

27. Lewis, The Dutch East India Company, pp. 214-216.

became more acrimonious, but the move which eventually brought about an open break was Raja Lumu's unilateral declaration of autonomy and his installation as an independent ruler by Sultan Mahmud of Perak.

The account of this incident as given in Malay and Dutch sources is interesting not only because of its intrinsic historical value but also because it conveys some idea of traditional prerequisites to any claim of sovereignty in the Malay world. At the time, the installation was a momentous event, and is treated as such in both Perak and Bugis sources. To the one it was the public recognition of prestige, while to the other it was the birth of a new state. Though the Tuhfat al Nafis and the Misa Melayu both describe the installation and concur in general terms, they differ significantly in detail. Used in conjunction with these texts, the Dutch material provides a framework of chronology and further information unavailable in the indigenous sources. It is therefore possible to examine the Bugis and Malay interpretations in the light of this additional evidence and to suggest some reasons which might have prompted the varying treatment.

In September 1766, over a year after the installation of Raja Kimas as Sultan Mahmud of Perak, a Selangor ship appeared in the Perak River. The captain informed Wiederholt that there were two envoys from Selangor aboard and asked permission to proceed upstream. They had brought with them a letter to Sultan Mahmud, in which Raja Lumu, the ruler of Selangor, made an unprecedented offer. He desired, he wrote, to see "all differences between Perak and Selangor laid aside"²⁸ and

28. KA 3104 OB 1768, Wiederholt to Schippers, 27 Sept. 1766. The resi-

proposed that a new contract be drawn up between himself and the new ruler, like that which had existed in earlier days "when his father had taken Sultan Iskandar as a son." Most importantly, he expressed a wish to come to Perak and discuss these matters personally.²⁹

Perak had been at odds with Selangor for twenty years and this unexpected letter must have aroused a fever of excitement in the Assembly. After his decision to renew the VOC alliance in 1753, Sultan Iskandar had rejected any dealings with the Bugis and from that time until his death had regarded them as potential if not actual enemies. But now the Selangor ruler had approached Perak in a spirit of conciliation and Sultan Mahmud, who had never seen the virtue of a diplomacy which excluded the Bugis, welcomed the opportunity of rapprochement with a hitherto hostile neighbour.³⁰ He decided to send two of his orang besar back to Selangor as envoys. They would leave as soon as possible, taking a letter and presents to Raja Lumu and conveying the assurance that Sultan Mahmud would be delighted to see a renewed friendship between the two states.³¹

At the same time, Sultan Mahmud was placed in somewhat of a quandary. While he was most anxious to establish some guarantee of future

28. (cont'd.)

dent thought this was purely a verbal message, but Sultan Mahmud's reply refers specifically to a letter. King of Perak to King of Selangor, rec'd. at Melaka, 28 Oct. 1766.

29. Ibid.

30. According to Wiederholt, "the king and his subjects are well pleased over this message [from Selangor]." Ibid., Wiederholt to Schippers, 27 Sept. 1766

31. Ibid.

peace between Perak and Selangor, he did not want to alienate the Dutch who, after all, had been reliable allies. Their extreme suspicion of the Bugis was well-known and they would undoubtedly oppose any form of alliance with Selangor. Not unnaturally, Sultan Mahmud hesitated to make any definite commitment until he had received some indication of Dutch reaction and the manner in which they would express their inevitable disapproval. Sultan Mahmud's personal scribe was therefore sent down to the Company post to request that Wiederholt come upstream for an audience.³² Resident Wiederholt, presumably suspicious of this unusual summons, did nothing to help guide the discussion. He refused to leave the fort and merely informed the scribe that the Company's attitude towards any agreement between their allies and the Bugis was well known. Sultan Mahmud should first write to the Governor concerning any such agreement and Wiederholt said flatly that he would not allow the Raja of Selangor to enter the river without specific instructions from Melaka. With this message the scribe returned to court.³³

The resident's attitude was as unprecedented as the letter from the ruler of Selangor had been. Never before had a Company representative attempted to force VOC views on Perak in such a blatant manner. His refusal to permit a visit from Raja Lumu until there had been some consultation with Melaka would have infuriated Sultan Iskandar and it was, in fact, in direct opposition to Governor Schippers' own policy. In September of the previous year his instructions to Everard Cramer had

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid. Wiederholt refused because there was no Company ship then anchored at the fort and he felt he could not leave it unguarded.

stressed the importance of employing "all cautious and advisable means so that the new king shall not share the view of the former one, namely that the Company seeks to obtain a kind of superiority in his kingdom and to lord it over him."³⁴

The anak raja and orang besar who had gained their political experience in Sultan Iskandar's Assemblies would have been shocked and angered by Wiederholt's heavy-footed incursion into Perak's affairs. As Schippers pointed out later, had Wiederholt gone to court, he might have been able to sway the discussions,³⁵ for there were undoubtedly many members of the Assembly who shared Dutch suspicions of Bugis intentions. Sultan Mahmud, however, did not wish to antagonise Raja Lumu by ignoring or refusing his request and therefore saw compromise as the best solution. On 27 September two Perak envoys left for Selangor, leaving with Wiederholt a letter of reassurance from the Perak ruler. The resident was requested to tell the Governor that the proposed agreement between Perak and Selangor would involve nothing more than arrangements for peaceful trade in permitted goods. Sultan Mahmud emphasised that he had no intention of meeting the ruler of Selangor in person.³⁶

Wiederholt's "imprudent, thoughtless and scandalous behaviour" so angered Schippers that the resident was recalled from Perak the following November.³⁷ Before he left Perak, however, he did manage to obtain a

34. KA 3075 OB 1765, Schippers' Instructions to Cramer, 26 Sept. 1765.

35. KA 3104 OB 1768, Melaka Resolutions, 5 Nov. 1766, foll. 287-288.

36. Ibid., Wiederholt to Schippers, 27 Sept. 1766.

37. Ibid., Melaka Resolutions, 12 Nov. 1766, foll. 296-297; Schippers to Batavia, 31 Jan. 1767, fo. 14.

copy of the letter which Sultan Mahmud sent to Raja Lumu, a letter which clearly demonstrates the basis on which the new friendship between Perak and Selangor was initially established. Though the Dutch translation undoubtedly lacks the refinement of the original Malay, it is obvious that Sultan Mahmud's primary intention was to ensure Perak would be free from any Bugis invasion similar to those of the early 1740's. He had not forgotten the years of hostility which had existed between the two states. On the other hand, while Sultan Mahmud emphasised the need for both rulers to think of the future and to maintain any agreements made, the tone of the letter is not one of submission. Closer ties with Selangor were welcomed, but only if they brought the guarantee of peace. After the customary compliments, the letter continues.

I have received your letter with the greatest honour and highest regard, trusting that this affection will be unchanging and not as in former days. I trust that it will be and remain longlasting. I from my side shall endeavour to contribute everything in my power to the maintenance of this treaty and shall not fail to remember it, just as to-day we remember the origin of our forefather Adam. . . . I hope our friendship will be as permanent as our faith in our Prophet . . . and that we will not forget our descendants. I pray God that we may be united in all our doings so that my heart may enjoy perfect rest. I also pray God that Perak and Selangor may be united and cleansed from all impurities, like a clean carpet, as white as a piece of paper and that God may incline my brother's heart towards all good works.³⁸

Both the tenor of this letter and the response to Raja Lumu's reply indicate that Sultan Mahmud originally pledged nothing more than

38. KA 3104 OB 1768, King of Perak to King of Selangor, rec'd. at Melaka, 28 Oct. 1766. Wiederholt did not say how he had obtained this letter. Ibid., Melaka Resolutions, 5 Nov. 1766, fo. 287.

a renewal of friendship. He did not foresee his relationship with Raja Lumu becoming any further involved, but in just a few weeks the situation changed radically. In his message to the Governor, Sultan Mahmud had stated categorically that he did not wish to speak to Raja Lumu but in early October the envoys returned from Selangor, bringing a letter which threw the Perak court into consternation. It contained the announcement that the Selangor ruler was determined to meet either Sultan Mahmud or his brother the Raja Muda personally and therefore intended to come to Perak.³⁹ Reaction was immediate, for memories of the former Bugis invasions were still fresh and the people of Perak knew only too well what a visit from their neighbours could mean. "They are fitting out their boats," reported Wiederholt, "and the king asks that the barque Zeepaard might be kept here. I told him he must write to Your Excellencies."⁴⁰

Preparations for defence continued. The three kubu which had been built by Sultan Iskandar and had since fallen into disrepair were speedily cleaned and restored, much to the concern of the resident.

I immediately summoned the king's scribe and asked him why this had been done without giving me the slightest knowledge. He answered that the king had ordered this in case the Selangorese came, so that some resistance could be offered. I told him that this was strictly opposed to the promises made by the former king to Your Excellencies about five years ago.⁴¹

Sultan Mahmud was caught between two fires. As he told Wiederholt, although he was not anxious to receive Raja Lumu, he could hardly refuse to

39. Ibid., Wiederholt to Schippers, 18 Oct. 1766.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid., Wiederholt to Schippers, 3 Nov. 1766.

grant him an audience since "among their nation this was a great affront."⁴² With no inkling as to Raja Lumu's intentions, Sultan Mahmud must be prepared to defend himself, but in the very process of arming Perak he risked incurring Dutch anger. Since the massacre at Pulau Gontong the Company had become almost frenetic at the least sign of military preparations by Malay rulers. Once again Sultan Mahmud chose compromise. Faced with the task of pacifying a frightened and suspicious resident, Sultan Mahmud sent down the message that no gunpowder would be taken inside the forts and that they would be manned only when Raja Lumu came up the river, as he was determined to do.⁴³

Events moved quickly. Three weeks later, on October 24th, Sultan Mahmud wrote to Wiederholt, informing him that Raja Lumu was actually anchored at Pulau Pangkor, about twenty miles from Kuala Perak. In order to bypass the Dutch post at Tanjung Putus, the Selangor ruler had sent six people overland to tell the Perak court of his arrival. Sultan Mahmud had decided to despatch two ships to meet Raja Lumu and, if the people from Selangor did not appear hostile, they should be allowed to enter. As a precaution, however, he again asked that the Company barque, the Zeepaard be detained in Perak until he had spoken with Raja Lumu. He could then send a letter to the Governor explaining the entire matter to the Governor.⁴⁴ Once more Sultan Mahmud assured Wiederholt that he would remain loyal to the Company. "The reason that I am anxious to meet the

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid.

Raja of Selangor is so that a few mutual benefits can be gained. The Captain can rest assured that I have not thought of allowing anything to happen to him. . . .⁴⁵

When Wiederholt voiced his protests, Sultan Mahmud proposed that Raja Lumu come upstream in a small perahu. The two rulers would only speak to each other for half an hour, and then Raja Lumu would leave. No sooner, however, had Wiederholt given his reluctant assent to this suggestion, than the mood of the Perak court seemed to change. There had obviously been protracted debates over the right of the VOC resident to forbid the entry of Raja Lumu or indeed, anybody at all. Memories of Sultan Iskandar's insistence on his own independence in matters such as this were still fresh and it was this mood of indignation that prompted yet another message from Sultan Mahmud to the resident. All six Selangor vessels, he now said, must be allowed in. As ruler of Perak, he was master in his own river and realm, and the Company had no right to interfere in the reception of any king or prince. The treaty he had made with the Dutch concerned only tin deliveries and had nothing to do with other affairs. Sultan Mahmud called sun and moon to witness that nothing should be allowed to happen which could be disadvantageous to the Company. On the other hand, he warned, if Wiederholt maintained his refusal to permit the entire Selangor fleet to come upriver, it might cause "great difficulties," and possibly lead to violence against the garrison.⁴⁶

45. Ibid., King of Perak to Wiederholt, rec'd. at Melaka, 12 Nov. 1766.

46. Ibid., Wiederholt to Schippers, 3 Nov. 1766.

In the twenty years which had passed since the signing of the treaty in 1746, no Perak ruler had deliberately attempted to frighten the VOC resident or allude to the fate of past Company employees who had aroused the anger of the Perak people. There was good reason for Sultan Mahmud's use of threats to force the resident's compliance. As Sultan Iskandar had pointed out, to bow to Company demands in matters like this simply reinforced the arguments of those who claimed that Perak was a Company puppet. Secondly, Sultan Mahmud dare not risk angering his Bugis neighbour in any way. Melaka was nearly a week away by sea and the tiny Dutch garrison could have offered but little resistance to a party of well-armed Bugis. Again, it had become increasingly apparent that even Melaka lacked men and equipment. Patrols could not be maintained along the coast and, as Sultan Mahmud pointed out to Governor Schippers, the presence of the garrison did not prevent his subjects from being carried off by pirates at the kuala itself, or cannon from being stolen out of his kubu or attacks on Company ships. "I trust the people who guard the mouth of the river," he wrote, "but I have rebuilt my kubu out of fear. Princes and foreign people come here, and this can easily result in bad feelings, for I firmly believe that good and bad accompany each other. . . . Therefore my fear is great, because I am not powerful enough to keep watch and thus protect my country."⁴⁷

Despite the reasons urging accommodation with the Selanger ruler, the opposition, which, like the Dutch, did not wish to see any association with the Bugis, had influential spokesmen. It was presumably be-

47. Ibid., King of Perak to Schippers, 17 Dec. 1766.

cause of their fears of attack that the kubu were made ready and the Company ship detained, but they could not dissuade Sultan Mahmud from his decision to meet Raja Lumu. Although Wiederholt condemned the Perak ruler's "irresolution and vascillation," Sultan Mahmud's changing attitude does not necessarily suggest weakness of character, as the resident maintained. It rather reflects the changing pressure of court opinion. As was customary, the outcome of the discussions demonstrated the views of the majority and Wiederholt feared that there was some kind of conspiracy afoot which would lead to violence should he persist in refusing to allow Raja Lumu's ships to pass. The court scribe secretly relayed to him the feelings of the Assembly, saying that there was a real possibility of hostility against the resident.

The king would rather place his entire kingdom in jeopardy than suffer the insult of having to seek permission from the Company in order to receive a Raja in his own kingdom.

With memories of 1651, 1689 and the recent attack at Pulau Gontong, Wiederholt saw no other solution than to accede.⁴⁸

On November 6 the six Bugis ships entered the Perak river, bringing the Raja of Selangor, his foremost nobles, and sixty members of his court. Met by eight baluk sent down by Sultan Mahmud, they were escorted to Kota Lumut where the boats dropped anchor. From then on Wiederholt was able to learn little of what ensued; he heard only that the Selangor visitors had been received with great ceremony, that the grandson of Sultan Mahmud would soon be married to Raja Lumu's daughter (a betrothal

48. Ibid., Wiederholt to Schippers, 3 Nov. 1766.

which did not please the anti-Bugis Raja Muda) and that the entire party from Selangor would shortly leave to visit a few "holy graves" in the ulu.⁴⁹ On November 20 Sultan Mahmud wrote to Governor Schippers, assuring him that this new friendship not only ensured peace between Perak and Selangor but also between Selangor and Melaka.⁵⁰ This was all the Dutch were ever officially told about the new alliance. Eleven days later Raja Luma and his followers left, escorted to the mouth of the Perak River by a number of Perak ships.⁵¹

It was two years afterwards before the Company learned that Raja Lumu's visit had been a momentous event. A contract had been concluded between the two rulers which guaranteed mutual assistance in case of any attack by a third party as well as friendship towards each other. As

49. Ibid. and Wiederholt to Schippers, 22 Nov. 1766. The identification of these graves is problematic. It is possible that they were the burial places of Bugis killed during previous battles in Perak, or perhaps keramat sites considered to be the graves of Islamic apostles or the home of some holy person. See W. W. Skeat, Malay Magic (London, 1900), pp. 61-71 and R. O. Winstedt, "Keramat: Sacred Places and Persons in Malaya," JMBRAS, II, 1 (1924), 264-279 for a discussion of the importance of such places in Malay society.

It is also possible that Raja Lumu's visit to the graves in the ulu after his installation was undertaken in the same way that Perak rulers traditionally visited the graves of their ancestors immediately following their installation. (Personal communication from Datuk Muda Orang Kaya Sri Adika Raja Syahbandar Muda Haji Meor Shamsuddin bin Haji Meor Yahya, Grik, Upper Perak, 31 July 1972.) Although there is no evidence in Dutch records to indicate any connection between Raja Lumu and the legendary Bugis hero of Perak, Daeng Selili, it is interesting to note that there are a number of old graves at Padang Cangkat, Kuala Kangsar, said to be those of Daeng Selili and his Bugis relatives. In Bugis society the honouring of the graves of forbears is considered to be of some importance. (Personal communication from Ms. Jacqui Dibden, who spent 1970-72 in Southwest Sulawesi on anthropological field work, 31 Dec. 1972.)

50. KA 3104 OB 1768, King of Perak to Schippers, 20 Nov. 1766.

customary, this had been sworn on the Koran and on their keris; following this, Sultan Mahmud had bestowed a "kingly title" on the Raja of Selangor and had given him "royal instruments which prior to this he could not use." Perhaps most important, Raja Lumu had been created a ruler independent of Riau.⁵²

This, then, is the information which appears in the records of the Dutch East India Company. For a deeper understanding of what the installation meant in Malay terms, one must turn to the descriptions of the event as they are presented in the Misa Melayu and the Tuhfat al Nafis.⁵³ In the accepted style of the classical Malay hikayat, the former depicts Sultan Mahmud extending his gracious munificence to a lesser endowed ruler--anugerah in the traditional sense. Conscious of the manner in which this occasion should properly be remembered, the chronicler emphasizes the role played by the Raja Muda and the Raja Bendahara in the welcome given to the Selangor party, although, according to Wiederholt, the Raja Muda registered his opposition by remaining absent from the ceremony and the Raja Bendahara, Raja Culan, was also strongly opposed to this new

51. Ibid., Wiederholt to Schippers, 17 Dec. 1766.

52. KA 3166 OB 1770, Report of Anthony Werndly on mission to Perak, 17 Sept. 1768. In 1771 Resident de Wind was assured that this contract was only verbal, a promise to stand by each other and not deviate from promises made by their forefathers, presumably Daeng Cellak and Sultan Iskandar. KA 3252 OB 1773, de Wind to Schippers, 27 March 1771. Low, "Observations on Perak," p. 503, describes an oath of allegiance in Perak in 1826 in which the Koran and regalia "consisting of armour" played an important role.

53. It is possible that this section of the Misa Melayu was not written by Raja Culan, but it nonetheless represents the official viewpoint. See Introduction, p. 15.

friendship with the Bugis prince.⁵⁴ It was not appropriate to mention such rifts between the royal brothers.

After the Raja Muda and the Raja Bendahara had conducted the visitors upstream, the ships anchored at Kota Lumut. Raja Lumu, together with his nobles, went into the balai penghadapan and made obeisance. He was then presented with robes of honour as was traditionally done when a ruler wished to display favour.⁵⁵

After this, His Majesty spoke with his brothers. "What is suitable for us to give the Raja of Selangor, since he has come to our country? We would give him gold and silver, but he already has much gold and silver; we would give him slaves and bondsmen, but he has already many slaves and bondsmen. In my opinion, since he has come to our country and has humbled himself before us, it is fitting that we present him with the nubat.

Then the ruler's brothers, the Raja Muda and the Raja Bendahara, and all the orang besar, the hulubalang, the officials, the people, made obeisance, saying, "It is just as Your Majesty has said. The Raja of Selangor hoped that by humbling himself before Your Majesty, your greatness would be increased in other countries and your name would be famous and your power increase in this country."

After this decision was reached, the gendang and nubat with all the accompaniments were brought and the Raja of Selangor was drummed in according to adat. He was entitled Sultan Salehuddin, and was given a special seal (cap).⁵⁶

When the ceremony had been completed, the Raja of Selangor was presented with a nubat, the royal orchestra. It was not long before he

54. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 186-187; KA 3104 OB 1768, Wiederholt to Schippers, 22 Nov. 1766. See above, pp. 416-417.

55. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 186-187. Skeat, Malay Magic, pp. 29-32 sees the possession of magnificent clothes as an essential characteristic of royalty. See also Wilkinson, "Some Malay Studies," p. 91.

56. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 187.

asked permission to return home and Sultan Mahmud ordered one of his ministers⁵⁷ to accompany Raja Lumu back to Selangor. When they had departed, all the people who had gathered at the court went back to their own places.⁵⁸

The version given in the Tuhfat al Nafis differs on several important points. According to Raja Ali Haji, at one time Tengku Raja Selangor (Raja Lumu) left to take a pleasure trip to Pangkor Island. When news of this reached the ruler of Perak, he ordered his orang besar to invite Raja Lumu to come up the river (masuk ke Perak). When Raja Lumu reached the place where the Yang di Pertuan Perak was living, he and his nobles discussed with the Perak court the installation of Raja Lumu as ruler in Selangor. Arrangements were made between the two sides and the Yang di Pertuan Perak installed Tengku Raja Selangor, giving him the title Sultan Salehuddin. Sultan Salehuddin returned to Selangor when this ceremony was completed, accompanied by the ruler of Perak. After their arrival in Selangor, Raja Lumu was again installed⁵⁹ to the beating

57. Raja Alang, the name of the noble who accompanied Raja Lumu and his party back to Selangor is found in both Dutch and Malay records. The mention of his name in the Misa Melayu suggests that this section was written very close in time to the actual incident or that the events were noted down in some kind of court record. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 188; KA 3104 OB 1768, Wiederholt to Schippers, 27 Sept. 1766.

58. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 188.

59. Wilkinson differentiates between dinubatkan and ditabalkan, which both refer to the beating of the royal drum to instal a ruler and lantik, meaning the investiture of high office. According to Raja Ali Haji, Raja Lumu was dilantik in Perak and ditabalkan in Selangor, while the Hikayat Negeri Johor, on which Raja Ali based his account, records that Raja Lumu was dinubatkan in Perak and then ditabalkan in Selangor. Raja Ali's account thus suggests that the most important phase

of drums and the playing of the nubat. All the anak raja paid homage, "for this is how raja are installed according to adat." The Perak ruler then returned, but from this time on the two negeri were as one because they were bound by an oath of loyalty.⁶⁰

It is only by placing the Misa Melayu and the Tuhfat al Nafis in their conceptual framework that the historian can relate these accounts to each other and to the data supplied in the Dutch records. In both texts the manner in which events are remembered is a function of distinct and differing perceptions of the past. While the Misa Melayu presents the incident as a demonstration of the respect accorded the ruler or Perak, as evidence of his greatness and nobility, Raja Ali Haji is concerned with the prestige of his own ancestors. The position of the protagonists is reversed, and in the Tuhfat al Nafis it is Raja Lumu who graciously accepts the honour that is his rightful due. It may be true that Bugis historians were, to a greater extent than their counterparts elsewhere in Indonesia, interested in the purely factual content of history, but it is also apparent that they were equally concerned with the reputations they were recording for posterity.

One of the basic motivations for Bugis writing was to chronicle events lest "old princes be forgotten" or lest "foreigners think we are only common people."⁶¹ In the eyes of Selangor Bugis it would have been

59. (cont'd.)
of Raja Lumu's installation took place in Selangor. Raja Ali Haji, Tuhfat al Nafis, p. 159; Ismail, Hikayat Negeri Johor, p. 99. Wilkinson, A Malay-English Dictionary, II, 655, 809, 1145.

60. Raja Ali Haji, Tuhfat al Nafis, pp. 159-160.

fitting that Raja Lumu be drummed in (ditabalkan) not in Perak, as the Misa Melayu would have it, but in his own country. Raja Ali Haji even introduces some changes in the Hikayat Negeri Johor, on which he based his account. The latter, like the Misa Melayu, states that Sultan Salehuddin returned to Selangor accompanied only by Perak orang besar. In the Tuhfat al Nafis, on the other hand, the ruler of Perak himself escorts Sultan Salehuddin back to Selangor and takes part in the ditabalkan ceremonies there.⁶² It is also significant that the Tuhfat al Nafis emphasises the contract made between the two rulers, a contract which is not mentioned in the Misa Melayu or the Hikayat Negeri Johor. From the viewpoint of nineteenth century Bugis, this contract was important because it provided the rationale for a later invasion of Perak by Raja Lumu's son, Ibrahim. "The agreement," writes Raja Ali, "had been that Perak and Selangor would be like one carpet; when it was night in Perak it would be night in Selangor and when there was sickness in Perak there would be sickness in Selangor."⁶³

Because their concerns lay elsewhere, there are a number of questions which neither Malay nor Bugis histories answer. Why, for example, did Raja Lumu come to Perak at this particular juncture? Why, indeed, did he consider this installation necessary at all? Again it is the Dutch material which helps provide some solution.

61. J. Noorduyn, "Some Aspects of Buginese Historiography," in Hall, Historians of Southeast Asia, p. 34.

62. It is almost certain that Raja Ali Haji referred to the Hikayat Negeri Johor when compiling this section of the Tuhfat al Nafis. See Ismail, Hikayat Negeri Johor, pp. 25, 37-38, 99; Matheson, "The Tuhfat al Nafis," pp. 380-381, 389.

When Daeng Cellak died in 1745, his sons were still children. Although it was acknowledged that Raja Lumu's future lay in Selangor, he was too young to assume responsibility for the administration. He was entitled Raja of Selangor, but the direction of affairs was under the Regent, Daeng Lakani, and a group of elders.⁶⁴ The Dutch noted that in one important conference with the Governor in 1756, Daeng Lakani acted as spokesman and Raja Lumu "did not speak a single word throughout the entire meeting."⁶⁵ Even when Raja Lumu began to take a more active part in government, decisions remained collective.⁶⁶ Moreover, Daeng Kemboja continued to regard himself as the dominant authority over the Bugis communities in the area. Writing to the Dutch resident in Perak in 1760, he referred to himself as "Yang di Pertuan, who governs the three places, Riau, Linggi and Selangor."⁶⁷

63. Raja Ali Haji, Tuhfat al Nafis, p. 243.

64. Ibid., pp. 122-124, 126-127. In 1760 Raja Haji and Sultan Sulaiman agreed to discuss their alliance with "the Suliwatang (Daeng Lakani) and elders (oudsten) of Selangor." No mention is made of Raja Lumu KA 2884 OB 1761, Boelen to Batavia, 23 Feb. 1760, fo. 83.

The dominant role of the orang besar in Selangor can be traced to the political systems of the Bugis states in Sulawesi, where councils of elders wielded great power. See Khoo, The Western Malay States, pp. 19-20, for a discussion of the orang besar in early nineteenth century Selangor. Leonard Y. Andaya, "The Nature of Kingship in Bone" (unpublished paper presented to the colloquium on The Nature of the State in Pre-colonial Island Southeast Asia, A.N.U., Canberra, April 1973), pp. 5-6, discusses the role of this Council, called the Hadat, in traditional Bone society.

65. KA 2776 OB 1757, Dekker to Batavia, 8 Oct. 1756, foll. 68-69.

66. Raja Al Haji, Tuhfat al Nafis, p. 243.

67. KA 2885 OB 1761, Daeng Kemboja to Meyer, 6 Nov. 1760.

By 1766 Raja Lumu was ready to assert his position as independent ruler of Selangor and the first step towards this was a formal installation. At this stage it is obvious that he did not consider himself completely legitimised, for he lacked the essential appurtenances of kingship--a fitting title, his own nubat and a royal seal.⁶⁸ Both the Tuhfat al Nafis and the Misa Melayu specifically state that it was on this occasion that the title "Sultan Salehuddin" was first adopted, the "kingly title" to which the Dutch refer. Certainly there is no indication in either Malay or VOC records that Raja Lumu had laid claim to any such honorific before his installation.⁶⁹ Prior to this he had been termed "Tengku Raja Selangor" or simply "Raja Selangor."⁷⁰ Now he had assumed

68. Daeng Kemboja apparently used the same title and cap as Daeng Marewa, the first Yamtuan Muda of Johor. It represented a sailing ship and bore the title "Sultan Alauddin Riayat Syah ibni Upu." Netscher, De Nederlanders, p. 166, n. 2; Raja Ali Haji, Tuhfat al Nafis, p. 63. A nineteenth century text from Riau says that there were two nubat there, a Malay nubat for the Yang di Pertuan Besar and a Bugis nubat for the Yang di Pertuan Muda. Cod. Or. 1999, Uni. of Leiden Library, fo. 20.
69. Only one copy of the Hikayat Negeri Johor (Von de Wall, Perpustakaan Lembaga Kebudayaan Indonesia, Jakarta) adds the honorific Syah to Raja Lumu's new title. Ismail, Hikayat Negeri Johor, p. 99. This was probably a later insertion.
70. It was not unprecedented for a Raja to adopt the title of Sultan even though he was not ruling, as Raja Iskandar had done (see above, p. 179). Such titles were sometimes bestowed as a mark of favour. See, for example, Raja Ali Haji, Tuhfat al Nafis, pp. 122-123. It does not appear, however, that this applies to Raja Lumu, for prior to 1766 Raja Lumu was called only Raja of Selangor or alternatively Tengku or Tunku Raja Selangor. (See Raja Ali Haji, Tuhfat al-Nafis, pp. 122-123, 148, 159; KA 2776 OB 1757, Dekker to Batavia, 9 April 1756, fo. 34v; Register of Papers sent by Dekker to Batavia, 9 April 1756, fol. 6 and 8 Oct., fo. 62, no. 10; KA 3078, Secret, Schippers to Batavia, 20 Aug. 1766, fo. 780; KA 3075 OB 1767, Schippers to Tunku Raja Selangor, 2 May 1765 and Raja of Selangor to Schippers, 8 June, 1765.)

the title of Sultan which was occasionally bestowed on great princes and which was customarily used by a Malay ruler who had been installed according to adat. When the head of a negeri, no matter how insignificant, adopted such an honorific, it was a sure indication that he now claimed a higher status and that he wished to be regarded as an independent sovereign. In the 1730's the head of Linggi, a Bugis chief named To Pas-serai, had assumed the title Sultan Ibrahim Tomimi, and Raja Kecil, the Minangkabau prince, had taken that of Sultan Abdul Jalil Rahmat Syah.⁷¹ Some years later, in 1780, at a time when Siam's control over its Malay dependencies had temporarily weakened, a mission arrived in Perak from the "so-called king" of Patani. He asked the ruler of Perak to grant him a more prestigious title than that of Datuk Paduka Sri Raja Muda, which had been bestowed on him by the ruler of Kedah. His request was granted and he was henceforth to be known as "Sultan Abdul Jalil Crimola Maloem-sa."⁷² The assumption of a royal title was thus a necessary step towards legitimising Raja Lumu as independent ruler of Selangor.

70. (cont'd.)

Using these sources, Netscher wrote that Raja Lumu "called Sultan Saleh" was head of Selangor in 1746 and mentions the title Sultan Salehuddin twice when he describes events in 1756. Winstedt was puzzled by these dates, even though he acknowledged that Netscher was "a careful historian." An examination of the archival material shows that Netscher applied the title to Raja Lumu prematurely because of his knowledge of later events. Netscher, De Nederlanders, pp. 68, 88, 89; R. O. Winstedt, "A History of Selangor," JMBRAS, XIII, 3 (1934), 7.

71. KA 2427 OB 1742, 1st Reg. de Laver to Batavia, 11 Feb. 1741, fo. 103; KA 2522 OB 1744, de Laver's Report on Melaka, 27 Dec. 1743, foll. 72-73.
72. KA 3491 OB 1782, Meyer to de Bruyn, 20 Dec. 1780. Professor Teugku Iskandar has agreed that my reading of "Sultan Abdul Jalil Karim Allah Mualam Syah" is probably correct.

To possess a nubat, or royal orchestra, was equally important, for it too was an emblem of kingship, an integral part of the kebesaran or royal regalia. According to tradition, the nubat was first instituted by a Queen of Bentan and the practice had been followed by other raja.⁷³ The Sejarah Melayu records how the Raja of Kedah went to Melaka to do homage and to ask for a nubat, as did Chau Sri Bangsa (Sultan Ahmad Syah) of Patani and Raja Narasinga (Sultan Abdul Jalil) of Indragiri.⁷⁴ The nubat was credited with its own unique powers, which were intimately linked to those of the ruler. It was played at his installation and when he went forth among his people and signified that there was a reigning raja in the country.⁷⁵ The nubat was considered an essential element of kingship, as was the ruler's seal which, affixed to documents and letters, made known his glorified title and status.⁷⁶ The lack of such royal accoutrements meant that in Malay terms Raja Lumu was not fully established as an independent ruler.⁷⁷

73. Brown, "Malay Annals," p. 28.

74. Ibid., pp. 137, 152, 175, 246.

75. Wilkinson, "Some Malay Studies," pp. 82-86; Skeat, Malay Magic, pp. 25, 27, 40-42; Alwi bin Sheikh Alhady, Malay Customs and Traditions (Singapore, 1962), p. 80.

76. For example, the cap halilintar kayu gamat (thunder seal) of Perak which bears the inscription, "The Illustrious Sultan Muhammad Syah, God's Shadow Upon Earth." Winstedt and Wilkinson, "A History of Perak," p. 163. Such cap had their own special authority as representatives of the ruler. Gullick, Indigenous Political Systems, p. 52.

77. The importance of the regalia in traditional Malay society has long been recognised. The Bugis had an even stronger feeling towards their gaukang, the sacred objects which "acted as a social integrator and a unifying element in the community, around which a power centre could form." The gaukang were the depository of state authority

Raja Lumu therefore need to obtain a regalia and to assume a suitable title which would demonstrate his new standing. Normally honours of this nature would have been bestowed by the ruler of Johor, as Selangor's overlord. In 1700, for example, the first Bugis Yamtuan of Selangor was said to have received his seal of authority from Johor's representative there.⁷⁸ Later Bugis chiefs in Linggi and Selangor similarly received their titles from Johor.⁷⁹ Raja Lumu's decision to appeal to Perak instead was motivated by three factors. Firstly, the throne of Johor was no longer occupied by an adult, but by a child ruler who was totally under the control of the Regent, Daeng Kemboja. The latter would almost certainly have opposed any attempt by Selangor to establish its independence from Riau. It was also unlikely that Raja Lumu would have received greater co-operation from other Malay rulers. Sultan Mansur Syah of Terengganu had long been an enemy of the Bugis and Sultan Muhammad Jiwa of Kedah had yet to make his peace with Selangor.⁸⁰ Of the peninsular states, Perak remained the only alternative.

77. (cont'd.)

which actually ruled the country. See Andaya, "The Nature of Kingship in Bone," p. 5, and R. Heine Geldern, "Conceptions of State and Kingship in Southeast Asia," Cornell University Southeast Asia Program Data Paper (Ithaca), 18 (April, 1956), 10. When the Bugis seized the regalia in the early 1740's, they may have done so under the assumption that possession of the regalia would enable them to govern the country. See above, p. 115.

78. R. O. Winstedt, "Negri Sembilan," JMBRAS, XII, 3 (1934), Appendix I, 112. This representative was the Datuk Engku Kelang.

79. Andaya, The Kingdom of Johor, pp. 258-259, 328-333.

80. In 1767 Raja Abdullah of Kedah married the daughter of Raja Lumu. See below, pp. 433.

Secondly, there was now a changed climate in the Perak court. Prior to 1765, Sultan Iskandar had adamantly refused to enter into any relationship whatsoever with the Bugis of Selangor. But now there was a new ruler, one who, as Raja Muda, had been the leader of those who favoured renewed trading ties with Perak's neighbours. Raja Lumu was ready to seize the opportunity this changed rule offered. Other benefits besides installation could accrue from a friendship with Sultan Mahmud. There was a possibility, for example, that Perak might renounce the Dutch treaty and restore to Selangor merchants their former favoured position in the Perak tin trade.

A third factor made Perak the obvious alternative to Johor. As Winstedt has suggested, the Bugis would have been aware that the rulers of Perak traced their descent from Alexander the Great (Sultan Iskandar Zul-karnain), from the demi-god who was the progenitor of all Malay kings, and from the sultans of Melaka. The genealogy of the Perak royal family established it as the heirs of the old tradition and, to many Malays, Sultan Mahmud, rather than the Bendahara family of Johor, must have appeared as the rightful representatives of the Melaka line. The significance of Perak's genealogy was not lost on the Bugis. Conscious of their own parvenu status, realising that in Malay terms they could not lay claim to the illustrious ancestry of other Malay rulers, they sought to increase their standing by marriages into prestigious families and the adoption of royal symbols which had meaning in Malay society. Such methods were necessary because, in the eyes of eighteenth century Malays, the Bugis were outsiders. According to one tradition, the Datuk Engku

Kelang refused to acknowledge Raja Lumu as the legitimate ruler of Selangor until his installation by the Yang di Pertuan of Perak.⁸¹ The importance accorded this custom is witnessed by its retention until the reign of Sultan Abdul Samad of Selangor (1859-1898),⁸² and even at the coronation of Sultan Sulaiman in 1895 a deputation came especially from Perak "as representatives of the senior state."⁸³

At the time, Sultan Mahmud's decision to ally himself with Selangor brought mixed results. In itself, it was a radical departure from the policy of the previous twenty years, and it was to involve Perak in the affairs of its neighbours in an unprecedented manner. Firstly, the new relationship between Selangor and Perak meant that Sultan Mahmud was now placed in the ambiguous position of being a friend of both the Dutch and their rivals, the Selangor Bugis. Secondly, Perak, as Sultan Salehuddin's ally, was now drawn into a developing Riau-Selangor rivalry. Nine years later, when rivalry had become outright hostility, Daeng Kemboja looked back to the installation of 1766 with feelings of resentment. He could not forgive his cousin for his declaration of independence and did not forgive the part that Sultan Mahmud had played.

I will have nothing more to do with [Sultan Salehuddin]; he is at present become king in Selangor on his

81. Winstedt, "Negri Sembilan," Appendix I, p. 113. This tradition is interesting in view of the fact that the first Bugis Yamtuan of Selangor was said to have received his authority from the Datuk Engku of Kelang. See above, n. 80.

82. C. D. Cowan, Nineteenth Century Malaya; the Origins of British Political Control (London, 1961), p. 67, n. 3.

83. Wilkinson, A History of the Peninsular Malays, p. 104.

own, and if he comes to me I shall not receive him. He is now outside my power, he has become king in Selangor without saying a single word to me about it. Never before has anyone in Selangor become king without being installed by the ruler of Johor. This is the first time they have raised themselves up in this fashion. Yes, now the king of Selangor even has a wife in Perak and has become a good friend of the King of Perak. These two kingdoms are as close as the fingernail and the skin.⁸⁴

There were other aspects of the new Perak-Selangor alliance which changed Perak's status in the Malay world. On the one hand, Sultan Mahmud had aroused the ill-feeling of Daeng Kemboja, but on the other there were brighter prospects for more favourable relations with Kedah. These prospects came as a result of the recent gestures of friendship between Sultan Salehuddin and Sultan Muhammad Jiwa, which, shortly before the former's installation, had led to a public declaration of friendship.

The initiative for this new relation came from Sultan Muhammad, who, having experienced a modicum of independence because of Siam's waning power in the mid-eighteenth century, now found himself threatened by Siam's bitter enemies, the Burmese. In the years after 1760 Siam was invaded several times, and there was a very real threat of an attack on its dependencies as well. Without a strong Siam as protector, Kedah's vulnerability was exposed. Furthermore, Sultan Muhammad faced personal problems of his own, for he was opposed by a cabal of anak raja who resented his choice of his son, Tengku Abdullah, as heir. The latter's

84. KA 3335 OB 1776, Daeng Kemboja to Gov. Crane, 27 March 1774. The Dutch phrase zo als de nagel met de vlees is a direct translation of the Malay proverb bagal kulit dengan isi, used of people who are very close. Wilkinson, Malay English Dictionary, I, 431, 620.

mother was merely a gundik, but he had gained such favour with Sultan Muhammad that the old ruler had displaced the previously selected heir apparent and had named Tengku Abdullah instead.⁸⁵

In some ways, therefore, the situation in Kedah in 1765 was similar to that in Perak twenty years before. Faced with the threat of invasion from outside and dissent from within, Sultan Muhammad also sought a powerful friend. He turned not to the Europeans, however, but to the Bugis of Selangor. In October 1765 Governor Schippers told Batavia that "the old and decrepit king of Kedah" had made overtures to Selangor because of his fear of the Burmese, and his realisation that his death would mean a contest for the throne.⁸⁶ The rival claimant already had a large following within the country, and Sultan Muhammad hoped that the Bugis would, after his death, ensure that Tengku Abdullah succeeded.⁸⁷

85. Tengku Abdullah received the title Sultan Muda. B.M. Add. Ms. 29133, Light to Hastings, 17 Jan. 1770, fo. 9. Sultan Muhammad Jiwa refers to his son as Sultan Muda in a letter to the Raja Muda of Perak in 1769. KA 3196 OB 1771, Sultan Muhammad to Raja Muda, Raja Bendahara, Oranga Kaya Besar and Paduka Maharaja, Oct. 1769. The Hikayat Negeri Johor also refers to him as Sultan. Ismail, Hikayat Negeri Johor, p. 99.

For a background to these events, see Bonney, Kedah, pp. 22-26. An interesting account of Sultan Abdullah's rivals is given in Muhammad Hassan bin Datuk Nerani Arshad, Al Tarikh Salasilah Negeri Kedah (Kuala Lumpur, 1968), pp. 121-126. The author of this work was born about 1868 and died in 1942. In 1926, as the Ketua Istana, he was ordered to write a history of Kedah by the Regent, Tengku Ibrahim. The original of this text is in the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka in Kuala Lumpur. His lengthy descriptions of the Kedah anak raja are significant in view of the role they were to play later in Perak affairs.

86. KA 3049, Secret, Schippers to Batavia, 13 Oct. 1765, fo. 70.

87. Ibid. and SFR G35/15, Monckton to Du Pre, 22 April 1772 (FSGCP 25 June 1772), fo. 83. Apart from Raja Nambang in Perak, Sultan Muhammad was said to have another brother and several nephews. SSR G34/2 Light to Cornwallis, 12 Sept. 1786 (FWCP 13 Dec. 1786), fo. 161.

This itself was a tribute to Selangor's growing prestige and the occasion is remembered as such in Bugis texts. The Hikayat Negeri Johor relates that "a letter arrived in Selangor from the Yang di Pertuan of Kedah, proposing marriage between his son, called Sultan Abdullah, and the daughter of Sultan Salehuddin."⁸⁸ The latter agreed, but, since he had not yet broken with Riau, he took the precaution of broaching the matter first to Daeng Kemboja. According to Governor Schippers, the new alliance between Kedah and Selangor was accordingly arranged with the "knowledge and consent" of the Yamtuan Muda.⁸⁹

Perak's new alliance with Selangor meant that its relationship with Kedah, Selangor's ally, was also changed. Sultan Mahmud had inherited the legacy of bad feeling which had resulted from Sultan Iskandar's attitude towards Kedah, and when he succeeded relations with Sultan Muhammad had reached a nadir. Even in December 1765 Sultan Mahmud had been forced to appeal to the Governor of Malaka in order to obtain restitution of some goods which the ruler of Kedah had confiscated.⁹⁰ Soon afterwards, however, he took positive action to exploit the possibilities for rapprochement now offered by a common alliance with Selangor. Letters and presents were sent to Sultan Muhammad, with a request that the former enmity be forgotten and a new friendship established. Although no formal treaty was signed, or oath taken, Sultan Muhammad sent

88. Ismail, Hikayat Negeri Johor, p. 99.

89. KA 3049, Secret, Schippers to Batavia, 13 Oct. 1765, foll. 69-70.

90. KA 3078, Secret, Schippers to Batavia, 24 Dec. 1765, fo. 797.

back a favourable reply and in consequence trade between the two states improved markedly.⁹¹

The outcome of Kedah's approaches to Selangor was of some importance not only to the Malay and Bugis states involved, but to the VOC officials in Melaka, who were always sensitive to any changes in the delicate alliance system in the area. The importance attached to this event at the time is indicated by the extent to which it is discussed in Dutch as well as Bugis and Malay sources. In January, 1767, two years after the betrothal, the Perak Resident, Claas de Wind, noted that a fleet of ships had come to anchor in Dinding Bay, en route to Selangor. They had come from Kedah, and were escorting Tengku Abdullah to his wedding to the daughter of Sultan Salehuddin.⁹² It became apparent that Sultan Salehuddin was determined to ensure his daughter's wedding would be given due honour by neighbouring rulers, but more especially by his new friend in Perak. Repeatedly he urged Sultan Mahmud to come himself and attend the marriage celebrations, and in March Sultan Mahmud finally decided that, although he would not go himself, he would send the Raja Muda, the Temenggong, the Orang Kaya Besar and three other anak raja as his representatives.⁹³ They would be accompanied by about 450 people.⁹⁴ On April 18 Sultan Mahmud, the Raja Muda and the other nobles arrived at the royal kubu with a fleet of over thirty ships.⁹⁵

91. KA 3166 OB 1770, Werndly's Day Register, 17 Sept. 1768.

92. KA 3137 OB 1769, de Wind to Schippers, 4 Feb. 1767.

93. Ibid., de Wind to Schippers, 29 March 1767.

94. Ibid., de Wind to Schippers 23 April 1767 and KA 3166 OB 1770, Werndly's Day Register, 17 Sept. 1768.

It was obviously a great occasion for the Perak court, and the Misa Melayu regards the event as a momentous one.

After some time the Raja of Selangor wished to marry his daughter to the son of the Raja of Kedah. He sent to Perak and invited all the Perak raja. Sultan Mahmud ordered his brother the Raja Muda, the Raja di Hilir, the Raja Kecil Bungsu and all the orang besar, hulubalang officials and people to go. About a thousand perahu were sent for this special invitation because Their Majesties were very close (sangat-sangat meseranya). When everything was ready, the Raja Muda left for Selangor according to adat, and the sound of the cannon was like rice being fried.⁹⁶

At the time of the departure of the Raja Muda, Sultan Mahmud assured de Wind that he only wished to foster the friendship with Selangor which had been established the previous November. Because of the relationship between them, he could not refuse the invitation to the wedding outright, and had therefore compromised by sending the Raja Muda. The latter would preside over the marriage ceremonies in lieu of Sultan Mahmud himself. Sultan Salehuddin, indeed, considered the presence of the Perak party so important that he had postponed the wedding day until the Raja Muda arrived. De Wind was told that Sultan Mahmud's representatives and their following would stay in Selangor for the duration of the celebrations, which were expected to last for two months.⁹⁷

Sultan Salehuddin's anxiety for Sultan Mahmud's presence can be attributed partially to the new relationship between them, but it can

95. KA 3137 OB 1769, de Wind to Schippers, 23 April 1767.

96. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 188.

97. KA 3137 OB 1769, de Wind to Schippers, 4 Aug. 1767; KA 3166 OB 1770, Werndly's Day Register, 17 Sept. 1768.

also be argued that he was concerned with establishing his credentials as a ruler in the Malay tradition. The Dutch envoy Werndly, who came to Perak the following year, reported that the Raja Muda had carried with him the "wedding ornaments" which were to be used in the marriage ceremony. Perak thus supplied at least some of the accoutrements considered necessary for a royal Malay wedding.⁹⁸ Together with the presence of the Raja Muda, these would have symbolised the Perak stamp of approval, a sign that the marriage had been carried out "according to the adat of children of a great raja."⁹⁹

The Bugis-oriented texts, little concerned with court ceremonial, do not describe the actual marriage, possibly because of its untimely dissolution. The Misa Melayu, on the other hand, treats it as an episode of some significance. After the party from Perak had arrived, Sultan Salehuddin began the festivities which lasted for forty days and forty nights, and his daughter was married to the son of the ruler of Kedah, according to adat. The Raja Muda then wished to return to Perak, and after ten days he sent the Orang Kaya Besar and Temenggong to ask permission from the Raja of Selangor. When Sultan Salehuddin heard their request, he prepared all his perahu to escort the Raja Muda. At the proper moment, the text continues, the Raja Muda left, being accompanied by Sultan Salehuddin and his party until they reached Kuala Bernam. "And then everyone returned to his own country." The Raja Muda went back to Perak, where Sultan Mahmud ordered the Raja Bendahara to greet the Raja

98. KA 3166 OB 1770, Werndly's Day Register, 17 Sept. 1768.

99. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 188.

Muda as was fitting. The Raja Muda came to make obeisance to his brother Sultan Mahmud in the presence of the entire court, and "Sultan Mahmud presented robes of honour to his brother the Raja Muda, according to adat and the Orang Kaya Besar and Orang Kaya Temenggong were also given robes of honour."¹⁰⁰

From Kedah's point of view, the marriage between Tengku Abdullah and the daughter of Sultan Salehuddin did not provide the anticipated security. During the course of 1767 all the fears of Sultan Muhammad Jiwa materialised. As he had expected, Siam was attacked, and in April Ayuthia itself was razed. But Siam's defeat did not mean the end of dependent status for Kedah, for Burma now demanded homage, and the Bunga Mas dan Perak, tributary offerings which symbolised this subservience, were consequently sent to the Burmese capital of Ava.¹⁰¹ Siamese recovery was rapid, however, and by the end of the year a new ruler, P'ya Taksin, had been installed on the throne.¹⁰² He moved quickly to regain lost territory, and in December 1767 and February 1768 Sultan Muhammad complained to Melaka of raids from Siam, Ligor and Mendelang, asking for assistance.¹⁰³ This was naturally refused, and Kedah once again acknowledged its position of vassal to a reunified Siam.

100. Ibid., 188-189. The party arrived back on June 25. KA 3137 OB 1769 de Wind to Schippers, 5 Sept. 1767.

101. Bonney, Kedah, pp. 11-12, 57; SSR G34/2, Light to Cornwallis, 12 Sept. 1786 (FWCP 13 Dec. 1786), fo. 172.

102. Bonney, Kedah, pp. 25-26, 57; W. A. R. Wood, A History of Siam (Bangkok, 1924), pp. 251-258.

103. KA 3166 OB 1770, King of Kedah to Schippers, 15 Feb. 1768; KA 3137 OB 1769, Schippers to Batavia, 28 March 1768, fo. 30. Ligor had declared its independence under the Governor, who now had the title of King Musika. Wood, A History of Siam, p. 254.

At the same time, Sultan Muhammad, now old and infirm, was confronted by a rebellion from his disgruntled anak raja, who had seized the opportunity offered by Tengku Abdullah's absence in Selangor. Led by one Tengku Long Dewa, they sought to depose the ruler, but, supported by loyalist elements, Sultan Muhammad managed to maintain the upper hand. In December 1767 an anak raja from Kedah "being next of kin to Tengku Long Dewa" appeared in Perak in a small perahu, accompanied by only two slaves. He told de Wind that he had fled from Kedah because of "the king's persecution," and asked Sultan Mahmud for permission to remain in Perak until affairs between the disputing parties were settled. Sultan Mahmud did not, apparently, regard the presence of this fugitive as a threat to his relations with Kedah, for he agreed to let him stay.¹⁰⁴

Despite Sultan Muhammad's hopes, Kedah's alliance with Selangor had not helped to prevent an internal uprising or lessened the threat of Burma and Siam. On the other hand, Sultan Mahmud must have been more than satisfied with his policy towards both Kedah and Selangor. It had been more than two decades since Perak's relations with its neighbours had been so amicable, and this had been achieved without alienating the Dutch. Not long afterwards Sultan Mahmud's promotion of a friendship with Selangor appeared to be vindicated.

In April 1768, Dutch cruisers in Linggi captured some baluk under the command of two of Daeng Kamboja's sons, who could not produce the required VOC pass.¹⁰⁵ The Yamtuan Muda regarded this as a deliberate in-

104. KA 3137 OB 1769, de Wind to Schippers, 21 Dec. 1767.

105. KA 3169, Secret, Schippers to Batavia, 16 March 1769, fol. 278; KA

sult, and he was determined to gain revenge. Accordingly, he attempted to recruit support from some of the surrounding states with a view to attacking Melaka or the Dutch post in Perak. There were few rulers, however, who cared to join the Riau Bugis in such a venture. When approaches to Sultan Abdul Jalil (Raja Muhammad Ali) of Siak were unsuccessful, Daeng Kemboja was forced to turn to his estranged cousin, Sultan Salehuddin.¹⁰⁶ In June two envoys arrived in Selangor with a fleet of fifteen ships. Their mission was to persuade Sultan Salehuddin to join the planned attack by Riau on the Company fort in Perak, an attack which would avenge the treatment accorded Daeng Kemboja's sons in Linggi.¹⁰⁷

On July 9, the Datuk Imam of Perak brought a letter to Sultan Mahmud from Sultan Salehuddin, informing the Perak ruler of Daeng Kemboja's request for help to oust the Dutch. Sultan Salehuddin had replied that, although he himself was not averse to the plan, he could not embark on such an expedition without the approval of Sultan Mahmud because it was from Perak that he had received the nubat (vorstelijk speel instrumenten).¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, he had solemnly promised, on his keris and on the Koran, that he would never invade Perak or disturb the peace

105. (cont'd.)

3166 OB 1770, Daeng Kemboja to Schippers, rec'd. 3 Sept. 1768; Schippers to Daeng Kemboja, n.d. Raja Ali Haji, Tuhfat al-Nafis, pp. 157-158.

106. KA 3166 OB 1770, Secret Melaka Resolutions, Report given by Koal, a Chinese coming from Siak, 1 July 1768 and from a Melaka Chinese, Sinsen, coming from Bukit Batu, 7 July 1768. In a letter to the Governor dated 27 July 1768, Sultan Abdul Jalil denied having any intention of joining in an attack.

107. KA 3166 OB 1770, de Wind to Schippers, 28 June 1768, 9 Aug. 1768.

108. Ibid., de Wind to Schippers, 9 Aug. 1768.

there.¹⁰⁹ Bound by this understanding, he could not attack the Dutch fort without Sultan Mahmud's consent, for the Perak ruler was allied to the Company.¹¹⁰

There were now several issues at stake. On the one hand, although Sultan Salehuddin had no love for the Dutch and little liking for Daeng Kemboja, he did care about his alliance with Perak and would not willingly place it in jeopardy. On the other hand, if the Dutch were evicted from Perak, it would undoubtedly redound to Selangor's advantage, since the English trade there would certainly attract a sizeable portion of Perak's tin. For his part, although Sultan Mahmud had deliberately cultivated his relationship with the Selangor Bugis, he was not ready to cut the ties which bound him to Melaka, he would have understood full well that a Bugis assault on the VOC fort would not necessarily stop with a rout of the Dutch. Sultan Mahmud might well find himself a vassal of the Bugis instead of their honoured friend. His response to Sultan Salehuddin's letter made it clear that in no circumstances would he condone an attack on the Dutch post.

According to reports [wrote de Wind] the Perak king said that he shall never give his permission for any acts of violence, but if the people of Riau and Selangor were inclined to seek a friendly reconciliation [with the Company] he would gladly act as mediator. If they felt otherwise, however, he would have nothing

109. Skeat says that when swearing fidelity or alliance, it was customary to drink the water in which keris, spears, or bullets had been dipped. The person drinking vowed, "If I turn traitor, may I be eaten up by this keris." Skeat, Malay Magic, p. 525, n. 2.

110. KA 3166 OB 1770, de Wind to Schippers, 9 Aug. 1768 and Werndly's Day Register, 17 Sept. 1768.

more to do with them, since the Company is not only his friend and ally but the guardian (bewaarder) of his kingdom with whose protection he governs quietly and peacefully.¹¹¹

Selangor's consequent refusal to join in the projected attack meant that an important source of manpower was denied the Bugis and the plan was of necessity abandoned.

Governor Schippers must have been delighted that Sultan Mahmud, like his brother before him, had held firmly to the Dutch alliance, even though Perak was now deeply involved in the affairs of its neighbours. It was clear that the VOC contract was still the linchpin of what might be termed Perak's "foreign policy." As Raja Muda, Sultan Mahmud had seen the treaty as an annoying restriction on trading activities; as ruler, he had come to appreciate the security and revenue which the Dutch presence supplied. But Sultan Mahmud's relationship with Selangor publicly demonstrated that the advantages brought by the VOC alliance had not meant forfeiture of independence. Perak was still a Company friend, not a Dutch puppet.

The new relationship with Selangor had completely reversed the policy which Sultan Iskandar had consistently followed and it was to bring unforeseen problems to Perak. Sultan Mahmud's accession also brought changes on the home front. By 1768 Sultan Mahmud was facing real difficulties in his administration of the ulu area, where suzerainty over the rich tin mines along the Perak-Kedah Patani borders had long been an important but disputed issue. Sultan Iskandar had devoted much time and

111. Ibid., de Wind to Schippers, 9 Aug. 1768

attention to establishing his authority here, but even during his reign there had been quarrels with Kedah, and the Patani migrants had not always been willing to recognise the position of the local orang besar. During the last year of Sultan Iskandar's reign matters came to a head. The Sri Adika Raja, it will be remembered, had placed his son in charge of the Indah mines, but the latter's harsh treatment of Patani people had led to quarrels. The situation became so bad that the son came downstream to complain to Sultan Iskandar, who had despatched the Orang Kaya Besar to the area with a party of men. The old minister had only gone half-way up when news arrived of Sultan Iskandar's death and the little force had immediately returned.¹¹²

The affairs had been left in abeyance but shortly after Sultan Mahmud's succession a Penghulu Boton, originally from Patani, had come to court to discuss the administration of the Indah district with the new ruler. He blamed the Sri Adika Raja's son for the hostility which had developed between the people of Patani and those of Kelian Indah, and suggested that he be made head there instead. If he were given this post, he assured Sultan Mahmud, the tin delivery would proceed more satisfactorily. His arguments and flattery so swayed Sultan Mahmud that he declared the son of the Sri Adika Raja guilty and appointed Penghulu Boton as his representative in Indah. The Sri Adika Raja and the Sri Maharaja Lela remained nominal chiefs, but they were forbidden to interfere in any way with the tin production.¹¹³

¹¹². Ibid., Werndly's Day Register, 17 Sept. 1768. See above, pp. 138, 240.

This new appointment had been accompanied by other administrative changes, which completely undermined the system established by Sultan Iskandar. The old Orang Kaya Besar, hitherto representative of the ruler and paramount chief in the ulu, had been deprived of his duties. Since the Sri Adika Raja and the Maharaja Lela had only nominal control over the area, there was now no intermediary between the court and the people. Some litigants came to the Raja Bendahara, some to the Raja Muda, and some to Sultan Mahmud. According to Anthony Werndly, a Dutch envoy who came to Perak in September 1768, there was no uniformity or co-ordination between the decisions meted out by the three brothers and each dealt with the matters brought to him as they accorded with his own particular interests. Werndly was also extremely critical of Sultan Mahmud's failure to continue the encouragement given to trade in the previous reign. Now district heads were no longer told to keep supplies of goods for barter on hand and the temptation to smuggle to Kedah had therefore increased.¹¹⁴

A basic reason for a noticeable decline in the efficiency of government was Sultan Mahmud's indifference to details of administration. In many ways, Sultan Mahmud acted more like a disreputable anak raja than a middle-aged ruler. He was, for example a habitual opium smoker, and though he never developed the symptoms of extreme addiction, the dulling of judgement and intellect which results from prolonged use of the drug cannot have been conducive to good government. Whereas Raja Culan

113. KA 3166 OB 1770, Werndly's Day Register, 7 Sept. 1768 and 11 Sept. 1768.

114. Ibid.

praises the length of time Sultan Iskandar devoted to receiving petitions and giving audiences, Sultan Mahmud, said Werndly, was so given to opium smoking that he did not come to his balai before midday or even three o'clock. He only set aside half an hour for audiences and passed the rest of the day in his other favourite occupation, cockfighting. One of the anak raja who had fallen from favour in the new regime told Werndly that Sultan Mahmud's methods of government had brought about a demoralising effect on the country.¹¹⁵

Weakness at the centre in Perak had always meant loss of control over the outlying areas. It is not surprising that smuggling increased and, despite Schippers' optimism in 1766, tin deliveries showed a marked decline. In February 1767 and again in March 1768, Schippers complained to Batavia of the decrease. Deliveries were almost half those of previous years and Melaka could not fulfil its quota of 500,000 lbs., even though Batavia had reduced the amount because of a surplus of tin on the market.¹¹⁶ Sultan Mahmud, when confronted with the fact of declining tin deliveries, blamed Dutch failure to patrol Larut and the outbreak of smallpox.¹¹⁷ Schippers, however, was not satisfied and in September 1768 Anthony Werndly was sent to Perak to investigate.¹¹⁸

115. Ibid.

116. KA 3104 OB 1768, Schippers to Batavia, 28 Feb. 1767, foll. 85-87; KA 3137 OB 1769, Schippers to Batavia, 28 March 1768, fo. 25. KA 921, Batavia to Schippers, 3 Aug. 1764, foll. 580-581.

117. KA 3166 OB 1770, de Wind to Schippers, 8 Jan. 1768.

118. KA 3166 OB 1770, Secret Melaka Resolutions, 17 Aug. 1768; KA 3169 Secret, Schippers to Batavia, 13 March 1769, fol. 11.

Werndly found that the choice of Penghulu as head of Kelian Indah had not been a fortunate one. He had indeed come down a few times with tin and the taxes he owed to Sultan Mahmud but when Werndly arrived on September 1, Penghulu Boton had not been seen at court for over a year, nor had he sent any tin down.¹¹⁹ Although the tin mines of Rui and Indah lay within Perak territory, the people of Patani and Kedah were mining tin there under Penghulu Boton's direction. He bought it from the miners himself, or exchanged it with Kedah traders from Kuala Muda for linen, opium, and other products. They then carried it overland to the coast.¹²⁰

Werndly also discovered that the districts of Kurau and Larut too were delivering less tin. In the past, they had yielded a hundred bahara annually, which had been brought down to hilir Perak via Rui. Now, however, it was being transported no further than Rui, where Penghulu Boton took possession and delivered it to Kedah. This presented no great difficulty, since Kurau was only one, and Larut two days travel from Rui. In sum, a total of two hundred bahara of tin produced per annum from the mines of Kurau, Larut, and Indah was being carried out to Kedah.¹²¹

One other rich tin mining area, the Kerian River, had also been lost to Perak. Sultan Mahmud told Werndly that he had sent four men there to collect tin, but they had been captured by people from Kedah mining in the area. Now, he said, the Kerian River and Batu Kawan had

119. KA 3166 OB 1770, Werndly's Day Register, 7 Sept. 1768 and 11 Sept. 1768.

120. Ibid.

121. Ibid.

been taken and were no longer under Perak's jurisdiction.¹²² The situation had been made even worse by the severe smallpox epidemic raging in the hilir. The Sri Adika Raja would not allow anyone to come into his territory for fear they would spread the infection. For the same reason, the ulu people were adamantly opposed to bringing their tin down to the Dutch fort and were taking it instead to Kedah.¹²³ Moreover, despite the Sri Adika Raja's measures, the epidemic was spreading into ulu Perak and many of the tin miners had died or had become so weak that they would not work.¹²⁴ It was not surprising, therefore, that the previous years tin deliveries had been half the expected amount.

On September 10, when Werndly was granted an audience, he argued forcibly for stronger action to enforce Perak's rights over the rich tin areas in ulu Perak and Kerian, pointing out that it was not only the Company who suffered. Sultan Mahmud himself had told Werndly that he had received neither tolls nor taxes from Penghulu Boton. The Perak ruler protested that he was powerless, for the people of Kedah had forcibly compelled his subjects to deliver their tin and alone he could do nothing to stop them. Instead, he put forward an alternative plan, suggesting that the Company show its support for him publicly by sending two ships

122. Ibid.; King of Perak to Schippers, 18 Sept. 1768.

123. Ibid.; also de Wind to Schippers, 8 Jan. 1768. Eighteenth century material bears out Swettenham's comment that "smallpox and cholera used to decimate the Malays of Perak and the fear of these scourges amounted to a bad form of panic." F. A. Swettenham, About Perak (Singapore, 1893), p. 16.

124. KA 3166 OB 1770, de Wind to Schippers, 8 Jan. 1768; King of Perak to Schippers, 1 Feb. 1768, de Wind to Schippers, 25 May 1768, 28 June 1768; Werndly's Day Register, 11-12 Sept. 1768.

to Perak. If the Kedah people refused to leave his territory, Sultan Mahmud would not appear ridiculous but could call on the Company's help to enforce his requests.¹²⁵ Sultan Mahmud, in fact, felt his military weakness made such a mockery of any demands that he was even reluctant to agree to Werndly's proposal that a force should be sent upstream under a prominent chief and at the same time a letter sent to Sultan Muhammad Jiwa asking him to recall his subjects. Sultan Mahmud maintained that he would be publicly shamed if he wrote to Kedah and his complaints were ignored.¹²⁶ Werndly, however, made it clear that there was no possibility of the Dutch undertaking any military action against Kedah, for Amsterdam was now adamantly opposed to any involvement in internal affairs in Malay states.¹²⁷

The Raja Muda seemed more sympathetic to the Dutch position, although in the previous reign VOC envoys had described him as being opposed to Company interests. In the Misa Melayu, on the other hand, he appears as a man who sought to avoid confrontation and advocated compromise, and certainly in 1768 he appeared ready to consider Werndly's suggestions.¹²⁸ In an unprecedented private audience, he told the envoy

125. KA 3166 OB 1770, Werndly's Day Register, 17 Sept. 1768. Werndly asked Sultan Mahmud several times why he had not written to Melaka, but Sultan Mahmud avoided answering the question. Later he said that he had already mentioned the subject to Cramer and de Wind.

126. Ibid., 10 Sept. 1768.

127. Gov. Schippers would not have been anxious to undertake any military action against Kedah in any case, for Melaka was dependent on Kedah for rice supplies.

128. Ibid., 12 Sept. 1768; Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 108, 106.

that the court itself was unsure whether the low tin deliveries was due to Penghulu Boton alone, or the Patanese or people of Kedah mining there. Although the smallpox epidemic and the building of a new istana had delayed the despatch of a party upstream, an expedition was even now being prepared to investigate matters in Indah. If Penghulu Boton or the people of Patani were responsible, they would be expelled immediately, but, if Kedah were involved, the situation would be more complicated. In this case, a letter would be sent to Sultan Muhammad Jiwa requesting him to take action, and, if this proved fruitless, notice would then be given to the Governor, who would be asked to act as mediator. While Werndly urged that Penghulu Boton, who was not originally from Perak, be dismissed and someone else of greater integrity be appointed instead, he realised that it would be impossible to prevent people from Patani or Kedah entering Perak freely. All Werndly could hope for was the actual departure of an expedition under a responsible person such as the Raja Muda himself, the Raja Bendahara, or the Orang Kaya Besar. The basic question of central control over these distant areas still remained. Sultan Mahmud expressed his difficulty succinctly. "What shall I do?" he asked, "I am powerless. Penghulu Boton is not a Perak man, but a Patanese by birth, and he has joined with the people of Kedah."¹²⁹ The loyalty which a ruler could expect and the obedience which he could demand from those who were not his subjects was minimal.

Sultan Mahmud might protect his innocence, but suspicions concerning his intentions towards the Company had already been implanted in the

¹²⁹ KA 3166 OB 1770, Werndly's Day Register, 12 Sept. 1768.

minds of the Governor and his Council. It had been rumoured in Melaka that Sultan Mahmud was himself profiting by the smuggling, being paid 2½ reals toll for every bahara carried out. Further, the Dutch were apprehensive about the new friendship between Perak and Kedah, and Sultan Mahmud's apparent reluctance to make any complaint to Sultan Muhammad Jiwa led Melaka to suspect that they were in collusion.¹³⁰ It was Werndly's duty, as envoy, to discover whether these suspicions were justified. Although he could not find any positive proof of Sultan Mahmud's complicity in the smuggling, one anak raja intimated that this rumour was true.¹³¹ In lieu of a private audience where he could have confronted Sultan Mahmud with the accusations which had been made against him, Werndly wrote a private letter to him and four other members of the Council, the Raja Muda, Raja Bendahara, Orang Kaya Besar and the Temenggong, clearly setting forth Melaka's views.¹³²

Such a sensitive matter could not be discussed in public, and Sultan Mahmud therefore sent an Indian envoy to Werndly in secret. Through this confidant, he again stressed his innocence and tried to explain his apparent ineffectiveness. Firstly, he said, he had only recently come to power, and he did not yet exert a great deal of authority over his subjects. Secondly, the Sri Adika Raja had barred all paths to the ulu in order to keep the smallpox away, and communication had been

130. KA 3169, Secret, Schippers to Batavia, 16 March 1769; (Resolutions, 17 Aug. 1768), fo. 296.

131. KA 3166 OB 1768, Werndly's Day Register, 19 Sept. 1768.

132. KA 3166 OB 1768, Werndly to Schippers, 24 Sept. 1768.

effectively cut off. He would have used other routes to reach Indah and thus punish Penghulu Boton and his Kedah allies, but the mountainous terrain and thick jungle made travel difficult, while the river was beset with strong currents, rapids, and treacherous shallows. Sultan Mahmud reminded Werndly that in the past he had faithfully delivered tin, even waiting four or five months for payment. Now the Company should trust his sincerity.¹³³

Melaka was somewhat mollified when in November 1768, fourteen days after Werndly's departure from Perak, news was received that the brother of the Orang Kaya Besar, Sri Bija di Raja, had been sent to Patani with a letter addressed to the ruler concerning the situation in the Indah mines.¹³⁴ By February of the following year, however, nothing had been heard from the envoy, although it was reported that Sultan Mahmud had also written to Sultan Muhammad Jiwa about affairs at Rui and Indah.¹³⁸ Both efforts to solve the problem of suzerainty over these border areas proved fruitless. The behaviour of the Sri Bija di Raja antagonised the ruler of Patani and no agreement was reached in regard to the mines.¹³⁶ Sri Bija di Raja had acquitted himself so badly that he went into hiding, taking the Patani letter with him. It was not until a year later, in January 1770, that he overcame his shame and finally presented himself

133. Ibid., Werndly's Day Register, 12 Sept. 1768.

134. This "ruler" was probably a border chief in the Reman district. KA 3166 OB 1770, de Wind to Schippers, 15 Dec. 1768.

135. Ibid., 15 Feb. 1769.

136. Ibid.

at court, giving up the reply from Patani. Apart from a scathing criticism of the envoy himself, this letter made no mention of the mission or disputes over the tin mines, but, according to a verbal report given by Sri Bija di Raja, the Patani ruler had said that a Penghulu Unun, who lived in Rui and governed in Sultan Mahmud's name, had ceded the district to Patani. He therefore wished to speak to Sultan Mahmud or the Raja Muda personally so that the matter could be settled. Resident de Wind was told that as soon as the planting season was over the Raja Muda planned to go to Rui himself.¹³⁷ The reply from Kedah, received in October 1769, proved no more satisfactory. Sultan Muhammad Jiwa disclaimed any responsibility concerning both affairs in the mines of Rui and Indah and smuggling to Kedah itself.¹³⁸ There is no mention in Dutch records of any Perak response to this letter and despite the despatch of the Laksamana "with an open letter as commissioner to the streams and rivers subject to this kingdom," the tin deliveries continued to fall.¹³⁹

The first years of Sultan Mahmud's reign thus saw the slow crumbling of the administrative structure Sultan Iskandar had built up over so many years. Sultan Mahmud apparently failed to send the Raja Muda to investigate matters in the ulu and we can only compare this indifference with Sultan Iskandar's quick despatch of the Orang Kaya Besar four years

137. KA 3226 OB 1772, de Wind to Schippers, 4 Jan. 1770; Schippers to de Wind, 25 March 1770.

138. KA 3166 OB 1770, de Wind to Schippers, 15 Feb. 1769; KA 3196 OB 1771, King of Kedah to Raja Muda, Raja Bendahara, Orang Kaya Besar and Paduka Maharaja, October, 1769.

139. KA 3196 OB 1771, de Wind to Schippers, 10 Nov. 1769.

before. Royal revenue declined because of the loss of these rich tin areas and the lessening of central authority over outlying districts. Even the constant goading of the Dutch was no longer evident. After November 1768 it was decided that there was not such a great need to increase the Perak tin delivery, since the price paid in China had been lowered and the trade was therefore less profitable than previously. Furthermore, Bangka tin was being delivered in Batavia for fifteen rijksdaalders the pikul, cheaper than that from Perak.¹⁴⁰ Apart from the ordinary cruising around Larut, there seemed no point using stronger coercion to ensure the delivery of tin from Rui and Indah, although the Melaka Governor continued to press Sultan Mahmud to take more positive measures against the smuggling to Kedah.¹⁴¹

Sultan Mahmud's friendship with the Bugis also represented a radical departure from previous policy and had brought unforeseen complications in its wake. The full repercussions, however, were not to become apparent until after 1769, when the alliance between Selangor and Kedah collapsed, a collapse which was to involve Perak even further in the affairs of its neighbours.

140. KA 3166 OB 1770, Secret Melaka Resolutions, 19 Nov. 1768.

141. Ibid.

Chapter VII

THE YEARS OF REASSESSMENT, 1769-1773

The linchpin of the fragile friendship between Kedah and Selangor, into which Perak had been drawn, was Tengku Abdullah's marriage to Sultan Salehuddin's daughter. Unfortunately for Sultan Mahmud, this marriage was short-lived. Bugis sources ascribe its breakdown directly to the actions of Tengku Abdullah. According to the Hikayat Negeri Johor, he stayed in Selangor for three or four months after the wedding before asking permission to return to Kedah. After some time he came back to his bride in Selangor, but not long afterwards he again asked leave to return, promising that he would not stay longer than three months. If he did not reappear within the stipulated time, however, the marriage would be annulled.¹

The three months came and went, the text goes on, and Tengku Abdullah did not come back to Selangor.² Such a prolonged absence was a gross insult and in Islamic law is considered sufficient grounds for

1. Ismail, Hikayat Negeri Johor, p. 99; The Tuhfat al-Nafis expands on this making Tengku Abdullah's actions even more insulting. He goes back to Kedah a third time and on this occasion Sultan Salehuddin says to him, "If you do not come back, what shall I do?" Tengku Abdullah replies, "Whatever you wish." Raja Ali Haji, Tuhfat al-Nafis, pp. 160-161.

2. Ibid.

divorce.³ Sultan Salehuddin felt the slight keenly. In March 1769 Governor Schippers informed the Governor-General that the marriage between the ruler of Selangor's daughter and Tengku Abdullah had been formally dissolved.⁴ In the words of the Hikayat Negeri Johor, the relationship was finished.⁵

The available material provides no specific reason to account for Tengku Abdullah's apparent indifference to his marital obligations. It is not possible to determine whether the only reason for the divorce was the insult of Tengku Abdullah's continued absence or whether there were other factors involved. Considering the likelihood of rebellion in Kedah, the possibility of invasion by Siam or Burma, and the health of Sultan Muhammad Jiwa, whom English traders described as being "extremely old" and "almost childish,"⁶ Tengku Abdullah probably felt he should return to Kedah and guard his interests there. Whatever the reason, the two parties were irreconcilable, and Raja Haji, Sultan Salehuddin's brother, seized this opportunity to engineer a rapprochement between Selangor and Riau.

Raja Haji, son of Daeng Cellak, was the most famous of the many

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3. K. B. Sethi, Muslim Marriage and Dissolution (Allahabad, 1961), p. 137. Malay tradition required that the groom spend a few months in the home of his wife's parents after the marriage. Skeat, Malay Magic, p. 384; R. J. Wilkinson, "Papers on Malay Customs and Beliefs," JMBRAS, XXX, 4 (1957), 61.
4. KA 3169, Secret, Schippers to Batavia, 16 March 1769, fo. 289.
5. Ismail, Hikayat Negeri Johor, p. 101.
6. SFR G35/115, Monckton to de Pre, 22 April 1772 (FSGCP 25 June 1772), foll. 81-83.

Bugis princes who figured in Malay history during the eighteenth century. Netscher has compared the tales about him to the sages of Scandinavian heroes, and Malay texts of the period describe his exploits in Sumatra, Borneo and the Malay peninsula with awe.⁷ Even at the time he was referred to as a keramat hidup, a living saint.⁸ It is a measure of his prestige and standing among his fellow Bugis that he could bring about a reconciliation, albeit temporary, between the estranged ruler of Selangor and the Regent of Johor. In early 1769 this reconciliation was affirmed by a marriage between Tengku Abdullah's former wife and a son of Daeng Kemboja.⁹ The berbisan relationship--that between people whose children marry--was made even stronger by another wedding between Sultan Salehuddin's elder son, Raja Ibrahim, and one of Daeng Kemboja's daughters.¹⁰ At the same time Tengku Abdullah in Kedah also sought to garner support by contracting a second marriage. This time he did not look outside the country but took as his wife the daughter of the Kedah Laksamana, "a man much respected."¹¹ It was obvious that Tengku Abdullah hoped to

7. Netscher, De Nederlanders, pp. 167-168.

8. van Papendrecht, "Some Old Private Papers," p. 22.

9. KA 3169, Secret, Schippers to Batavia, 16 March 1769, fo. 289.

10. Raja Ali Haji, Tuhfat al Nafis, p. 159. The chronology in this text is confused, unlike that in the Hikayat Negeri Johor. Raja Ali Haji places the marriage between Raja Penuh (daughter of Sultan Salehuddin) and Raja Ali (son of Daeng Kemboja) before Raja Penuh's marriage to Tengku Abdullah.

11. SSR G34/2, Light to Cornwallis (FWCP 13 Dec. 1786), fo. 161. A recent study was concluded that there was no marriage between Tengku Abdullah and Sultan Salehuddin's daughter. However, it must be emphasised that the information supplied by Francis Light and Edward Monckton was gleaned from what the people of Kedah chose to tell

strengthen his resources and out-maneuvre his rivals by gaining the loyalty of one of the most important chiefs in Kedah.

Sultan Mahmud was greatly perturbed by this animosity between his two neighbours, a development for which he was entirely unprepared. His concern was even greater when it became obvious that Sultan Salehuddin's sense of insult had not been assuaged merely by a divorce. In March 1769 a Melaka Bugis reported that a few days before he had come from Selangor, where the ruler was already equipping his forces. Sultan Salehuddin was said to have acquired about six hundred pistols from the English trading in Selangor and had recruited more than forty Europeans into his service to maintain weapons and armaments and make gunpowder.¹² A large fleet,

11. (cont'd.)

them, and most notably from accounts by Sultan Muhammad Jiwa and his son Tengku Abdullah. It was only natural that the latter should represent themselves as the injured parties, making only oblique references to the relationship which had previously existed between Kedah and Selangor and indeed claiming that the wedding had never occurred at all. When Light wrote to Hastings in January 1772, he informed the Governor that Sultan Muhammad had betrothed his son to the daughter of the ruler of Selangor, but, on Tengku Abdullah's arrival there, he had found "the Selangorese had given her to another husband. He then married the daughter of the Laksamana." Bonney, Kedah, p. 29, n. 12; B.M. Add. Ms. 29133, Light to Hastings, 17 Jan. 1772, foll. 9-9v.

12. The English were willing to join in the attack because of the murder of a compatriot in Kedah the previous year. There were also other Europeans, deserters and adventurers, "and others whose names are marked on their bare arms." They lived on a hill at the mouth of the Selangor River and were paid five reals a month. KA 3169, Secret, Schippers to Batavia, 16 March 1769, Encik Hussain's Report, 9 March 1769, foll. 288-289.

The employment of European mercenaries was an accepted practice among Indonesian rulers. When the Sultan of Bantam began to rebuild his navy in 1667, for example, he employed Englishmen as "shipwrights, officers, gunners, pilots and pursers." The Acehnese fleets in the late eighteenth century were similarly manned and commanded by Euro-

whose crews included a number of European mercenaries, had already sailed to Riau to combine with ships under Daeng Kemboja and from there they planned to leave and attack Kedah.¹³

For the Dutch as well as Perak, this new alliance raised again the spectre of a concerted Bugis attack, perhaps on Melaka itself. Daeng Kemboja, Raja Haji, and Sultan Salehuddin were now holding frequent meetings and showed increasing animosity towards the Company.¹⁴ Their alliance with a number of Kedah anak raja was also disturbing.¹⁵ These princes had failed in previous efforts to assert their claims and topple Tengku Abdullah, but now the opportunity had arisen to join forces with the Bugis. An expedition against Kedah would mean rewards for both. The Bugis would not only gain revenge but also the "plunder of all the Chooliahs and Chinese" if Sultan Mahammad's relatives were placed in control of the country.¹⁶ Each group was spurred on by the common goal of

12. (cont'd.)

- peans, mostly country traders or deserters from the various East India Companies. Bassett, "The British Country Trader," p. 10; Lee Kam Hing, "Foreigners in the Achehnese Court, 1760-1819," JMBRAS, LXIV, 1 (1970), 73.
13. KA 3169, Secret, Schippers to Batavia, 16 March 1769, foll. 289-290.
14. Ibid., foll. 282-283.
15. Ibid., fo. 289. It was said that "three princes, and one princess of the royal family and nobility of Kedah . . . have joined the Selangor party."
16. B.M. Add. Ms. 29133, fo. 9v. Bonney, Kedah, p. 31, has discussed at length the reasons for the Bugis attack. He has concluded that the reasons given by Raja Ali Haji in the Tuhfat al-Nafis were probably a justification after the event. Raja Ali Haji claimed that the ruler of Kedah owed the Bugis twelve bahara of dollars in payment for help given many years previously. There is some reason to believe the debt was a genuine one but it appears the immediate cause for the

revenge and profit, but to the Dutch the possibility of an attack on Kedah must have been disturbing, to say the least. What would happen to the delicate balance of power in the Straits if Sultan Muhammad Jiwa were deposed and Kedah became a Bugis-controlled state?

Sultan Mahmud, squeezed geographically and politically between the two hostile parties, watched events closely. In July 1769 he informed Resident de Wind that the ruler of Kedah and Selangor had now publicly declared war on each other, and he was afraid Perak would be involved. It would be only natural for the Bugis to stop en route to Kedah in order to restock their supplies of rice and betel and, because of the relationship between himself and Sultan Salehuddin, Sultan Mahmud felt he would not be able to refuse them entry. He had no desire to arouse Dutch suspicions, however, and proposed that instead of rebuilding the old kubu near Tanjung Putus, as he had previously done, he would erect a balai opposite Sungai Buluh, below the Company fort, where any royal visitor could be suitably welcomed.¹⁷ De Wind did not raise any objection to this, but his own fears were evident in his request that Melaka send another ship to patrol the river until the disputes between Selangor and Kedah had been settled. Both places were now "in a state of defense" and the Riau fleet had just arrived in Selangor.¹⁸

16. (cont'd.)

attack was the sense of insult felt by the Bugis when Tengku Abdullah deserted his wife, Raja Ali Haji, Tuhfat al Nafis, pp. 64-65, 160-161, 170-171; Andaya, The Kingdom of Johor, pp. 260-203.

17. KA 3196 OB 1771, de Wind to Schippers, 7 July 1769.

18. Ibid.

The enmity between Selangor and Kedah placed the tenuous friendship between Sultan Muhammad Jiwa and Sultan Mahmud in jeopardy. In October, 1769 de Wind sent Melaka a copy of a "recently written letter from the King of Kedah," in regard to the ulu Perak mines. Sultan Muhammad expressed his hope that the good relations between Kedah and Perak might continue, but he disclaimed any responsibility for developments in the mines in Rui and Indah. He said he only bought tin in Pulai, which was in his territory, although the tin itself did come from Perak. More humiliating was his implied criticism of the breakdown of Perak administration in the ulu. It was public knowledge, he said, that the revenues of the area no longer went to Sultan Mahmud, but the blame for this rested on the Perak ruler himself. "It would be better if my brother sent officers to Rui to collect the tin, and then my friend would truly know who lives there." If some order were restored again, the trade of both Kedah and Perak in this area would improve.¹⁹

With preparations for war continuing in Kedah and Selangor, there seemed little possibility that Perak would be able to remain uninvolved. Rumours of attacks flew everywhere: coupled with the reports of a Bugis invasion of Kedah was another rumour hinting at Terengganu's designs on Riau. There were also unsubstantiated stories of a Bugis attack on Melaka itself, and the VOC were anxious to rally all their allies, even those previously regarded as insignificant. Batavia did not forget the loyalty which Sultan Iskandar and Sultan Mahmud had shown towards the

19. Ibid., Letter from King of Kedah to Raja Muda, Raja Bendahara, Orang Kaya Besar and Paduka Maharaja, Oct. 1769.

Company, and Governor General van der Parra instructed Schippers "to cultivate the friendship of the Kings of Siak and Perak, as well as Terengganu."²⁰ On the other hand, Melaka was not completely unhappy at the feverish activity in Kedah and Selangor, and the Governor expressed the hope that this would keep the inhabitants of both states at home, thus cutting down on piracy.²¹

It was not until the middle of 1770 that the Bugis made any definite move. In November 1770 two Chinese returning from Kedah told the Dutch authorities that several months earlier Raja Haji and Raja Syed, the Raja Muda of Selangor, had sent a letter to Sultan Muhammad Jiwa announcing that they were going to attack Kedah and were already preparing their ships in Selangor. Immediately after receiving this letter, Sultan Muhammad made ready his kubu at the mouth of the river, and placed barriers across the entrance. He told the two Chinese that, should they meet Raja Haji en route to Melaka, they should tell him that Kedah was prepared. If Raja Haji did not come in a short space of time, Sultan Muhammad would himself attack Selangor.²²

Sultan Mahmud's fears of the previous year were now realised. In October word was received in Perak that Sultan Salehuddin was now ready

20. KA 3134 G.M. 1770, Batavia to Heeren XVII, 31 Dec. 1769, fo. 811.

21. KA 3199, Secret, Schippers to Batavia, 31 Jan. 1770, fo. 10.

22. KA 3229, Secret Melaka Resolutions, Report given by Chinese Ang Tun Kue and Lee Holim (sic), 22 Nov. 1770. Compare this with the description given in the Tuhfat al-Nafis: "Sultan Muhammad built a kubu at Betangu with all the cannon arranged and thousands of people inside with all their guns and many panglima . . . [there were] iron chains across the Kedah River which prevented perahu from entering. Raja Ali Haji, Tuhfat al-nafis, p. 171.

to leave Selangor. He had with him a fleet of one hundred ships, and de Wind informed Governor Schippers that the Kedah prince, Raja Nambang, still hopeful that his aspirations might be fulfilled, had left Perak to join the Bugis forces.²³ From Perak's viewpoint, the major reason for concern was a letter from Sultan Salehuddin to Sultan Mahmud, which announced that the Selangor ruler intended to visit Perak. He would leave his fleet anchored at Pulau Pangkor and come upriver with his brother, Raja Haji, in order to greet Sultan Mahmud and "ask his selamat (wishes) for this undertaking."²⁴

Sultan Mahmud, faced with a situation similar to that of four years before, made the same response. Despite the resident's protests, he was not prepared to insult the Bugis, and, with his express invitation, Sultan Salehuddin and Raja Haji sailed up the river, escorted by their complete entourage.²⁵ Through the mannered language of the Misa Melayu, we can feel again the awe with which the Bugis were regarded. The chronicler cannot help evincing some of the admiration which the semi-mythical figure of Raja Haji aroused, even in his own lifetime.

It is related that a certain Bugis chief, one Raja Haji, whom people call Pangeran, came from Riau to Selangor, the Yang di Pertuan of Selangor being a relative of his. There he agreed on ways to attack Kedah, and stopped at Perak on the way. He cast anchor just below the Dutch fort, and the Dutchmen trembled with fear when they saw how numerous his vessels were.

23. KA 3226 OB 1772, de Wind to Schippers, 9 Oct. 1770.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid., 22 Nov. 1770.

He said that he wanted to see the Raja of Perak, so the Laksamana and the Syahbandar went up the river to Pulau Besar Indra Mulia and presented themselves before the ruler with the information that he wanted an audience with His Majesty. They said that Raja Haji had a great number of perahu, about a hundred and twenty,²⁶ and asked for Sultan Mahmud's instructions, as they had heard that the Pangeran contemplated some evil design in Perak. Then Sultan Mahmud said, "Let him come up the river; I have no fear or apprehension at all." At the same time His Majesty ordered that all his nobles and hulubalang and people should be gathered, fully equipped with their weapons. When they were all assembled at Pulau Besar Indra Mulia, the Pangeran came up the river as far as Teluk Penadak²⁷ and the river was crowded with vessels from bank to bank. Then His Majesty said, "Bring up the Pangeran to see me." So he was brought up by the Laksamana and the Syahbandar and entered the presence of Sultan Mahmud Syah with the Raja of Selangor. And when he looked upon the face of the ruler, he was seized with great fear and trepidation, which increased when he saw the grandeur of His Majesty and the appearance of the hulubalang. After that he ceased to entertain any further evil intentions against the ruler of Perak.²⁸

While the Dutch are frightened and cowardly the Raja of Perak is brave and utterly fearless, a ruler full of confidence and self assurance, whose greatness asserts his superiority in the face of these foreigners. But this impression is hardly borne out by Dutch records. Against the Malay account of feasting and entertainment enjoyed by all the nobles and

26. According to Dutch sources, there was a fleet of one hundred ships outside and de Wind said about seventy ships came up the river. KA 3229, Secret Melaka Resolutions, Report by Chinese, 22 Nov. 1770; KA 3226 OB 1772, de Wind to Schippers, 22 Nov. 1770. Winstedt's romanisation has twenty ships (Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 190) whereas the Ms. has 120 (Hs. Kon. Inst. 632, fo. 100).
27. Teluk Penadak is near Kota Lumut on the left side of the Perak River. The Hikayat Negeri Johor notes that Raja Haji stayed here for seven days and a son was born to him there. Ismail, Hikayat Negeri Johor, p. 107.
28. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, pp. 190-191.

court attendants, can be placed the more poignant picture given by the Dutch resident. "The subjects of this realm," wrote de Wind to Melaka, "lament over the wanton destruction that the Buginese rabble wreak on their fields and vegetable gardens and over the seizure of their slaves."²⁹

Moreover, Sultan Mahmud's misgivings concerning the Bugis visit were soon justified. It was not long before the basic purpose was made clear, for Raja Haji demanded a tangible sign of the selamat in the form of material help.³⁰ The prospect of direct Perak involvement in an attack on Kedah aroused consternation in Melaka, but the Governor felt his hands were tied. As he explained to de Wind,

The present time is not one in which to remonstrate with the king or his nobles about an affair of this nature, much less express our opinions concerning it.

Schippers had not forgotten Sultan Iskandar's insistence that affairs unrelated to the collection of tin were of no concern to the Dutch. The Governor realised full well that the Dutch had no right to object to Perak's association with the Bugis. Sultan Mahmud could justifiably answer, as his brother had done in 1765, that "he alone is master in his kingdom and over his subjects and is not responsible nor does he have to account to anyone else in any way."³¹

De Wind was ordered, however, to "insinuate himself into the dis-

29. KA 3226 OB 1772, de Wind to Schippers, 22 Nov. 1770.

30. KA 3229, Secret Melaka Resolutions, Report given by Chinese, 22 Nov. 1770.

31. KA 3226 OB 1772, Schippers to de Wind, 11 Dec. 1770.

cussions" and to use all possible means to persuade Sultan Mahmud against continued involvement with Kedah and Selangor. Schippers, with some discernment, felt that Perak could well be caught up in a stream of events which its ruler could not control. "His Highness and his nobles would be better advised to work towards a re-establishment of peace between the quarrelling parties, since further disputes and wars can only hinder trade and shipping and will result in harm to neighbouring countries."³²

The resident's arguments were in vain, for Sultan Mahmud considered he had little choice but to comply with Raja Haji's requests. There were about a hundred Bugis vessels anchored in the river, all fully equipped for war, and his subjects were so afraid that they dared not venture outside the kuala.³³ The Dutch were equally apprehensive. De Wind had been specifically told not to interfere with the Bugis so that there would be no excuse for them to attack Company ships or VOC employees or, indeed, commit violence of any kind.³⁴ In the face of this formidable Bugis fleet, led by Raja Haji himself, Perak's fundamental weakness was exposed. Sultan Mahmud would have realised the futility of relying on the small Dutch contingent to protect him against any Bugis hostility, especially as there was no hope of help arriving from Melaka. Furthermore, four years earlier he had promised he would assist Selangor if it were attacked and he was now being called on to honour his word.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid., de Wind to Schippers, 9 Oct. 1770; 22 Nov. 1770.

34. KA 3226 OB 1772, Schippers to de Wind, 11 Dec. 1770.

Sultan Mahmud may also have considered that he himself might gain from participation in an invasion of Kedah. Sultan Muhammad Jiwa and his subjects had effectively usurped the Kerian district as well as the revenue from the ulu mines along the border. If the Bugis were victorious, Perak might well regain its former control in these rich tin areas.

For any or perhaps all of these reasons, Sultan Mahmud agreed to assist Raja Haji. Several Perak ships were fitted out under the leadership of the Orang Kaya Besar and the Raja Kecil Bungsu. To forestall Dutch objections, Resident de Wind was told that these vessels were intended merely to carry envoys, a mediating mission which would try to bring the two factions together and prevent the outbreak of fighting.³⁵ That this was for Dutch consumption only is seen clearly in the Misa Melayu which states specifically that "the Raja of Selangor was going to join his brother" in order to attack Kedah. "Then Sultan Mahmud Syah told his youngest brother, called Raja Kecil Bungsu, to go with the Sultan of Selangor."³⁶

The second demand made by Raja Haji was particularly onerous, but Sultan Mahmud was equally unable to refuse it. The Bugis leader proposed that his brother should marry the daughter of Raja Culan, the Raja Bendahara, and thus cement the alliance between the two states. When recounting this episode, the Misa Melayu presents it less as a demand to

35. Ibid., de Wind to Schippers, 22 Nov. 1770. Governor Schippers did not believe this fully, but felt the outfitting of ships was motivated partly through fear and partly through self-interest. Ibid., Schippers to de Wind, 11 Dec. 1770; KA 3229, Secret, Schippers to Batavia, 11 Feb. 1771, fo. 4.

36. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 191.

which Perak was forced to accede that a concession granted in return for the Bugis withdrawal.

Raja Haji had not been in Perak for very long when he proposed a marriage between the Yang di Pertuan of Selangor and Sultan Mahmud's niece, according to adat. His Majesty agreed to the wishes of the Pangeran. A short time later he requested that the marriage be performed, and this was put to Sultan Mahmud by the orang besar. His Majesty was very angry, and said, "If all the perahu of the Pangeran do not leave Perak, our child shall not marry the Raja of Selangor." The fact that His Majesty was very angry was reported to the Pangeran, and he left with all his perahu. There remained only three perahu belonging to the Yang di Pertuan of Selangor.³⁷

Dutch sources support this picture of a precipitate betrothal, negotiations for which were conducted with unseemly haste. On November 5, after he had been in Perak only eighteen days, Raja Haji sailed out with his fleet, joining another force under the command of Raja Syed of Selangor which was anchored at Pulau Pangkor.³⁸ The relief with which the people of Perak watched him leave is summed up tersely in the Silsilah Raja-Raja Perak: "The army of Pangeran Raja Bugis entered Perak to menghadap the ruler, but with the help of God most high, and the daulat of His Majesty, no evil or misfortune came to the ruler or to the people of Perak."³⁹ Sultan Salehuddin, the Resident reported, stayed behind for a time while he and Sultan Mahmud renewed the vows they had made previously, swearing that they would not deviate from their former agreement and would aid

37. Ibid.

38. KA 3226 OB 1772, de Wind to Schippers, 22 Nov. 1770. The entire fleet now consisted of about two hundred ships. KA 3229, Secret, Schippers to Batavia, 11 Feb. 1771, fo. 2.

39. Silsilah Raja-Raja Perak, fol. 36A, lines 8-11.

each other in time of attack.⁴⁰ The daughter of the Raja Bendahara was married to Sultan Salehuddin and, according to the Misa Melayu, everything was conducted as dictated by "the adat of great rulers." Arrangements were also set in motion for the wedding of Raja Syarifah, Sultan Salehuddin's daughter, and the grandson of Sultan Mahmud, the fulfilment of the betrothal made in 1766.⁴¹

On December 31, after his wedding, Sultan Salehuddin left Perak with his own fleet and the six ships which Sultan Mahmud had contributed. It was widely believed that, after Kedah had been attacked, he would return to claim his wife and take her to Beruas or Bernam where he would build a place for her to live.⁴² It was also rumoured that he would be accompanied by his brother, Raja Haji, a prospect which filled the people of Perak with alarm.⁴³ This alarm would have been the greater in February 1771 when news was received in Perak of the destruction wrought by the Bugis in Kedah.⁴⁴

The Tuhfat al Nafis depicts the invasion as resulting in a great Bugis victory, a tribute to the prowess of Raja Ali Haji's ancestor, Raja Haji.⁴⁵ In fact, while the havoc in Kedah was widespread, the

40. KA 3252 OB 1773, de Wind to Schippers, 27 March 1771.

41. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 191; KA 3226 OB 1772, de Wind to Schippers, 22 Nov. and 19 Dec. 1770.

42. KA 3252 OB 1773, de Wind to Schippers, 8 Jan. 1771.

43. KA 3226 OB 1772, de Wind to Schippers, 22 Nov. 1770.

44. KA 3229, Secret, Schippers to Batavia, 11 Feb. 1771, fo. 3; KA 3252 OB 1773, de Wind to Schippers, 1 Feb. 1771.

45. Raja Ali Haji, Tuhfat al Nafis, pp. 171-174.

triumph of the Bugis was not so complete, nor the battle so heroic, as this account would have us believe. At the kuala itself Kedah offered little resistance, and two years later Edward Monckton was told that "three hundred brass cannon had been taken out of the fort by the Selangorese with not one shot fired at them."⁴⁶ At Anak Bukit, however, the Kedah forces regrouped and drove the Bugis back. Raja Haji lost four or five of his best panglima, besides a number of his men, "not so much in action as in plundering."⁴⁷ Some of his followers had even tried to escape with their booty and Raja Haji, fearing he might be deserted by his own people, hung chains across the river to prevent their escape.⁴⁸

Although support for the Bugis-backed rebellion was extensive, the combined forces of the anak raja and Raja Haji could not overcome those of Sultan Muhammad. The fighting lasted for over three months, but by the end of March the Bugis were forced to withdraw because of loss of men.⁴⁹ Together with their Kedah allies they retreated to Larut, where they were reported to be pirating.⁵⁰ Raja Haji and Sultan Salehuddin did not come to Perak again, as had been feared, but continued on to Bernam with some of the Kedah anak raja, foremost among whom was

46. KA 3252 OB 1773, de Wind to Schippers, 1 Feb. 1771; SFR G35/15 Monckton to du Pre, 22 April 1772 (FSGCP 25 June 1772), fo. 97.

47. KA 3252 OB 1772, de Wind to Schippers, 1 Feb. 1771. See also Raja Ali Haji, Tuhfat al-Nafis, p. 173.

48. KA 3229, Secret, Schippers to Batavia, 11 Feb. 1771, fo. 10.

49. KA 3252 OB 1773, de Wind to Schippers, 27 March 1771.

50. SSR G34/2, Light to Cornwallis, 12 Sept. 1786 (FWCP 13 Dec. 1786), fo. 161; KA 3252 OB 1773, de Wind to Schippers, 5 Sept. 1771; B.M. Add. Ms. 29133, fo. 9v.

Datuk Engku Mangku Putera.⁵¹ In Bernam Raja Haji arranged two marriages, intended to demonstrate not only Bugis solidarity but also to make it apparent that the Kedah anak raja were still his allies. The younger son of Sultan Salehuddin married a daughter of Raja Haji and Sultan Salehuddin's elder son, Raja Ibrahim (already married to a daughter of Daeng Kemboja) married a daughter of Engku Mangku Putera.⁵²

This elaborate alliance system based on marriage was of key importance in Malay politics, forming a tight web of relationships in which Perak was now enmeshed. The Raja Bendahara's daughter was a wife of the Raja of Selangor, and the latter's daughter was betrothed to Sultan Mahmud's grandson. This in turn meant that Sultan Mahmud was related to Raja Haji and Daeng Kemboja of Riau. By virtue of his alliance with Sultan Salehuddin, Sultan Mahmud was also drawn into a relationship with the Kedah anak raja, and was thus an enemy of Sultan Muhammad Jiwa. There was no possibility of being friends with both, for neither Sultan Muhammad nor his son could forget the role that their relatives, the Kedah anak raja, had played. The exposure of the intense factionalism within Kedah drew a response from all commentators, be they Dutch, English, Malay or Bugis.⁵³ A year later, Francis Light was told that "the

51. KA 3252 OB 1773, de Wind to Schippers, 10 June 1771. The Tuhfat al-Nafis lists Tengku Long Putera as being among this party, but according to Dutch sources he did not come until later. Raja Ali Haji, Tuhfat al-Nafis, p. 175; see below, n. 60.

52. Raja Ali Haji, Tuhfat al-Nafis, p. 175.

53. KA 3256, Secret, Schippers to Batavia, 15 Feb. 1772, fo. 2; Raja Ali Haji, Tuhfat al-Nafis, p. 174; B.M. Add. Ms. 29133 fo. 9v; Wan Yahya bin Wan Muhammad Taib, Salasilah atau Tawarikh Kerajaan Kedah (Alor Setar, 1911), p. 5.

Bugis came, the old king sent his relations to fight them, they joined the Bugis and marched in with them. The king was so struck with terror and rage to find himself betrayed, he fainted and was carried away to Perlis. His friends pressed him for leave to fight but he remained stupified without being able to speak for several days."⁵⁴ Sixteen years later, the role of Perak and Selangor in this conspiracy was still remembered with bitterness.⁵⁵

In 1766, when Sultan Mahmud sent a letter to Sultan Muhammad Jiwa urging the establishment of a new friendship between them, he could not have foreseen that he would have joined in a Bugis invasion of Kedah only five years later. Governor Schippers had, it appears, shown a greater perspicacity than had the ruler of Perak. The Dutchman had rightly feared that involvement with Selangor would lead Sultan Mahmud into a situation which he would not be able to handle. A reconciliation with Sultan Salehuddin, innocent enough in itself, had made Perak an unwilling participant in Bugis activities. Sultan Mahmud had now aroused the active animosity of Sultan Muhammad Jiwa and Tengku Abdullah of Kedah, undoing all the careful negotiations of five years before.

The attack on Kedah had once again demonstrated Bugis military strength and Sultan Mahmud must have appreciated anew the fate of those so foolish as to antagonise them. It was true that the Bugis and their

54. B.M. Add. Ms. 29133 fo. 9v. Sultan Muhammad Jiwa continued to live in Perlis after "the troubles," SFR G35/15, Monckton to du Pre, 22 April 1772 (FSGCP 25 June 1772), fo. 77.

55. SSR G34/1, Glass to Gov.-Gen., 1 Sept. 1787, fo. 365; SSR G34/2, Light to Cornwallis, 12 Sept. 1786 (FWCP 13 Dec. 1786), fo. 161.

allies had not gained their objective of displacing Tengku Abdullah and his father, but, on the other hand, the devastation of Kedah was almost total. The capital of Alor Setar was burned and the countryside razed. Governor Schippers reported that "After a great destruction . . . the Bugis left with their booty," and he predicted that it would be many years before Kedah would return to its former prosperity.⁵⁶ Light's comments are even more graphic.

The Bugis burned everything as they went and plundered without distinction, carrying away all the women and children they could find. They destroyed everything they could not carry with them, leaving not a shrub or fruit tree standing.⁵⁷

Nine years later, Raja Haji boasted that no ships went to Kedah from Coromandel since the Bugis attack, and even by 1787 the country had not recovered.⁵⁸ The condition of Kedah served to remind Malays once more of Bugis strength and the people of Perak must have recalled the bleak days of the early 1740's when they too had fallen victim to a Bugis invasion combined with civil war.

1771, the year after the Bugis attack on Kedah, was a crucial one for Sultan Mahmud, a year in which he was forced to think out his policy carefully and tread with the utmost wariness. He was now faced with the problem of maintaining his friendship with the Bugis, the patrons of the Kedah anak raja, without antagonising Sultan Muhammad Jiwa even further

56. KA 3256, Secret, Schippers to Batavia, 15 Feb. 1772, fo. 2.

57. B.M. Add. Ms. 29133 fo. 9v.

58. KA 3446 OB 1780, Raja Haji to de Bruyn, 4 March 1779; see above, n. 55.

or alienating the sizeable anti-Bugis faction within his own court. His attempts at reaching a compromise were clearly illustrated in July, when the Raja Kecil Bungsu returned to Perak from Larut, bringing with him a fleet of fifteen ships and a party of refugees from Kedah, the leader of whom was Tengku Long Putera, who appears in Kedah texts as a son of Sultan Muhammad by a gundik.⁵⁹ The Raja Kecil Bungsu had wanted to escort them to Selangor or Bernam himself, but such a public indication of Perak's favour brought strong opposition from the Raja Muda, who had always been unhappy about the alliance with Selangor. Despite protests from the Raja Kecil Bungsu, who was told to remain at court, the Kedah party was sent to join the other anak raja in Bernam under the less controversial escort of three hulubalang.⁶⁰ The independent attitude of the Raja Kecil Bungsu at this point gave a foretaste of the rebelliousness he was to exhibit in the following reign, but, although Dutch sources hint at widening rifts in court circles over the question of continued association with the Bugis, the Misa Melayu conveys a picture of confidence and harmony. "Kedah was defeated and the Pangeran and the Raja of Selangor each returned to their own country. Raja Kecil Bungsu entered

59. According to one account, Sultan Muhammad Jiwa had four sons. Tengku Long Putera and Tengku Anjang were the son of a gundik, while Tengku Abdullah and Tengku Dhiauddin were the sons of the Raja Paimasuri. Tengku Long Putera was given charge of everything directed with the land, including the power to give grants to people for rice fields. His title was therefore Raja Tanah (Lord of the Land). English reports, however, noted that Tengku Abdullah was also the son of a gundik and had replaced the legitimate heir in Sultan Muhammad's favour. Muhammad Hassan, Al Tarikh Salasilah, pp. 121-122; B.M. Add. Ms. 29133, fo. 9.

60. KA 3252 OB 1773, de Wind to Schippers, 5 Sept. 1772.

Perak and made obeisance to Sultan Mahmud Syah. His Majesty was very pleased to see his younger brother return victorious."⁶¹

There is no evidence that Sultan Mahmud shared the doubts of Governor Schippers and the Raja Muda concerning Perak's friendship with the Bugis. On the contrary, he appeared its most active advocate. In November 1771, a few months after the Bugis had returned from Kedah, he informed the new Resident, Johan Hensel, that he was sending an envoy to Sultan Salehuddin so that arrangements for the wedding between his grandson and Raja Syarifah of Selangor could be set in motion.⁶² The messengers arrived back on December 22 and four days later the court scribe came down to Tanjung Putus to tell Hensel that Melaka should be officially informed of the approaching marriage.⁶³ Sultan Salehuddin had said that the groom might live in whatever place he chose--Selangor, Bernam, or Perak--and his wife would go with him.⁶⁴ Sultan Mahmud still appeared convinced that his contract with the VOC would not conflict with the Selangor alliance. He assured Hensel that he himself intended to remain true to the treaty and he hoped Selangor would similarly become a friend of the Dutch.⁶⁵

Governor Schippers himself was not so optimistic. In a secret letter to the Governor General, he discussed the relationship which had

61. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 191.

62. KA 3252 OB 1773, de Wind and Hensel to Schippers, 29 Nov. 1771.

63. KA 3278 OB 1774, Hensel to Schippers, 10 Jan. 1772.

64. Ibid.

65. Ibid.

developed between Perak and Selangor and expressed his doubts about the future.

At present they appear as one family, but it is to be feared that in time the king of Perak shall complain bitterly about this close bond, since he himself is not equal to the Bugis strength. Apart from that, the Bugis nation is far too clever for him, for they seek (indeed, one might say they already have succeeded) to put Perak so far under their power that they can behave as complete masters and as cock of the walk. Nothing appears to stand in their way except the Company fort, and what will follow in the future is difficult to discern. It is very easy to be apprehensive if one remembers and reflects on the violent and hostile behaviour shown by the Bugis during recent years and also the fact that their proud and arrogant nature does not allow them to acknowledge any other authority or share it with others.⁶⁶

There were a number of nobles in the Perak court who would have agreed wholeheartedly with the Governor's basic arguments and who doubted the wisdom of Sultan Mahmud's policy, especially when it became obvious that Tengku Abdullah and his father were not prepared to let the destruction of Kedah go unpunished. Determined to root out the Bugis from their strongholds in Selangor and Riau, they found a natural ally in the ruler of Terengganu, Sultan Mansur Syah, and the latter's son-in-law, Raja Ismail of Siak.⁶⁷ Raja Ismail had reportedly planned an attack on Riau in 1770, while the Bugis were away in Selangor, although this had been abandoned because of Riau's strong defences.⁶⁸

66. KA 3256, Secret, Schippers to Batavia, 15 Feb. 1772, fo. 6.

67. KA 3045 OB 1766, 3rd Reg. Schippers to Batavia, 6 April 1765, fo. 6, reported the marriage between Sultan Mansur's daughter and Raja Ismail. Since then Raja Ismail had spent much of his time in Terengganu.

68. KA 3229, Secret, Schippers to Batavia, 11 Feb. 1771, fo. 3.

Bolstered by this new alliance, Sultan Muhammad Jiwa, who had several times refused treaties with Europeans,⁶⁹ made approaches to the English in mid-1771. He was willing to sign a commercial contract with them on the understanding that they would help him oust the Bugis. He told Edward Monckton, the English representative, that Daeng Kemboja was "very much disliked" by the Malays and said that his eviction from Riau would receive general approval. "The whole coast of Malaya and Sumatra would be well pleased to see Raja Ismail on the throne of Riau as he was descended from all their ancient kings."⁷⁰ By obtaining assistance from the English, Sultan Muhammad also hoped to regain the goods, especially the cannon which the Bugis had taken to Selangor and to avenge himself on those among his own relatives who had committed derhaka.⁷¹

69. After initially being refused aid by the English and French merchants at anchor in the Kedah River, Sultan Muhammad had applied to the Danes at Tranquebar. They had sent help, but when they arrived, they found the English already established there. Later, Sultan Muhammad wrote to the Chief of Cuddalore for permission to purchase guns and ammunition. He also attempted to gain help from Siam but "they were at war and could not help him." In 1768 Sultan Muhammad had refused an alliance with the French, but by 1771 he was willing to give trading concessions to any European nation which would help him. KA 3113 G.M. 1769, Batavia to Heeren XVII, 31 Dec. 1768, fo. 2463; SFR G35/15, Light to Jourdain, 12 Aug. 1771 (FSGCP 9 Feb. 1772), foll. 16-17; Monckton to du Pre, 22 April 1772 (FSGCP 25 June 1772), foll. 80-81; KA 3256, Secret, Schippers to Batavia, 15 Feb. 1772, fo. 3.

70. SFR G35/15 Monckton to du Pre, 22 April 1772 (FSGCP, 25 June 1772), fo. 85; King of Perak to Governor, foll. 101-102. Raja Ismail's descent could have been traced through his grandmother, Tengku Kamariah, the daughter of Sultan Abdul Jalil of Johor, or through his father, Sultan Muhammad, the son of Raja Kecil who was said to be the son of Sultan Mahmud of Johor, murdered in 1699.

71. See Bonney, Kedah, pp. 33-37 for a discussion of Sultan Muhammad's approaches to the English.

These plans for revenge did not omit Perak, and Sultan Muhammad told Monckton that he was prepared to send his own forces there "and make them bring all their tin to Quedah," thus gaining the monopoly which he had wanted for so many years.⁷² As a result of his negotiations with Monckton and Francis Light, Sultan Muhammad began his preparations for war, and in February it was reported that he was fitting out a fleet of a hundred ships.⁷³ The English had promised to send a vessel with the Kedah ships to blockade the Selangor river and order any English ships there to refrain from helping Kedah's enemies.⁷⁴

On February 6, Sultan Mahmud sent his scribe downstream to discuss the recent declaration of war between Kedah and Selangor, the involvement of the English, and the rumours of an attack on Perak itself. As a precaution, he asked for permission to rebuild the old kubu at the kuala, but predictably the resident decried this as totally unnecessary. His arguments that the Company would protect Perak were apparently convincing, for three days later Resident Hensel received a letter from "the three kings," saying that they had resolved to abide by their promise given to Cramer in 1761. The kubu would not be rebuilt, but, instead, they asked if a ship could be sent from Melaka to patrol the river as a guarantee against invasion.⁷⁵

72. KA 3278 OB 1774, Schippers to Hensel, 26 March 1772; SFR G35/15 Monckton to du Pre, 22 April 1772 (FSGCP 25 June 1772), fo. 87.

73. KA 3256, Secret, Schippers to Batavia, 15 Feb. 1772, fo. 2.

74. SFR G35/15, Enclosure in Monckton to du Pre, 22 April 1772 (FSGCP 25 June 1772), fo. 104; Bonney, Kedah, p. 45.

75. KA 3278 OB 1774, Hensel to Schippers, 20 Feb. 1772.

Although Governor Schippers remained convinced that Sultan Mahmud's alliance with Selangor was unwise, he appears to have been more rational in his attitude to the Bugis than many of his colleagues. As long as the Bugis were treated with caution, Schippers saw no reason why they should attack Perak or the Company post there. In May 1771, after the Bugis had retreated from Kedah, Governor Schippers had refused de Wind's request for reinforcements. In his view, there was insufficient reason to warrant the strengthening of the present contingent of forty men.⁷⁶ The message from Sultan Mahmud in the following March asking for a patrol ship to be sent from Melaka met a similar response. "The Perakese," wrote Schippers, "have no reason to fear as long as the Company stays there and we consider it unnecessary to despatch a ship."⁷⁷

The refusal of his request must have come as an unpleasant surprise to Sultan Mahmud. Perak's need for a strong and committed ally was particularly great at a time when the real attitudes and intentions of Sultan Muhammad and Tengku Abdullah were unknown. On the one hand, a letter phrased in most friendly terms was received from the old ruler of Kedah on March 10, 1772. Sultan Muhammad expressed a desire to see the continuation of the old friendship between Perak and Kedah so that trade might proceed more smoothly. He also swore that he now bore the

76. KA 3252 OB 1773, Schippers to de Wind, 18 May 1771. Fifteen men had been sent to Perak the previous December under the command of Johan Hensel, but this was principally to help with repairing of the lodge and the tin smelting. KA 3256 OB 1772, Schippers to de Wind, 11 Dec. 1770.

77. KA 3278 OB 1774, Schippers to Hensel, 26 March 1772.

Bugis no ill-will but recognised that the attack against Kedah was due to the actions of his own children.⁷⁸

The tenor of this letter, however, is in marked contrast to Sultan Muhammad's remarks to the English representatives and to the evidence of active plans for punishing Perak and wreaking vengeance on the Bugis.⁷⁹ It is not easy to guess what prompted Sultan Muhammad to write such a letter. It may have been intended to put Sultan Mahmud off guard so that any attack would take him unawares or to discourage an alliance between Sultan Mahmud and the Kedah anak raja. Sultan Muhammad Jiwa was certainly aware that his relatives who had fled with the Bugis were anxious to settle in Perak, and he possibly feared that Sultan Mahmud might lend his support to another invasion.⁸⁰ He need not have been afraid. The Kedah anak raja had been permitted to settle in Bernam, but Sultan Mahmud made it explicit he would not allow them to live anywhere within the ambience of the Perak court, much less aid them in any further opposition to the Kedah ruler. In April 1772, when one of their leaders, Engku Mangku Putera, asked for a refuge in Perak, the request was categorically refused. He and his son were told they must remain with the little community of exiles in Bernam.⁸¹

78. Ibid., Hensel to Schippers, 15 April 1772.

79. See above, n. 71.

80. It is also possible that Sultan Muhammad Jiwa hoped to court Sultan Mahmud's goodwill so that the Perak ruler would help him regain debts owed him by Perak's Paduka Raja. KA 3278 OB 1774, Hensel to Schippers, 17 June 1772, 12 Dec. 1772.

81. Ibid., Hensel to Schippers, 15 April 1772.

Even if Sultan Muhammad had written to the Perak ruler because of a genuine change of heart, it would have brought little alteration in Kedah's policy. He himself had lost any real grip on the government and, according to Monckton, Sultan Muhammad was virtually senile and "entirely governed by the person who speaks to him last."⁸² Power within the Kedah court was in the hands of his son, Tengku Abdullah, supported by a number of orang besar, all of whom opposed any further association with the English. It was reported that Sultan Muhammad was afraid of his son, felt himself beset by enemies, and did not entirely trust his ministers.⁸³ In these circumstances, it was Tengku Abdullah with whom Sultan Mahmud had to reckon, and the former never forgot the shame he had suffered at Bugis hands. Over a decade later, when Governor de Bruyn wrote asking for help against a combined attack from Riau and Selangor, Sultan Abdullah was more than willing to assist. "I cannot, and shall never, forget the humiliation that the Bugis have brought to me and my nobles and long to gain revenge."⁸⁴ This hatred was also directed at Sultan Mahmud, and in June of 1772 Tengku Abdullah issued an order that anyone from Perak entering the southern part of Kedah, which he governed, would be summarily put to death.⁸⁵

Such threats boded ill for Perak's future security when Tengku

82. SFR G35/15, Monckton to de Pre, 22 April 1771 (FSGCP 25 June 1772), fo. 82.

83. B.M. Add. Ms. 29133, foll. 10-11.

84. KA 3627 OB 1787, King of Kedah to de Bruyn, 29 July 1783.

85. KA 2378 OB 1774, Hensel to Schippers, 1 June 1772.

Abdullah succeeded. Unlike Schippers, Sultan Mahmud was convinced that there was a very real possibility of an attack by Kedah. No Company ship patrolled the river and no reinforcements had been sent to strengthen the garrison. Conscious of Perak's fundamental weakness, Sultan Mahmud was not reassured by Schippers' letters and therefore renewed his efforts to ensure himself of Bugis support. He had already, in fact, demonstrated the value he placed on the friendship in the previous January, when he had announced that he would go to Selangor himself to be present at the wedding of his grandson. In May preparations for the journey were begun and his subjects were ordered to make ready the ships.⁸⁶

Had this trip actually taken place, it would have been as momentous in its own way as Sultan Iskandar's trip to Larut. Sultan Mahmud's plans certainly demonstrated the degree to which the attitude of the Perak ruler towards the Company had changed. To this point, Sultan Mahmud, like Sultan Iskandar, had remained faithful to the contract even though he too had succeeded with a reputation of hostility towards the Dutch. Moreover, in contrast to the previous reign, Sultan Mahmud's dealings with the VOC were virtually free of the misunderstandings which had beset Company relations with his brother. This was partly due to the expansion of the contract itself and the fact that many inherent ambiguities had been clarified in the expanded agreements of 1753, 1759 and 1765. Secondly, although there was a chronic shortage of reals, this never reached the same proportions as before. Nor did the lower tin deliveries after 1767 concern the Dutch unduly, since the overall tin

86. Ibid., Hensel to Schippers, 10 Jan. 1772; 1 June 1772.

collection of the VOC now surpassed the Company's needs.⁸⁷ Sultan Mahmud's renewal of the treaty had not aroused any open opposition from prominent people in the Assembly and, in fact, the Company alliance was actively supported by the principal anak raja, the Raja Muda and the Raja Bendahara. Although they disagreed with Sultan Mahmud's favour towards the Bugis, their criticism never amounted to a challenge. Sultan Mahmud had inherited from his brother a court free of conspiracy and an assembly of relatively quiescent orang besar. There was no other contender for the throne and Sultan Mahmud even felt sufficiently confident to allow communication between Raja 'Alim, still exiled in Batavia, and his family in Perak.⁸⁸

The relatively harmonious relations between the Dutch and Sultan Mahmud were also due to the experience and diplomatic skill of Thomas Schippers, Governor of Melaka from 1764 until July 1772. Schippers had been in Company service since 1746 and had gained first hand knowledge of Perak through his visit as the Governor's representative in 1753. Relations between the Perak court and the Company had at that time reached a low ebb, but Schippers' tact and persuasiveness had succeeded in re-establishing the former friendship. Now, nearly two decades later, he proved himself a man of imagination and experience, with some understanding of the preoccupations and concerns of Malay rulers. Sensitive

87. Lewis, The Dutch East India Company, p. 98.

88. KA 3166 OB 1770, de Wind to Schippers, 5 March 1768; King of Perak to Schippers, rec'd. 17 March 1768; KA 3137 OB 1769, Schippers to Batavia, 28 March 1768, fo. 109; KA 3169, Secret Melaka Resolutions, 18 March 1768, fo. 85.

to the delicate position of the Company in Perak, Schippers was reluctant to interfere in relations between Sultan Mahmud and his neighbours. He also felt that the reputation of the Company was important and spoke of the necessity of maintaining "the honour of old Holland," even in negotiations with a small and relatively insignificant Malay negeri.⁸⁹

In December 1765, for example, when Sultan Mahmud complained that a former resident was indebted to one of his subjects, the case was heard in Melaka and a decision issued in favour of the Perak ruler.⁹⁰ Schippers was also willing to act as Sultan Mahmud's agent and buy goods for him in Melaka which were unobtainable in Perak--cannon, an iron scale, a ship suitable for transporting tin.⁹¹ This help was greatly appreciated, and Sultan Mahmud told the Governor that he would do his best to reciprocate through greater tin deliveries.⁹² In 1767, when de Wind complained of theft from his storeroom, Sultan Mahmud personally issued an edict that anyone found near the Company lodge after sundown would be immediately put to death.⁹³

Governor Schippers' sympathetic approach was reflected in his choice of a resident for the Perak post after the dismissal of Wiederholt in November 1766. Schippers had always stressed that it was crucial to

89. See below, p. 486 and n. 109.

90. KA 3078, Secret, Schippers to Batavia, 24 Dec. 1765, fo. 798.

91. KA 3104 OB 1768, King of Perak to Schippers, 28 Feb. 1766; KA 3075 OB 1767, de Wind to Schippers, 20 Aug. 1765.

92. KA 3137 OB 1769, King of Perak to Schippers, 21 June 1767.

93. Ibid., de Wind to Schippers, 29 March 1767.

retain the favour of the ruler and was extremely annoyed at the manner in which Wiederholt had handled the Raja Lumu affair, as well as his "imprudent and provoking conduct towards the king."⁹⁴ Nicolaas de Wind was chosen as a replacement specifically because of his "mind manner and ability," which Schippers hoped would improve the Company's standing in Perak.⁹⁵

The instructions given to de Wind after his appointment made Schippers' views explicit. While the new resident should never relax his vigilance, he should employ every means possible to ensure that Dutch dealings with Perak were carried out "on the basis of generosity, as experience has long since shown that a contract can only last a short time if the satisfaction of both sides is not borne in mind."⁹⁶ De Wind was to exercise care in dealing with Sultan Mahmud and his court and never step beyond the bounds of the authority delegated to him. He should gradually try and win over the trust of the Perak people by treating them in a gentle and friendly manner. If Sultan Mahmud should do anything which might redound to the disadvantage of the Company, de Wind should immediately remind him in a courteous way of the solemn treaty he had recently concluded with the VOC.⁹⁷

Because of the lack of a suitable replacement, de Wind remained in Perak for five years and gained considerable favour in the court.⁹⁸ A

94. KA 3104 OB 1768, Schippers to Batavia, 31 Jan. 1767, fo. 14.

95. Ibid.

96. KA 3104 OB 1768, Schippers' Instructions to de Wind, 18 Nov. 1766.

97. Ibid.

year after his arrival, he could proudly report that his deliberate efforts to ingratiate himself with the ruler had been successful and that Sultan Mahmud had been persuaded to deliver 27 bahara of tin on credit. Some of the other tin suppliers had followed suit, and this, said de Wind, was something his predecessors had not been able to achieve.⁹⁹ When de Wind finally left Perak in 1771, the court saw it as a real loss and the letter of commendation which followed him to Melaka was unique in the history of Perak's dealings with the Dutch.

Concerning the Captain, Resident Nicolaas de Wind, he has now been here in Perak for five years and during this time his advice and dealings have always been for the best. I had hoped that he would continue to remain here, but what can one do against the will of the Company?¹⁰⁰

Schippers selected the next resident with the same care that he had shown in his choice of de Wind. Johan Hensel had previously worked with de Wind in Perak and during his years of service in Perak also earned the respect and liking of the Perak Malays.¹⁰¹ For the greater

98. KA 3226 OB 1772, de Wind to Schippers, 9 Oct. 1770; Schippers to Batavia, 24 Oct. 1770, fo. 347.
99. KA 3137 OB 1769, de Wind to Schippers, 5 Sept. 1767. In 1751 van Heemskerck had noted that "the king will give nothing on credit." KA 2673 OB 1752 van Heemskerck to Batavia, 20 Feb. 1751, fo. 42. See also above, p. 344.
100. KA 3252 OB 1773, Letter from Paduka Sri Sultan Mahmud Syah to Schippers, 7 Nov. 1771.
101. Hensel had been sent to Perak in December 1770. KA 3226 OB 1772, Schippers to de Wind, 11 Dec. 1770. He was sent back in 1783 to renegotiate the Dutch return because of the liking shown for him by the Perak subjects. KA 3545, Secret, de Bruyn to Batavia, 14 March 1783, fo. 88. See also the praise given to Hensel by Sultan Alauddin, KA 3446 OB 1780, Sultan Alauddin to de Bruyn, 13 Sept. 1778.

part of his reign, therefore, Sultan Mahmud dealt with a Governor and residents who felt the Company's position depended on maintaining the ruler's good opinion. With this understanding, relations were generally amicable. The court's liking for de Wind and Hensel and their personal knowledge of Schippers meant that the latter's arguments in favour of a continued relationship between Perak and the VOC did not fall on deaf ears.

Since the Honourable Company has been in his [Sultan Mahmud's] country, he has governed his land and kingdom in peace and has never been disturbed by anyone from outside. During this time he has been unhindered in his constant enjoyment of the advantages of his country and this is still so. Merchants deal in his kingdom unafraid and yearly come to take away his elephants. If the Company should break up its fort, his land and people will be exposed to the rapacity of the Bugis and Minangkabau as before and he shall be left with an overabundance of tin and elephants, at least in regard to the latter. As for the former, he will simply have to take whatever is given him in payment. Thus, as long as the Honourable Company stays in his kingdom, he can be assured of a lasting peace and will be sheltered and protected from all these disasters.¹⁰²

Until the beginning of 1772, Sultan Mahmud would have seen no fundamental reason to doubt Schippers' assurances of continued Company protection. But now he felt Perak was threatened by an attack from Kedah and Dutch support did not seem to be forthcoming. The only alternative was to gain a guarantee that at least the Bugis would come to Perak's defence. It was with this aim that Sultan Mahmud announced his projected trip to Selangor.

There was good reason for Malay uncertainty concerning VOC commit-

¹⁰². KA 3104 OB 1768, Schippers' Instructions to de Wind, 18 Nov. 1766.

ment to the alliance. It had become clear that Schippers, for all his goodwill, could not provide the degree of protection that Sultan Mahmud desired. Melaka was so financially embarrassed that it was impossible even to send ships to cruise "unless the king himself bears the cost."¹⁰³ Melaka was not a wealthy town, and Schippers, as its Governor, was merely an executor of one area in an Asian-wide trading network. He had little influence in the meetings of the Heeren XVII in Amsterdam. As early as 1768 they had advocated a lowering of the tin prices, although at the time Schippers had argued against this, saying it was not in the best interests of the Company.¹⁰⁴ The value of maintaining a comptoir in Perak was also questioned, since the tin obtained there was not as cheap as that from Palembang, Bangka and Ujung Salang. The costs of the Perak post were high and at present the Company had a surplus of tin. To Governor-General van der Parra in Batavia, the little post in Perak simply appeared a drain on VOC finances. In a letter to Schippers in April 1771, he suggested that the post be withdrawn and the contract revoked.¹⁰⁵

Such a proposal aroused an immediate response from Schippers and the Melaka Council. To them, Perak remained of some importance. After 1767 Melaka's finances had shown a marked improvement, largely because the surplus tin not required by Batavia could be sold to merchants calling at Melaka for a profit of 26 per cent.¹⁰⁶ The town was now financial-

103. KA 3278 OB 1774, Schippers to Hensel, 26 March 1772.

104. KA 3196 OB 1771, Extract from Heeren XVII to Batavia, 28 Sept. 1768 and Melaka's comments, fo. 76.

105. KA 982, Secret, Batavia to Schippers, 30 April 1771, foll. 22-23.

ly self-supporting, but this was due principally to the flow of surplus tin which would be cut off if the contract with Perak were revoked.

In addition, the post in Perak was felt to be vital strategically. In answer to van der Parra's arguments, Governor Schippers protested that, if the comptoir were closed, the Bugis would have succeeded in their aim at evicting the VOC and would undoubtedly hasten to assume control of the tin trade. Alternatively, the English or some other nation might try to establish themselves there. The Governor said flatly that he "dare not proceed" with the disbanding of the post at this juncture.¹⁰⁷

Van der Parra would have had no compunction about an immediate and unilateral retraction of the treaty but Schippers argued strongly against such a step. Possibly remembering Sultan Mahmud's description of the treaty as "an inheritance which is left to me, of which I cannot alter a single word"¹⁰⁸ Schippers stressed that any sudden abrogation of the contract would certainly harm the Company's reputation. He acknowledged the generally accepted Dutch view that "in all treaties and especially a commercial treaty, the given word need not nowadays be maintained any longer than is compatible with the interests of the Company" but went on to emphasise that this would be "against the equity of Your Honours' dealings and opposed to the reputation of old Holland." He suggested that, before any final step were taken, the Company should make one more attempt to obtain a lowering of the tin price.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶. Lewis, The Dutch East India Company, pp. 98-100.

¹⁰⁷. KA 3256, Secret, Schippers to Batavia, 15 Feb. 1772, foll. 6-8.

¹⁰⁸. KA 3075 OB 1767, King of Perak to Schippers, 4 Nov. 1765; KA 3252 OB 1773, King of Perak to Schippers, rec'd. 18 June 1771.

Schippers' arguments were convincing and van der Parra agreed that the post in Perak should remain on the condition that costs were reduced. Accordingly, in July 1772 Anthony Werndly was again sent to Perak, this time to renegotiate the cost of the tin. Despite the elaborate presents sent to Sultan Mahmud and his Council with the aim of securing their favour, Werndly's efforts were totally unsuccessful. The Perak ruler, now assured of an alternative market and an alternative ally in Selangor was not prepared to make any change at all in the existing treaty. In his reply to Schippers, he wrote:

The Commissioner, while conveying my friend's warm greetings, asked me for a slight lowering in the price of tin. The Honourable Company has agreed to the present contract, which I have also observed until the present time, because I inherited it from my predecessor and have therefore never deviated from it. I do not dare reduce or extend something which has been so clearly negotiated and which came to me as heritage and a remembrance.¹¹⁰

Governor Schippers was not easily deterred, especially when Resident Hensel wrote in October to say that the Raja Muda and Raja Bendahara had not given an outright rejection to the Dutch proposal for a lower tin price.¹¹¹ The following January, therefore, Hensel was instructed to put the Company's case more forcibly and convince Sultan Mahmud that, if the price were not reduced, the VOC would abandon its post in Perak.¹¹²

109. KA 3256, Secret, Schippers to Batavia, 15 Feb. 1772, foll. 8-10.

110. KA 3278 OB 1774, King of Perak to Schippers, rec'd. 21 Aug. 1772.

111. KA 3306 OB 1775, Crans to Hensel, 11. Jan. 1773.

112. Ibid.

A severe illness contracted by Sultan Mahmud, which had delayed his departure for Selangor, also delayed any meeting with Hensel, until finally an audience was arranged in early February 1773. The resident then broached the question of the tin price and put forward the Company's ultimatum.¹¹³

Hensel's account of the ensuing discussion is intriguing because it demonstrates two vastly different views of what the alliance between the Company and Perak was. To the Dutch, the document itself was merely a symbol of the contract, but to Sultan Mahmud, brought up in a society which regarded the written word with veneration, the document was the contract. To introduce changes in the document meant that the actual contract would be broken. The Company saw an alteration in the wording or in this case, the price, as a minor matter; but whereas Hensel spoke of lowering the tin price, Sultan Mahmud saw the contract itself threatened.

The king answered me that he would rather lose his head than see the contract which had been concluded between himself and the Honorable Company broken [i.e., see the tin price lowered]. The king repeated, "There sit my two brothers, they are of the same sentiment as myself." But the Young King [Raja Muda] and the Raja Bendahara gave no answer to that.¹¹⁴

The difference of opinion between Sultan Mahmud and the other princes became even more apparent as the audience continued.

The Young King said that I should write to Your Excellencies and convey the friendly greetings of both

113. Ibid., Hensel to Crans, 12 Feb. 1773.

114. Ibid.

himself and the Raja Bendahara and say that I had personally heard that the Older King was not inclined to decrease the tin price. They therefore asked Your Excellencies that they and their subjects not be embarrassed through lack of money [i.e., lack of reals] as long as the Company stayed in their kingdom and the contract signed by the Older King was with Your Excellencies and that of the Company here. However, should it happen that Your Excellencies' pleasure was to abandon the lodge, the two kings, in a very friendly manner, asked that they be told a short time before. . . . They also requested that when I wrote to Your Excellencies, I should not mention anything that would appear to their kingdom's disadvantage.¹¹⁵

Hensel attempted once more to persuade Sultan Mahmud to agree to a change in the tin price.

He answered No, that his predecessors had first made the contract and he could not break it. The Young King and the Raja Bendahara said that if the Older King's contract was sent back by Your Excellencies, they hoped that you would send a Commissioner with it.¹¹⁶

The Raja Muda and Raja Bendahara thus headed a faction which favoured the revision of the contract if this were necessary to keep the Dutch post in Perak. Their support heartened the new Governor, Jan Crans, and he made continued efforts to persuade Sultan Mahmud to give his assent to the new terms.¹¹⁷ No arguments could move him, however, although he repeatedly expressed his regret at the prospect of the Dutch departure and asked that the VOC remain in Perak until his death. After this, he said, his successor could renew the contract, if he so wished.

^{115.} Ibid.

^{116.} Ibid.

^{117.} Ibid., Crans to Hensel, 19 April 1773; 4 July 1773.

In May 1773 he sent another message through his mata-mata to voice his refusal once again.

He was very old and, when he goes to sleep in the evening, he does not know if he will still be living the next morning. After his death his subjects might curse him because he had broken the contract made by his predecessors between the Company and this kingdom.¹¹⁸

Although the Raja Muda and some of the other nobles had used all possible means to persuade Sultan Mahmud to agree to the proposed price of 30 reals, he continued to tell them that they could do what they pleased when he was dead but that he would not agree to any reduction during his lifetime.¹¹⁹

Sultan Mahmud's doubts as to Company commitment to Perak's defence had already pushed him towards the Bugis, and Dutch insistence on renegotiation of the tin prices brought matters to a head. The choice clearly lay between the Company, which offered lower tin prices but had an honourable record in its dealings with Perak, and the Bugis who, despite their previous failings, promised a profitable market and a lasting alliance. When a choice was finally forced on him, Sultan Mahmud reluctantly decided to relinquish the contract and turn instead to Selangor. Here, he believed, he could find both purchasers for his tin and protection for his country.

Having accepted the fact of the Company withdrawal, Sultan Mahmud devoted the last months of his life to a whole-hearted effort to cement

¹¹⁸. KA 3306 OB 1775, Hensel to Crans, 21 May 1773.

¹¹⁹. Ibid.

the alliance with Selangor through the marriage of his grandson and Sultan Salehuddin's daughter. His health was already failing and Sultan Mahmud was aware that, if he died with the marriage uncelebrated, the Raja Muda would do his best to avoid the commitment. On June 14, the Orang Kaya Besar, the old and faithful servant on whom Sultan Iskandar had depended and who now stood by Sultan Mahmud, was despatched with a letter to the Selangor ruler. This contained the information that Sultan Mahmud wished everything to proceed as planned, although he was too ill to be personally present. He suggested that his grandson go to Selangor alone, or that Sultan Salehuddin come to Perak to fetch him.¹²⁰

Sultan Mahmud's fears concerning his imminent death were justified. Two days after the Orang Kaya Besar had passed the fort, news was received that the ruler was mortally ill, and the Orang Kaya Besar was hurriedly recalled from his anchorage at the mouth of the river. At two o'clock on the afternoon of June 17, the scribe came to the resident with a message that Sultan Mahmud "had returned to the mercy of God most high, exchanging this transitory world for that of the eternal."¹²¹ The Misa Melayu takes up the story:

And after His Majesty died, a great clamour broke out among the inhabitants of the country, increased by the sound of His Majesty's gongs. All the people of negeri Perak gathered, small and great, old and young, male and female, and there was such noise because of the wailing and the beating of drums. The men shaved their heads, as did the women, cutting off their hair. This is the adat when rulers die.¹²²

120. KA 3306 OB 1775, Hensel to Crans, 6 July 1773.

121. Ibid.

The coffin was carried in a procession led by the Raja Bendahara and all the orang besar, and the Raja Muda assumed control of the government of Perak. Sultan Mahmud was then interred, being given the posthumous name of al-Marhum Muda.¹²³

A week after Sultan Mahmud's death, on June 23rd, the scribe again appeared at the fort to inform Hensel that the Raja Muda had been elected as the new ruler, with the title Sultan Alauddin Mansur Syah Iskandar Muda Khalifatu'r Rahim.¹²⁴

122. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 192.

123. Ibid.

124. KA 3306 OB 1775, Hensel to Crans, 6 July 1773; King of Perak and nobles to Crans, rec'd. 21 July 1773.

Chapter VIII

EIGHT TROUBLED YEARS, 1773-1781

Sultan Alauddin was a man already past middle age when he succeeded as ruler of Perak.¹ The Dutch alliance was now thirty years old, and through most of his adult life Sultan Alauddin had watched first his uncle and then his two brothers in their dealings with the VOC. Since his appointment as Raja Bendahara during Sultan Iskandar's reign, Sultan Alauddin had been closely associated with the administration and would have been familiar with all the arguments for and against the Dutch contract. He would similarly have had an opportunity to compare and evaluate the differing policies of Sultan Iskandar and Sultan Mahmud, under whom he had served his political apprenticeship. He must have been struck by the contrast between the relative tranquillity of the earlier reign and the potentially dangerous situation into which Perak had been thrust as a result of Sultan Mahmud's decision to cultivate the Selangor Bugis. The degree to which Sultan Alauddin was prepared to support the treaty, often in the face of strong opposition from his court, suggests that he had taken Sultan Iskandar as his model. In less than twenty years the zaman celebrated in the Misa Melayu had come to be recognised as a high point in Perak's history.

1. Ten years later Sultan Alauddin referred to himself as "an old man."
KA 3627 OB 1787, King of Perak to de Bruyn, 5 Nov. 1783.

As Raja Bendahara, Raja Alauddin had initially regarded the Dutch presence as an intrusion, but the final years of Sultan Iskandar's reign had convinced him of the contract's worth. As Raja Muda under Sultan Mahmud, he had been critical of the association with the Selangor Bugis and had spoken out openly in favour of the alliance. In 1773, when he in turn succeeded as ruler, his views had not altered. There was as yet no question of turning to another European government, for, as Edward Monckton had remarked the previous year, the Malay states in the area regarded the Dutch as the only powerful nation in the eastern seas,² and this was doubly true after the ignominious English withdrawal from Kedah in late 1772.³ The Kompeni Holanda, despite the setbacks it had suffered, was still viewed with respect as the ruler of Melaka and Batavia. Sultan Alauddin therefore indicated he was willing to renew the contract and lower the tin price in order to maintain the VOC alliance. On July 5, after the twenty days of mourning were completed and after he had been formally installed, Sultan Alauddin sent two small baluk to Melaka to give Governor Crans notice of his accession.⁴ Almost three weeks later

2. SFR G35/15, Monckton to du Pre, 12 April 1772 (FSGCP 25 June 1772), fo. 80.

3. English sources indicate that Sultan Muhammad Jiwa refused to continue any further negotiations with the English after their support for an expedition against Selangor was withdrawn and that the English left sometime after July 1772. SFR G35/15, Monckton to du Pre, 13 Aug. 1772 (FSGCP Oct. 1772), fo. 146; Bonney, Kedah, pp. 49-50. Governor Crans reported that the English became unpopular in Kedah because of the manner in which they treated Kedah women. Seven or eight Malays were killed in a clash and the English were finally ordered to leave in November. Sultan Muhammad compensated them for the money they had expended in setting up a post. KA 3281 OB 1774, Crans to Batavia, 9 Jan. 1773; Report given by Lt. Michael Zanden, 21 Dec. 1772, foll. 189-192.

Hensel was granted an audience and Sultan Alauddin then asked that an envoy be sent to Perak so that a new contract could be drawn up.⁵

This decision, made in spite of protests from many members of the Perak Assembly, was a clear demonstration of the new ruler's resolve. There were a number of men within the court circle who disapproved of any reduction in the tin price. With some justification they could claim that it was they, rather than the ruler, who would suffer, since Sultan Alauddin still retained two reals toll on each bahara. Even formerly stalwart supporters of the contract objected when they realised that its maintenance would, for them, entail a substantial financial loss. The old Orang Kaya Besar, for example, who had been an influential minister since 1746 and a faithful servant of three rulers, argued that "We should get rid of the Company as Marhum would have done were he still living."⁶ The new Raja Muda, Raja Culan, was equally unhappy. Previously a warm admirer of Sultan Iskandar's policy and a friend of the Company, he had strongly urged the Dutch to remain in Perak.⁷ He was not pleased, however, to learn of the sacrifice this would involve.⁸

Though a royal mission had already been sent to Melaka, discussions for and against renewal of the treaty continued. Those who opposed

4. KA 3306 OB 1775, Letter from King and Nobles of Perak to Crans, rec'd. 21 July 1773; Arriving Ships, 19 July 1773.

5. Ibid., Hensel to Crans, 25 July 1773.

6. Ibid.

7. See pp. 487-490.

8. KA 3306 OB 1775, Werndly's Day Register, under 20 Dec. 1773.

the alliance, or at least the lowering of the tin price, found added reason for resentment in the fact that once again there were no reals at the Company post. This shortage had resulted in a climate of frustration and annoyance in which arguments against renewal found active supporters, even among those who would normally have favoured the contract. Sultan Alauddin himself realised the urgency of the situation. Immediately after his brother's death he had asked for ten thousand reals to be sent to Perak "since there is still a great deal of tin in store in his kingdom and his subjects can no longer be left without money for their tin."⁹ This request was repeated on July 24 when Hensel went to court, and the resident was told that "his subjects are very displeased because they can get no money for their tin."¹⁰ In a situation where feeling against the Dutch was running high, there would have been many who looked with envy towards Selangor, where English traders paid high prices and where reals were never lacking.

The significance of these developments was not lost on the ruler of Selangor himself, who reacted quickly to news of the death of Sultan Mahmud. Sultan Salehuddin realised that the new Perak ruler would not favour a continuation of the Bugis alliance, but he was also aware that the former treaty was now in abeyance. If he moved at once he might be able to influence the debates in the Perak Assembly in the interregnum before Melaka sent an envoy. In the face of strong opposition to the contract, and with the additional presence of the Selangor ruler, Sultan Alauddin could well be persuaded to change his mind.

9. Ibid., Hensel to Crans, 6 July 1773.

When Hensel wrote to Governor Crans on July 25, reports had already been received that Sultan Salehuddin was again planning to come to Perak in person.¹¹ Arriving ten days later, with a fleet of fourteen baluk, he wasted no time in making the purpose of his visit clear. He told Sultan Alauddin that there was no necessity for the contract with the Dutch to be renewed, because Selangor was ready to take over the role of the Company and buy Perak tin for the old price of 34 reals. By this arrangement Sultan Alauddin's subjects would not suffer the loss which acceptance of present Dutch terms would involve. Furthermore, the Selangor ruler promised that there would be no problems of transportation or supply of cash, for Selangor always had reals on hand and, when sufficient tin had been delivered in Perak, he would send a ship to collect it.

To many tin suppliers, this proposal would have appeared a vast improvement on the terms of the Dutch contract, but Sultan Alauddin could not be persuaded to agree. Once again he publicly demonstrated his conviction that it was the Company alliance which would yield Perak the most benefits. His decision made, Sultan Alauddin politely but firmly explained to the Selangor ruler that he had given his word to the Governor and would not break it.¹²

This royal commitment to the contract is reminiscent of the days of Sultan Iskandar, when the Perak ruler had openly refused to join a

10. Ibid., 25 July, 1773.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid., 10 Oct. 1773.

Bugis-sponsored alliance.¹³ But Sultan Mahmud's foray into diplomacy meant that Perak's situation in 1773 was very different from that of twenty years before. Sultan Alauddin could not afford to ignore or antagonise his powerful neighbours, as his elder brother had done. In spite of the resident's protests, it was announced that a marriage alliance with Selangor arranged in Sultan Mahmud's reign would take place. Sultan Alauddin maintained that the betrothal could not be set aside since celebration of the marriage was a trust he had inherited from the previous ruler, a wasiat or last injunction.¹⁴

Such a testament could not be lightly disregarded in any event, but in this particular case political considerations were also an important factor. As 1768 had shown, it was to Perak's advantage to remain on good terms with Selangor, for this could provide some insurance against a Bugis attack. Sultan Alauddin would have had no desire to begin his reign confronted by a hostile neighbour. Consequently, on September 28, Sultan Salehuddin left Perak accompanied by his prospective son-in-law, Sultan Mahmud's grandson.¹⁵ The party was escorted back to Selangor by the Orang Kaya Besar and the Temenggong, who were to represent the Perak court at the wedding.¹⁶ Although this was a far cry from the planned presence of Sultan Mahmud, these ministers were

13. See above, pp. 216-217.

14. KA 3306 OB 1775, Hensel to Crans, 10 Oct. 1773; KA 3310, Secret, Crans to Batavia, 31 Jan. 1774.

15. KA 3306 OB 1775, Hensel to Crans, 10 Oct. 1773.

16. Ibid.

sufficiently prestigious for the ruler's absence to be accepted without a sense of insult. It is significant, however, that neither the Raja Muda nor the Raja Bendahara saw fit to attend the ceremony. Though disagreeing with a renewal of the Dutch contract if this meant a lowering of the tin price, they were even less in favour of any association with the Bugis.

It was on this unsatisfactory note that Sultan Alauddin's reign commenced. Determined to maintain the alliance, the new ruler could not rally equivalent support from his court, especially as the shortage of reals continued. The Melaka Governor, Jan Crans, seemed as unresponsive as the Perak nobles. Sultan Mahmud died on June 17, 1773, but no commissioner arrived in Perak for nearly six months, even though Sultan Alauddin had immediately expressed his readiness to renew the treaty. Sultan Alauddin was therefore placed in the anomalous position of defending his decision in favour of the Dutch despite the fact that no official contract had been signed.

The eventual arrival of the commissioner, Anthony Werndly, on December 9, hardly helped matters. Sultan Alauddin, who had become reconciled to a new price of 32 reals the bahara, now found that the Dutch wanted a further reduction to a mere thirty reals. Anxious though he was to see the continuation of the alliance, the Perak ruler could not agree to a contract which would be so blatantly against Perak's interests, even if the Company should carry out its threat and abandon its post at Tanjung Putus.¹⁷ Werndly's lengthy arguments and dire pre-

17. Ibid., Werndly's Day Register, under 14-20 Dec. 1773; Hensel to Crans,

dictions as to the outcome of Perak's association with Selangor should the VOC leave had no effect. Sultan Alauddin remained adamant and the Dutch envoy was finally forced to agree to the higher price. On December 20 a new treaty was signed, similar to the old in every respect except for the reduction of two reals for each bahara of tin.¹⁸ But although Sultan Alauddin was prepared to face the criticism of his court in order to insure himself of a continued Dutch presence in Perak, he made it clear that this concession was not made willingly and that he hoped for a revision of the contract in the future.

I have consented to the new price because I am most anxious to cultivate a lasting friendship and an amicable relationship with my friend, the more so since my friend says that he suffers a loss through our friendship. However, should it happen that my friend profits from the new contract, and should I come to hear of this, then I shall also hope for some benefits from my friend.¹⁹

Years before, Wilhelm Albinus, as Governor of Melaka, had stressed that any contract must be to the mutual advantage of both signatories if it was to be faithfully executed.²⁰ He would probably have predicted

17. (cont'd.)

10 Dec. 1773; Crans to Batavia, 16 Aug. 1773, fo. 212 and 25 Oct. 1773, fo. 329; Instructions to Werndly, Melaka Resolutions, 15 Nov. 1773, foll. 405-408.

18. Stapel, Corpus Diplomaticus, pp. 377-379. See Appendix E.

19. KA 3335 OB 1776, King of Perak to Crans, 25 Dec. 1773. Writing to the Governor-General, Crans remarked that Werndly had met with "much opposition" from the Perak court. KA 3310, Secret, Crans to Batavia, 31 Jan. 1774. The Raja Muda himself signified his disapproval by being absent from court the day the treaty was signed, one of the few ways in which he could express his dissent. KA 3306 OB 1775, Werndly's Day Register, under 20 Dec. 1773. See also Gullick, Indigenous Political Systems, p. 51.

that a treaty such as that of 1773, signed by a ruler who lacked the full support of his court, had little hope of success. It was not a promising base on which to build a working relationship between Perak and Melaka, and in fact it was only rarely during Sultan Alauddin's reign that the alliance functioned smoothly. In part this was due to the personalities of the Dutch Governors, for neither Jan Crans (1772-1776) nor his successor, Pieter de Bruyn (1776-1788), succeeded in gaining the confidence of the Perak Assembly. The Company's demands in 1773 were not forgotten and time did not mend matters. Dutch efforts to introduce newly minted reals or replace the old tin weight, measures which might have passed unnoticed in happier times, now served to feed a growing conviction in the court that the VOC was covertly trying to cheat the Malays.²¹

Basically, however, Sultan Alauddin's self-imposed task of Company advocate was hindered not by the failings of the Melaka Governors, but by the slow descent of the VOC itself into bankruptcy and its consequent inability to offer competitive prices for tin. This decline in Company power in the Malay archipelago during the last decades of the century reflected the gradual deterioration of the Dutch economy in Europe, where industry could not keep pace with that of other European states. Even in 1714 the English navy was larger and better administered

20. See above, p. 180.

21. KA 932, Batavia to Crans, 25 April 1775, fo. 17; KA 3359 OB 1777, Hensel to Crans, 15 Nov. 1775; King of Perak to Crans, 19 Nov. 1775; KA 3387 OB 1778, Hensel to Crans, 8 Jan. 1776; Hensel to Melaka Council, 18 Jan. 1777, 10 March 1777; Melaka Council to King of Perak, 18 Feb. 1777.

than any other in Europe, and supremacy in naval skills such as shipbuilding and cartography was also assumed by England.²² Without command of the Asian seas, the VOC was unable to enforce its monopoly treaties with native rulers and the formerly vast Dutch seaborne trade slowly dwindled.²³ Company administrators fully realised that their fortunes were changing and made constant comparisons between the situation in the later eighteenth century and that which had existed a hundred years earlier.²⁴

The decline of the VOC was also due to its inability to adjust to the changing trade pattern and to meet the demand for new products such as China tea. Company policies did not evolve and adapt from those followed in the preceding century and because of this the Dutch could not compete with British traders, who now came to Asia with a more flexible organisation and greater capital resources.²⁵ As Boxer remarks, "the official correspondence of the VOC in the later eighteenth century is full of lamentations about the superiority of the English and the threat they posed to the Dutch."²⁶ In the face of obvious Dutch weakness on the

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22. Alice Carter, "Britain as a European Power, from her Glorious Revolution to the French Revolutionary War," in J. S. Bromley and E. H. Kossman, eds., Britain and the Netherlands in Europe and Asia (London, 1968), p. 115; Boxer, The Dutch Seaborne Empire, pp. 271-273, 107-108, 287-288.
23. See Boxer, The Dutch Seaborne Empire, for a penetrating and sympathetic analysis of this decline and also Harlow, The Founding of the Second British Empire, II, 330.
24. Boxer, The Dutch Seaborne Empire, pp. 268-269.
25. Furber, John Company at Work, pp. 171-172; Nicholas Tarling, Anglo-Dutch Rivalry in the Malay World, 1780-1824 (Sydney, 1962), p. 1.
26. Boxer, The Dutch Seaborne Empire, p. 277.

seas, English country traders grew more adventurous. During the 1760's and 1770's the expansion of their trade in Riau was especially noticeable and in contrast to the previous century there was now frequent and prolonged contact rather than periodic and intermittent expeditions.²⁷

The growth of English commercial activities was particularly apparent in regard to the tin trade. By the mid-1770's the Chinese market for tin was once more expanding after the glutting of the late 1760's, and the increasing popularity of Chinese goods in Europe meant that tin, still one of the few items which sold readily in Canton, was again in demand. The English were prepared to raise their prices in order to meet this growing demand and their tightening grasp on the market was demonstrated by the VOC's own trading figures. In February 1778 de Bruyn reported that Melaka had obtained 394,511 lbs. of tin in the previous financial year (1777/1778), which was 28,094½ lbs. less than in 1776/77.²⁸ On the other hand, the English, who still used Melaka as a convenient reprovisioning port, disposed of 501,250 lbs. there and de Bruyn was aware that much larger amounts were being taken to Canton.²⁹ It was well known that much of this tin, bought in Ujung Salang, Riau and Selangor, was smuggled from Rembau, Kelang, Linggi, Palembang and Perak, despite the monopoly treaties signed between these states and the Dutch.

27. Bassett, "British Commercial and Strategic Interest," p. 123; Harlow, The Founding of the Second British Empire, II, 330-331, 339-342.

28. KA 3446 OB 1780, de Bruyn to Batavia, 12 Feb. 1778, fo. 50.

29. KA 3420, Secret, de Bruyn to Batavia, 17 March 1778, fo. 284; Lewis, The Dutch East India Company, pp. 100-103.

As de Bruyn pointed out, it was "no wonder that the English can take out more tin from the Melaka Straits than the Company" since they were willing to pay from forty to forty-four reals the bahara.³⁰ Added to the spirited competition of the English was that of other Europeans, as well as Chinese, Indians, and Bugis. Against such rivals the VOC could do little. By 1781 Governor de Bruyn lamented that it was impossible to obtain tin from anywhere else except Perak because other traders not only offered higher prices than the Dutch but were prepared to barter cloth, opium, and other necessities.³¹

In Perak, however, deliveries were lower than ever before and the inroads of the English into Dutch preserves made the economic disadvantages of Perak's alliance with the Dutch increasingly apparent. In 1773, when Sultan Alauddin renewed the treaty, he had hoped that the price reduction would be only temporary and that the contract would be revised when the market improved, but even in its heyday the VOC had acted on the assumption that "buying cheap and selling dear" was the key to successful trading ventures. Company administrators had never deviated from this principle in the days of their greatest strength and were much less likely to now, as the foundations of the once-mighty VOC gradually crumbled.³²

30. KA 3473 OB 1781, Melaka Resolutions, 29 Dec. 1779, fo. 197; KA 3446 OB 1780, de Bruyn to Batavia, 12 Feb. 1778, fo. 53.

31. KA 3491 OB 1782, Melaka's Comments on Missive from Heeren XVII (7 Oct. 1779), 20 Feb. 1781, fo. 12.

32. Even in 1785 de Bruyn assured his superiors in Batavia that he would always endeavour to "buy at the lowest price and sell at the highest."

It is thus evident that Sultan Alauddin had succeeded in a troubled time. Perak was intimately involved with Selangor at a point when the VOC was growing rapidly weaker. These factors, and especially the Company's economic decline, meant that Sultan Alauddin faced far greater problems than either of his brothers. Sultān Iskandar's differences with the Dutch had concerned such matters as the supply of reals, the wording of an article, and the degree of VOC authority in Perak; now the alliance itself was in jeopardy. But Sultan Alauddin saw his association with the Company as a guarantee of security in Perak, a security which had made the zaman of Sultan Iskandar possible, and he fought to preserve it. In so doing, he became the supporter of a contract which many members of his court saw as a financial burden. In these circumstances, ties of loyalty were strained to breaking point and it is not surprising that discussions for and against the VOC alliance dominated Sultan Alauddin's reign.

The extent of opposition to the ruler's pro-Dutch policy was reflected in the smuggling, which increased to unprecedented levels after 1773.³³ The temptations were great not only because of the high profits

32. (cont'd.)

Brian Harrison, trans., "Trade in the Straits of Malacca in 1785. A Memorandum by P. G. de Bruijn, Governor of Malacca," JMBRAS, XXVI, 1 (1953), 62.

33. In early 1777, for example, the Melaka Council had expected to receive 428,550 lbs. of tin from Perak, a figure based on deliveries of the previous five years, but in fact only 422,605½ lbs. were delivered and in the following financial year (1777/8) the amount fell to 386,642 lbs. KA 3391, Secret, Crans to Batavia, 10 Feb. 1777, fo. 96; KA 3446 OB 1780, de Bruyn to Batavia, 30 Nov. 1778, foll. 3-4.

which could be obtained from the sale of tin in neighbouring ports, but because in Selangor and Kedah cheap opium could be bought from English country traders and their Bugis clients.

Though trade in opium had been well-established when the Portuguese had arrived in the archipelago over two hundred years before, its importance increased during the eighteenth century because opium could be bartered for tin and spices which were then taken to China.³⁴ The English were able to dominate the market since they controlled the areas in India where the opium poppy was grown and, as English contacts with China increased, country traders selling cargoes of opium became more frequent in Malay waters. The drug's addictive properties dictated the prices and accounted for the vast profits which this trade yielded.³⁵ Anyone who followed the normal route to China through Ujung Salang, Kedah, Selangor, Melaka, Linggi, Palembang and Batavia could be assured of a ready market, for consumption throughout the archipelago appears to have been rising. In 1689 William Dampier remarked on the extent to which Malays used opium³⁶ and a hundred years later Governor de Bruyn advocated greater Dutch involvement in the opium trade because "the people of Rembau, Selangor and Perak, like other natives, cannot live

34. David Owen, British Opium Policy in China and India (New Haven, 1934), p. 6.

35. According to William Marsden, chests containing about 140 lbs. of opium could be purchased for about three hundred Spanish dollars and could be sold again for five or six hundred. On "occasions of extraordinary scarcity," however, opium would sell for its weight in silver, upwards of three thousand dollars a chest. Marsden, A History of Sumatra, p. 277.

36. Dampier, Voyages and Discoveries, p. 114.

without opium."³⁷ When Raja Haji went to Palembang to reprovision his fleet, the Siak Chronicle records that he required "opium, water and wood,"³⁸ and in other hikayat opium is depicted as a magic potion which enables the hero to regain his strength and perform marvellous deeds.³⁹

In Perak, opium-smoking had generally been regarded as a harmless, if unproductive, pastime, especially common among the anak raja. It will be remembered that Sultan Mahmud was himself an opium-smoker⁴⁰ and it is quite probable that his example had encouraged more widespread use in court circles, where many people had the leisure and the money to indulge. At one time the Dutch had attempted to monopolise opium sales in Perak, but this policy had been abandoned in 1766 and was not resumed, despite the urging of men like de Bruyn.⁴¹ Shortly before his death in

37. Harrison, "Trade in the Straits of Malacca," p. 59.

38. Siak Chronicle, fo. 492, lines 3, 10.

39. Panglima Ali Mudin bin Panglima Hassan, Hikayat Terong Pipit (Oxford, 1964), pp. 125-126. In the eighteenth century few Europeans felt that moderate opium taking was harmful. Many doctors considered that it could cure or relieve almost any illness or pain, from toothache to asthma and melancholia. See, for example, George Young, A Treatise on Opium (London, 1753); Samuel Crump, An Inquiry into the Nature and Property of Opium (London, 1793); John Jones, The Mysteries of Opium Revealed (London, 1701). Travellers passing through the Indies, however, remarked on the "speechlessness" and "open fixed eyes" of Indonesians who had been too "immoderate." Opium was also seen as the cause of the Malay amuk. Stavorinus, Voyages to the East Indies, I, 245, 291; Pierre Sonnerat, Voyage aux Indes Orientales et à la Chine (Calcutta, 1788), III, 21-22.

40. See above, p. 442.

41. Harrison, "Trade in the Straits of Malacca," p. 58; Harrison, "Malacca in the Eighteenth Century," p. 28; KA 3392, Secret Melaka Resolutions, 4 Sept. 1777, foll. 21-27.

1773, Sultan Mahmud had assumed the monopoly and four years later Sultan Alauddin announced that he too would assume control over this lucrative trade. Supplies of opium would in future be obtainable only through the ruler, who would buy the drug directly from Sultan Salehuddin of Selangor and resell it to selected members of the Perak court.⁴²

It is possible that Sultan Alauddin, concerned at the growing traffic in opium, had hoped that this measure would lessen smuggling to Selangor, but, if anything, it made the situation worse. There was now a dual monopoly system operating in Perak; on the one hand, the Dutch were buying tin at extremely low prices; on the other, Sultan Alauddin controlled all opium transactions. Faced with these restrictions, many members of the Perak court made private arrangements with traders in Selangor and exploited their privileged positions as royal representatives in outlying areas like Larut, Kinta and Kuala Kangsar to buy tin, smuggle it out to Selangor and bring illegal opium in.⁴³

Though the resident did not hesitate to bring such activities to the ruler's notice, there was no easy solution because some of the principal waris negeri and orang besar were involved, men such as Sultan Alauddin's son, the Raja Kecil Sulung, his nephew, the Raja Kecil Besar, his brother, the Sultan Muda (formerly raja Kecil Bungsu), the Raja Kecil Muda and the Syahbandar.⁴⁴ The Sultan Muda's refusal to co-operate with

42. KA 3306 OB 1773, Hensel to Crans, 12 Feb. 1773; Crans to Hensel, 19 1773; KA 3387 OB 1778, Hensel to de Bruyn, 29 July 1777.

43. KA 3446 OB 1780, Meyer to de Bruyn, 17 Sept. 1778, 9 Dec. 1778, 20 March 1779.

44. Ibid., and 10 April, 4 May 1779.

Sultan Alauddin was a matter of particular concern to the ruler and his advisors. As the Raja Bendahara told the resident, a rift in the court could affect the entire country. Although he himself, Sultan Alauddin and the Sultan Muda were "three brothers," he said, the Sultan Muda's brazen disobedience had resulted in disunity amongst them.⁴⁵ Nearly two decades before Sultan Iskandar had faced a similar problem in dealing with his own Raja Muda; Sultan Alauddin, like his brother before him, found the disciplining of his closest relatives his most difficult task.

For Sultan Alauddin the situation was complicated by the fact that this Sultan Muda was much more powerful than the Raja Muda had been in 1759. Previously holding the title Raja Kecil Bungsu, he had been named Sultan Muda and admitted to the Council when Sultan Alauddin succeeded in 1773. As has been shown, the post of Sultan Muda carried great prestige and, with his appointment, the Raja Kecil Bungsu was placed above the Raja Muda and the Raja Bendahara in the court hierarchy. Obviously an event of some consequence, it is recorded in all the Perak texts and genealogies relating to the period.⁴⁶ The Raja Kecil Bungsu's promotion meant that he was no longer merely one of the anak raja, whose duties were to do "whatever the Raja and Raja Muda order" and whose income was derived purely from "the ruler's bounty";⁴⁷ he was now a prince with im-

45. Ibid., 9 Dec. 1778.

46. KA 3306 OB 1775, Hensel to Crans, 25 July 1773. For a description of this office, see Chapter I, p. 58. Silsilah Melaka Kerajaan Negeri Perak, fo. 31, lines 1-3; Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 193. (The romanisation in Raja Muda, but Hs. 632 Kon. Inst. gives Sultan Muda, fo. 102, line 24.)

47. RKP SP 9/15, fo. 5.

portant and specific functions and an independent revenue, and thus with the ability to attract a following of his own.⁴⁸

If Sultan Alauddin had hoped to recruit the support of his brother for his pro-alliance policy, he was disappointed, for the new Sultan Muda became another locus of opposition within the country. His territorial jurisdiction was now concentrated in the ulu⁴⁹ and, from his residence at Air Mati,⁵⁰ the Sultan Muda had access to many of the richest tin areas. This gave him a degree of geographic and economic independence not enjoyed by other members of the court. In addition, he had a strong personal hold over the people and was said to arouse greater fear and respect than Sultan Alauddin himself.⁵¹ The Dutch resident reported that, either voluntarily or under duress, many people were storing up their tin and selling only to the Sultan Muda.⁵² With this leadership, opposition to the treaty and to the Dutch alliance assumed greater proportions than ever. On several occasions Sultan Alauddin himself assumed responsibility for the debts of his relatives in order to prevent

48. Ibid., fo. 1. According to this text, the Sultan Muda received a revenue from the captains of tongkang, large barge-like sea-going ships used for transporting cargoes, and from opium.

49. KA 3636 OB 1787, Wilner to de Bruyn, 26 March 1786. He may have taken over the administrative duties carried out by the Sri Adika Raja and Maharaja Lela during Sultan Iskandar's reign.

50. Air Mati is five miles downstream from Brahmana Indra. The Sultan Muda also maintained a residence in Kangsar. KA 3446 OB 1780, Meyer to de Bruyn, 9 Dec. 1778; KA 3626 OB 1787, Wilner to de Bruyn, 26 March 1786.

51. KA 3446 OB 1780, Meyer to de Bruyn, 9 Dec. 1778; KA 3474 OB 1781, Meyer to de Bruyn, 5 Jan. 1780.

52. Ibid.

their smuggling their tin out and so that a confrontation with the resident would be avoided.⁵³

Sultan Alauddin recognised that the root cause of the smuggling in Perak was the low tin price. If this were raised, his subjects would not be tempted to take their tin elsewhere and Selangor, even with its supplies of opium, would not present such a lure. He was reasonably sure that the Dutch would agree with him and would grant his request, since the market for tin had improved in recent years. Furthermore, he had signed the treaty on the understanding that the price would be revised when demand for tin rose. In June 1778 and again in September the Perak ruler explained his position to the Governor in specific terms.

I wish to inform my friend that from the north and from the south reports are heard that the price of tin has risen. My friend can be assured that his friend [Sultan Alauddin] suffers a loss. I am fully convinced that the Company does not desire such a thing for his friend. I therefore ask my friend that the price of tin be raised again to 34 reals the bahara as was formerly paid. All my subjects will be pleased, since the people report here that the English buy tin for 38 reals the bahara.⁵⁴

In view of VOC weakness, this request came at an inopportune time. The situation was a particularly delicate one, and unfortunately the Governor was not equipped to deal with it. In retrospect, it appears that much of the success of the alliance in the past had been due to the

53. In September 1778 and again in November, Sultan Alauddin paid the debts owed Raja Ibrahim of Selangor by the Sultan Muda and the Raja Kecil Sulung so that they would not smuggle their tin out. KA 3446 OB 1780, Meyer to de Bruyn, 17 Sept. 1778, 9 Dec. 1778.

54. Ibid., King of Perak to de Bruyn, 23 June 1778, 13 Sept. 1778. See above, p. 500.

anxiety of men like Albinus, van Heemskerck, Boelen and Schippers to cultivate good relations with the Perak court. Unlike his brothers, Sultan Alauddin was forced to deal with men of lesser calibre. Jan Crans, Governor of Melaka from 1772 until 1776 hardly impinges on the Company records and the selection of Pieter Gerardus de Bruyn as his successor was even less happy. His appointment had been made in some haste, since the Governor-General's first choice, a Swiss named Pierre de Fillietaz, had died just eight days after the announcement of his new posting.⁵⁵ One can only speculate how relations between Melaka and the Malay states might have developed if de Fillietaz, an accountant and scribe, had lived to take up his position. De Bruyn's background was very different. He had been born in Columbo and was thus one of those Dutchmen raised outside The Netherlands whom their fellow citizens called disparagingly "liplaps."⁵⁶ As a youth he had entered the Company's service as a soldier, but had later transferred to the clerical ranks and was eventually appointed as secretary to the Indies Government in Batavia.⁵⁷ De Bruyn thus came to Melaka directly from Java and lacked the valuable experience in the Melaka administration which had made men like Schippers well qualified for the position of Governor. Taking up his new duties in April 1777, de Bruyn failed to gain the liking or respect of his subordinates. The Dutch Syahbandar of Melaka described the Governor in scathing terms.

55. Resandt, De Gezaghebbers, pp. 226-227.

56. Ibid., 227-228; Stavorinus, Voyages to the East Indies, I, 315.

57. Resandt, De Gezaghebbers, p. 228.

Pieter Gerardus de Bruyn . . . is a Ceylonese who only knows secretarial work, by which he has made his fortune at Batavia; he knows how to draw up resolutions with "it is approved and resolved," but he has not the least idea of cabinet affairs.⁵⁸

De Bruyn also had little understanding of Malay attitudes towards the Company, and, as a former soldier, was a man who believed in force rather than persuasion. In a memorandum to the Governor-General, for example, he complained bitterly about the tin smuggling in Perak and elsewhere. "Protest and artifice are of little help against this kind of thing unless one can command respect with a sword in one's hand."⁵⁹

Predictably, Sultan Alauddin's request for a rise in the price of tin did not receive a sympathetic hearing in Melaka. In November 1778 de Bruyn replied to the Perak ruler's letter in threatening terms, a letter which contrasts sharply with the persuasive remarks made by Schippers five years before.⁶⁰ The Governor claimed that it was impossible to make any alterations in the treaty terms, since great expense was involved in maintaining the fort. The English, on the other hand, could pay more for tin because they did not have the financial burden of such commitments and because they drew large profits from their opium sales. Neither they nor the Bugis, argued de Bruyn, would pay as much if the

58. Hoynck van Papendrecht, "Some Old Private Letters," p. 22. There were personal reasons to account for the dislike between the Syahbandar, Renier Hoynck van Papendrecht, and de Bruyn. The Governor had hoped to marry his eldest daughter to the Syahbandar, but the proposal had been refused. As a son-in-law of Thomas Schippers, the Syahbandar must have been acutely conscious of the difference in their styles of government. *Ibid.*, pp. 16, 18.

59. Harrison, "Trade in the Straits of Malacca," p. 60.

60. See above, p. 484.

Dutch were not there as competitors. Further, there had been no fixed agreement that the price should be changed. Although it was recalled that Sultan Alauddin had mentioned this as a possibility, it had not been included in the treaty and was not regarded as binding by the Dutch authorities.⁶¹

Did our friend not agree [continued the Governor] to a lowering of the price to 32 Spanish reals, without anyone compelling him? How can he now say that the Company brings him a loss, when it continues to pay what was mutually agreed on? If Your Highness suffers a loss, it is with your own consent and cannot be imputed to the Company, which has always held to the contract. Is it your loss that your kingdom is protected and safeguarded against attacks by the Dutch fort?⁶²

De Bruyn went on to speak of the low profits which came to the Dutch from Perak after the cost of the fort and garrison had been subtracted. The Company was willing to suffer this loss in order to protect its friend but it might not continue to do so. The Governor also denounced the Selangor Bugis involved in the smuggling and their accomplices, the Sultan Muda and his following of anak raja. He advised them to unite with Sultan Alauddin in combating the smuggling, rather than condoning it or carrying tin out themselves. If they did not heed his warning they would bring down on themselves "the Company's just displeasure." In closing, de Bruyn spoke directly to the ruler himself.

If Your Majesty wishes to enjoy the friendship of the Company and through this further the welfare of your kingdom, Your Majesty must be satisfied

61. KA 3446 OB 1780, de Bruyn to King of Perak, 21 Aug. and 14 Nov. 1778.

62. Ibid., 14 Nov. 1778.

with the present price and seek your profits in an increased delivery. However, if Your Majesty will not listen to this well-intentioned warning and would rather listen to the advice of people who are not your sincere friends, and if you do not have sufficient judgement to foresee the calamity that would follow a perfidious breaking of the contract, we fear that Your Majesty will find what it seems to embitter old friends and allies.⁶³

Never before had such a letter been received from Melaka and Sultan Alauddin was visibly shaken. "The king," reported the resident, "became so changed that I thought he would fall in a swoon. He struck his hands together and was as pale as death, sitting fully a quarter of an hour without speaking to anyone."⁶⁴ The Governor's veiled threats and allusions to the disasters which awaited an undefended and friendless Perak struck home, for since his accession Sultan Alauddin had been plagued by the problem of Perak's relations with its neighbours, a legacy of the policy adopted during the previous reign.

To the north, Sultan Muhammad Jiwa of Kedah and his son, Sultan Abdullah, did not easily forget the part played by Perak in the Bugis invasion of 1770. Four years later relations between the two states were still so poor that the Sultan Mada found it impossible to recruit a party of men to bring back some Company deserters who had fled towards the Kedah border. He told the resident that "his people are all afraid for their lives, because Kedah and Perak are not good friends."⁶⁵ From the time of his accession Sultan Alauddin turned his attention towards recon-

63. Ibid.

64. Ibid., Meyer to de Bruyn, 9 Dec. 1778.

65. KA 3335 OB 1776, Hensel to Crans, 20 May 1774.

ciliation with the Kedah ruler, but his efforts were without success.⁶⁶ In 1775 and again in 1778 Sultan Abdullah and his father were reported to be making preparations for an attack on both Selangor and Perak, having recruited the assistance of Raja Ismail, the homeless claimant to the Siak throne, and his brother, Tengku 'Lah.⁶⁷ Though neither of these attacks eventuated, it was not until 1779, after Sultan Abdullah succeeded to the Kedah throne, that plans for revenge were finally abandoned. But although trading relations between Perak and Kedah were restored, and although the two rulers maintained an intermittent correspondence, Sultan Alauddin was not able to persuade his neighbour to return the border areas of Batu Kawan and Kerian, which had been taken by Kedah in 1768.⁶⁸ The loss of these rich tin districts was a visible reminder of Perak's basic weakness and the degree to which its outlying areas lay at the mercy of neighbouring rulers.

66. In October 1774 Sultan Alauddin wrote to the ruler of Kedah asking that the anak raja be forgiven and that his own subjects be permitted to go to Kedah once more and trade. Ibid., 16 Oct. 1774.

67. KA 3359 OB 1777, Hensel to Crans, 8 Feb. 1775. Relations between Kedah and Perak appeared to have improved in 1775, when Sultan Muhammad Jiwa said Perak people could come to Kedah and trade. By December 1778, Tengku Abdullah, Sultan Muhammad Jiwa's son, was in total control in Kedah and again announced plans to punish Perak and Selangor. KA 3350 OB 1777, Hensel to Crans, 28 July 1775; KA 3446 OB 1780, Meyer to de Bruyn, 9 Dec. 1778.

68. KA 3491 OB 1782, Meyer to de Bruyn, 26 July 1780. Sultan Alauddin may have hoped for a positive response to his letter because Sultan Abdullah had been particularly helpful when the Perak ruler had wished to purchase a ship. KA 3474 OB 1781, Meyer to de Bruyn, 21 Feb. 1780, 17 April 1780, 13 Sept. 1780. The boundary between Perak and Kedah reverted to Kurau, but continued to be disputed. In 1848 Kerian was given back to Perak. Nicholas Tarling, British Policy in the Malay Peninsula and Archipelago (London and Kuala Lumpur, 1969), pp. 1-2, 41-42; Khoo, The Western Malay States, p. 33; Bonney, Kedah, pp. 5, 139.

Relations with Selangor had also been troubled. The Dutch had not approved of the continued association between the two rulers, and even less of the marriage of 1773 which had strengthened the ties which bound them together. Both Crans and de Bruyn actively propagated the Company's view of Sultan Salehuddin as a greedy, untrustworthy ruler who was merely waiting his opportunity to undermine the contract between Perak and the VOC.⁶⁹

The constantly repeated arguments were not lost on Sultan Alaud-din, who had never favoured the friendship with the Bugis into which circumstances had forced him. The marriage bonds between the royal families of Perak and Selangor were now so close that an event which might appear a purely domestic issue could provide grounds for Bugis interference. In March 1777, for example, the son of the Perak Raja Bendahara, married to a daughter of the Raja Muda, ran amuk, killing several people, including his wife and various members of his family.⁷⁰ Sultan Salehuddin, married to another daughter of the Raja Muda, claimed to be concerned for his wife's safety, even though he had not lived with her since their marriage in 1770.⁷¹ Without warning, a fleet of twenty Bugis ships appeared in the Perak River, and the Selangor ruler stayed on in Perak for another eight months. Seven or eight weeks after his arrival

69. KA 3359 OB 1777, Crans to Hensel, 6 March 1775; KA 3310, Secret, Crans to Batavia, 31 Jan. 1774, foll. 2-3.

70. KA 3387 OB 1778, Hensel to de Bruyn, 29 July 1777. This incident is described in the Silsilah Melaka Kerajaan Negeri Perak, foll. 30-30v.

71. See above, p. 466.

he caused a major scandal by secretly marrying the widow of the late Orang Kaya Besar. Sultan Alauddin was extremely annoyed, not only because the marriage had been concluded without his knowledge, but also because it represented a grave insult to the Raja Muda's daughter. The latter was furious and announced that she intended to divorce her husband immediately, since he had taken another wife.⁷² Sultan Alauddin, on the other hand, was forced to keep in mind the realities of his relationship with Selangor and urged her to be patient. It would be foolhardy to anger the Selangor ruler and his force of well-armed Bugis. When the unwelcome guests had returned home, he said, he would write a letter announcing the talak (divorce formula).⁷³ In order to avoid trouble, Sultan Alauddin was even willing to waive his right to the two reals toll so that the Bugis would sell what tin they had bought in Perak to the Dutch resident.⁷⁴ Nonetheless, it was clear that he was extremely displeased over Sultan Salehuddin's behaviour, and he refused to permit his neighbour to build his new wife a house in Perak, insisting that she leave the country.⁷⁵

Sultan Alauddin was also angered by the piracy carried out openly along the Perak coast by Selangor's leading anak raja. The son of the Selangor Raja Muda, and Raja Ibrahim, elder son of Sultan Salehuddin, had

72. KA 3387 OB 1778, Hensel to de Bruyn, 29 July 1777.

73. Ibid., 20 Sept. 1777.

74. KA 3392, Secret, de Bruyn to Batavia, 20 Dec. 1777; Crans to Hensel, 29 Nov. 1777; KA 3417 OB 1779, Hensel to de Bruyn, 23 Dec. 1777.

75. KA 3387 OB 1778, Hensel to de Bruyn, 20 Sept. 1777.

gained particular notoriety and in 1774 they were joined by Sultan Mahmud's grandson, now married to Raja Ibrahim's half-sister. Their reputations were so tarnished that, when reports arrived that the three princes intended to visit Perak, Sultan Alauddin immediately suspected their intentions and asked Melaka for a ship to cruise the river.⁷⁶

Selangor had not only become a haven for pirates and European deserters; it was also an active incentive to illegal trade in tin and opium. Many members of the Selangor court were deeply involved in smuggling, and this was especially true of Raja Ibrahim. Repeatedly the Selangor prince came to Perak with chests of opium, hoping to persuade Perak tin suppliers to sell his tin through some outlet such as Larut.⁷⁷ By 1777 Sultan Alauddin was so infuriated by the young man's activities that he would not even grant Raja Ibrahim an audience and ordered him to leave Perak at once.⁷⁸ In December of the following year he was actually forbidden to come to Perak again "even though he is one of the royal family."⁷⁹ Such orders had little effect in curbing Raja Ibrahim's attempts to carry out clandestine trade, and, twelve months later, one of his ships carrying a cargo of six hundred Spanish reals was sunk in Kuala Perak. The existence of this large sum was considered sufficient evidence that Raja Ibrahim had intended to buy smuggled tin, and Sultan Alauddin

76. KA 335 OB 1776, Hensel to Crans, 20 June 1774, 18 Aug. 1774, 16 Oct. 1774.

77. KA 3446 OB 1780, Hensel to de Bruyn, 26 June 1778, 9 Dec. 1778.

78. KA 3387 OB 1778, Hensel to Crans, 17 May 1777, 28 July 1777.

79. KA 3446 OB 1780, Meyer to de Bruyn, 9 Dec. 1778.

considered the sinking of the ship and the loss of the money to be just retribution for Raja Ibrahim's defiance. A verbal message sent to Sultan Salehuddin, Raja Ibrahim's father, is perhaps the most positive statement of support for the VOC alliance ever given by a Perak ruler. Sultan Alauddin roundly declared that he would never break his contract with the Dutch and that he would never permit the people of Selangor to take tin out. He knew, he said, that his neighbours wanted to see the contract between the Company and himself broken, and that they sought "to bring misfortune to Perak." They should be warned that he and the Dutch maintained a watchful eye over all their doings. Indeed, Sultan Alauddin expressed himself so fervently that the scribe told Resident Meyer he had never seen his master so vehement on any other issue.⁸⁰

Under these circumstances, Company administrators found it impossible to understand why Sultan Alauddin did not unilaterally break off any connection with the Selangor Bugis. But, as the Perak ruler tried to explain to Resident Hensel, marriages had been concluded and oaths sworn, binding the two royal families together, and these could not be lightly put aside. When Hensel once again gave the Company arguments,

The king grew very pale and heaved a heavy sigh. After a short pause, he answered, "What can I do concerning what has already been done by my predecessor? Because of his grandson's marriage, we are obliged to maintain a friendship with Selangor. If this had not taken place, I would end the friendship immediately. Despite this, the Company and I are like iron smelted together."⁸¹

Two years later, during Sultan Salehuddin's long stay in Perak, Sultan

80. Ibid., Meyer to de Bruyn, 26 March 1779, 4 May 1779.

81. KA 3359 OB 1777, Hensel to Crans, 12 April 1775.

Alauddin once again attempted to articulate the problems involved in his relationship with Selangor. The ruler of that state, he said, had played an ambiguous role in Perak affairs, sometimes for good, sometimes for bad. He himself could not risk antagonising his neighbour by announcing an end to their association. There could be no doubt, however, that Sultan Alauddin, expressing his relief at the presence of a VOC ship in the Perak River, saw the Bugis connection as a burden.

He has no baluk or ships [he said] and his subjects are in no way equipped to defend themselves against the King of Selangor, and indeed have never had to do so as long as he has governed with the Company's protection. This also applied to his predecessors and therefore he should also try, as much as possible, to live in friendship with the Company.⁸²

Sultan Alauddin was not only uncertain of his relationship with Kedah and Selangor. He also felt Perak's security was threatened by the wandering pirate fleets in the Straits which made Perak waters increasingly unsafe. Perak had always been a favourite area for pirates because of the number of ships which sailed past from Kedah to Melaka and because its long coastline, indented by creeks, rivers, bays and mangrove swamps afforded ample hiding places. "Ten or fifteen men will live in a small perahu to appearance not large enough for six men for months. They will skulk in bays and rivers where there are no inhabitants, waiting for the unwary trader."⁸³

People from Selangor like Raja Ibrahim were not the only offenders. Some of the piracy could be traced to the homeless Siak princes, such as

82. KA 3417 OB 1779, Hensel to de Bruyn, 23 Dec. 1777.

83. SSR C34/6, Light to Shore, 23 Jan. 1794 (FWCP, 1 Aug. 1794), fo. 132.

Tengku 'Lah, Raja Ismail's brother, who had been forced to the seas as a result of the prolonged dynastic disputes in their homeland. Though the exploits of these wandering anak raja are eulogised in the Siak Chronicle, it was apparent, as Daeng Kemboja pointed out, that the activities of "Raja Kecil's children and his children's relatives" meant that the safety of the surrounding seas was constantly endangered.⁸⁴ Other Malays and Minangkabau living along the Sumatran East Coast followed the example set by the Siak princes. In June 1774, for example, a fleet of twelve vessels headed by the Syahbandar of Langkat was reported to be cruising between Pulau Sembilan and Dinding Bay. From this fleet two ships were actually sent in to Kuala Perak itself to prey on passing perahu.⁸⁵

The problem of piracy was made more acute because of the canker area of Bernam, the underpopulated and undergoverned border district between Selangor and Perak. Its proximity to the sea and its ambiguous position between two states meant that Bernam was a natural refuge for pirates and fugitives. It was here that the Kedah anak raja, now exiled from their homeland, had settled after 1771. Without subsistence of any kind, the money they had brought from Kedah expended, they lived like the poorest kampung dweller, existing on rice which they planted themselves.⁸⁶ They might perhaps have found their change in fortune more acceptable if Bernam had been a desirable place to live, but it was low-

84. KA 3306 OB 1775, Daeng Kemboja to Crans, 18 Oct. 1773.

85. KA 335 OB 1776, Hensel to Crans, 20 June 1774.

86. KA 3306 OB 1775, Werndly to Crans, 22 Dec. 1774.

lying, unhealthy, and infertile. Under these circumstances it was almost inevitable that some of their number attempt to "seek their fortune" along the Perak coast.⁸⁷

The presence of the Kedah refugees in Bernam attracted a motley collection of adventurers, deserters, and vagrant anak raja. The Siak prince Tengku 'Lah, roaming in search of new adventure, used Bernam both as a shelter while he made repairs to his boats and as a base for pirating activities.⁸⁸ It was even reported that the Raja di Ulu of Perak, a son-in-law of the late Sultan Mahmud, had spent some time there, and one of his panglima was in fact accused of piracy.⁸⁹

The existence of such havens, over which Sultan Alauddin could exert no control, meant that the issue of piracy could not be ignored. This was especially true for a state like Perak which depended on the outside world for its existence and yet was unable to guarantee the safety of those who came to trade. Once again Sultan Alauddin looked to the Company for support. In October 1774 the Raja Muda made a formal complaint to the resident, and ten days later Sultan Alauddin himself

87. One of the Kedah anak raja, for example, had joined Raja Ibrahim and in 1773 was reported to be pirating in the Linggi and Kelang area. KA 335 OB 1776, Crans to Raja of Selangor, 4 May 1774.

88. Tengku Abdullah, commonly known as Tengku 'Lah, was one of the most notorious adventurers in the Malay world, a typical example of the displaced anak raja who abounded as a result of polygamous marriages and dynastic disputes. The son of Sultan Muhammad Syah ibni Raja Kecil, Tengku 'Lah had followed his half-brother, Raja Ismail, in many of his adventures. Siak Chronicle, foll. 453, 481-489, 502-509. See also KA 3446 OB 1780, Meyer to de Bruyn, 9 Dec. 1778, 9 Oct. 1779.

89. KA 335 OB 1776, Hensel to Crans, 16 Oct. 1774.

summoned Hensel to his capital at Rantau Panjang. He repeated his request for a Company ship to cruise the river and said he would contribute whatever baluk he had to the patrol. The Perak ruler also agreed to take stricter measures to prevent piracy by his own subjects. Any offenders "be they his own people, or slaves, or even his own son, who had pirated without his knowledge," would be made prisoner and the booty divided between himself and the Company.⁹⁰

Though Melaka had no ships to spare for such an enterprise, Sultan Alauddin continued to ask that Dutch cruisers maintain guard along the coast, particularly during the season when the Coromandel traders came down the coast from Kedah.⁹¹ When it became clear that the Company could not commit vessels for such patrols, Sultan Abdullah himself sent out twelve baluk under the Laksamana to cruise the troublesome area between Larut and Pulau Sembilan.⁹² It is not unlikely that his attempts to bring about a reconciliation between Sultan Abdullah of Kedah and the anak raja in Bernam was prompted by a desire to see the departure of the royal fugitives who had attracted such a disreputable group of people.

Against this background of an uncertain and threatening world, when the new friendship with Kedah was at best uneasy, and relations with Selangor at times verged on outright hostility, the one constant element in Sultan Alauddin's world appeared to be the Dutch alliance. He not only looked to Melaka for assistance in the defence of his country; he

90. Ibid.

91. KA 3359 OB 1777, Hensel to Crans, 7 June 1775.

92. KA 3387 OB 1778, Hensel to Crans, 24 Dec. 1776.

asked for help in enforcing his opium monopoly, for rice during a drought, for a ship to take his elephants to India.⁹³ "Never yet," the ruler told Resident Meyer in December 1778, "had his requests been refused by the Company."⁹⁴ Despite the irritation over the economic terms of the treaty, the differences over prices, currencies and weights, Sultan Alauddin had found the Dutch a faithful ally. When attack or invasion threatened, the court too saw the virtue in his pro-Company policy. In 1775, when it was rumoured that Raja Ismail was on the point of departure for Perak, the old Orang Kaya Besar, who had opposed the renewal of the contract so vehemently two years before expressed the relief of the Assembly at the Dutch presence. What could Raja Ismail do to Perak, he asked "if we have the Honourable Company as our friend?"⁹⁵

In view of Sultan Alauddin's adamant support for the contract it is not surprising that de Bruyn's threatening letter of November 1778 produced the desired results. It was clear that Sultan Alauddin had taken the Governor's words to heart. From the time of the arrival of de Bruyn's letter Sultan Alauddin redoubled his efforts to strengthen the relationship between himself and the Dutch and in particular to increase the tin delivery. These efforts stand as a clear demonstration of the value he placed on the contract.

Sultan Alauddin had in fact already shown that he was receptive

93. Ibid., 29 July 1777 and King of Perak to Crans, 8 Oct. 1776, 25 Nov. 1776; KA 3491 OB 1782, de Bruyn to Batavia, 27 Oct. 1781; KA 3446 OB 1780, Meyer to de Bruyn, 9 Dec. 1778, 15 Jan. 1779.

94. KA 3446 OB 1780, Meyer to de Bruyn, 9 Dec. 1778.

95. KA 3359 OB 1777, Hensel to Crans, 12 April 1775.

to innovations which would stimulate tin production. In mid-1776 Perak was hit by a severe drought and the resident reported that "even people eighty years old" could not remember such a bad season. No rice could be planted and, because incoming supplies were insufficient, famine broke out.⁹⁶ By October of that year Sultan Alauddin informed Governor Crans that his subjects were too weak to work in the mines and he could not increase the deliveries.⁹⁷

Dutch administrators, probably impressed by the results of the importation of Chinese labour into Bangka, made a suggestion.⁹⁸ Since there was at present no way of inducing Malay miners to return to work, Sultan Alauddin should permit the Chinese living in Perak to develop tin mines in some of the mountain areas.⁹⁹ Sultan Alauddin agreed to the proposal and in early December 1776 he gave the Chinese Captain permission to mine tin along three rivers in the Kinta district. He continued to give his full support to the project, placing it under the general supervision of the Raja Bendahara, who personally accompanied the Chinese Captain to the designated place.¹⁰⁰ The Chinese were also provided with

96. KA 3387 OB 1778, Hensel to Crans, 28 July 1776.

97. Ibid., 29 Oct. 1776.

98. The Sultan of Palembang had imported Chinese labourers to work in his tin mines. F. S. A. de Clerq, "Bijdrage tot de Geschiedenis van het Eiland Bangka," BKI, 45 (1895), 136-137; Marsden, A History of Sumatra, p. 172.

99. Even at this point in Perak history, the Chinese community was sufficiently large to have its own Kapitan Cina, and the Misa Melayu mentions that the Chinese lived in their own quarter in Sultan Iskandar's new town. The earliest reference to the Kapitan Cina is in KA 2753 OB 1756, Dekker to Batavia, 30 April 1755, fo. 47; for the references in the Misa Melayu, see above, Chapter IV, pp. 295, 311.

a letter of authority as proof that they were allowed to mine and Sultan Alauddin promised that he would not allow anyone "be he of high or low rank" to interfere with their activities.¹⁰¹ After the Chinese had succeeded in opening up a new lode in the following year, Sultan Alauddin requested that fifty or sixty strong young Chinese be sent from Melaka to overcome the labour shortage.¹⁰² He was also willing to encourage the importing of Chinese workers on a regular basis and to guarantee their wages and conditions of work. Any grievances could be discussed with the resident and Sultan Alauddin gave his word that he would punish any official found guilty of mistreating the Chinese.¹⁰³

The Kapitan Cina in Perak was appointed head of the Kinta mining area and work was immediately begun on the first Chinese mine.¹⁰⁴ Their

100. KA 3387 OB 1778, Hensel to Crans, 29 Oct. 1776, 8 Dec. 1776, 7 March 1777.

101. Ibid. and 24 Dec. 1776; de Bruyn to Hensel, 8 April 1777.

102. Ibid., 17 May 1777.

103. Ibid., Hensel to de Bruyn, 14 Nov. 1777. The importation of workers was not easy, for Perak did not appear the land of promise that it did to later generations of Chinese immigrants. It was discovered that no Melaka Chinese could be persuaded to leave for a relatively unknown place to engage in a new occupation without the guarantee of a reasonable income and a clear statement of conditions of work. The Chinese Captain in Perak notified the Melaka authorities that all workers would receive $\frac{1}{2}$ Spanish real per day, as well as free board. All tools would be provided and expenses paid, and two Chinese were sent back to Melaka in July 1777 to spread this information and persuade other workers to come. This measure was successful and in September ten Chinese were sent to Perak who were willing to work for the wages and conditions quoted. The Captain of the Melaka Chinese was instructed to ensure that each ship leaving for Perak should carry a similar number of Chinese. Governor de Bruyn was confident that with fair treatment and reasonable pay many other Chinese would follow. KA 3387 OB 1777, de Bruyn to Hensel, 20 July, 5 Sept. and 17 Oct. 1777; Hensel to de Bruyn, 29 July, 14 Nov. 1777.

efforts soon brought results. In March 1778 two samples of tin obtained from the new mines at Kinta and Sungkai were sent to Melaka, which, when assayed, were found to be of as high quality as Perak's purified tin.¹⁰⁵

The introduction of indentured labour was a totally new development in Perak. While the original suggestion may have come from the Dutch, Sultan Alauddin himself oversaw and encouraged the scheme. He must have realised that the intermittent nature of Malay mining was not conducive to the expansion of tin production. The kerah or corvee system meant that there was not only a continual demand on the time and energy of the Malay workers, but that mines were left for indefinite periods untended, when they often filled with water. Further, the Malays rarely depended solely on mining for their subsistence. For them it was an occupation which could easily give place to rice-planting, harvesting, elephant-hunting, or court festivities. With the new approach to mining symbolised by the importation of Chinese labour, the future of Perak's tin production seemed bright.

Under Dutch pressure, Sultan Alauddin also made positive efforts to win over the principal court members to his pro-alliance policy. In February 1777, when Governor Crans had submitted his retiring report, he had recognised that the continued opposition of the Sultan Muda remained an obstacle to the smooth working of the contract.

Because although the Perakese at present are more than ever inclined towards the Company's post, and above all,

104. Ibid., Hensel to de Bruyn, 14 Nov. 1777.

105. KA 3417 OB 1779, de Bruyn to Batavia, 17 March 1778, fo. 53.

through years of experience, are convinced that the Company's aim there only concerns tin deliveries, and all former suspicions have come to an end, there is no doubt that there are still malcontents. The principal person among these is the so-called Young King [Sultan Muda], the reigning king's brother, who would rather have the freedom to take his tin out to Selangor or Kedah than to deliver it to the King of Company, as he is obliged to do.¹⁰⁶

De Bruyn proved less tolerant than Crans. The Governor's open denunciation of the Sultan Muda's smuggling in his letter in November of the following year shocked Sultan Alauddin, who took immediate steps to bring about a reconciliation with his brother. The Raja Bendahara was sent upstream to summon the Sultan Muda to court and in November 1779 the latter finally appeared at Rantau Panjang. As a sign of the new harmony which prevailed in the Council, the Sultan Muda's son was married to a daughter of the Raja Bendahara.¹⁰⁷ From this point the Sultan Muda took a leading role in the government, virtually ruling the country for six months from December 1779 until June 1780 when Sultan Alauddin was severely ill with an abscess on his neck.¹⁰⁸ Governor de Bruyn was naturally delighted at this new co-operation. Now, he told Batavia, the Sultan Muda was "as great a friend of the Company as he was formerly of Selangor."¹⁰⁹

106. KA Nederburgh Archives 419, Crans' Report on Melaka, 10 Feb. 1777.

107. KA 3446 OB 1780, Meyer to de Bruyn, 9 Dec. 1778 and KA 3474 OB 1781, Meyer to de Bruyn, 18 Dec. 1779.

108. KA 3474 OB 1781, Meyer to de Bruyn, 5 Jan. 1780, 25 Jan. 1780; KA 3491 OB 1782, Sultan Muda to de Bruyn, n.d.; Meyer to de Bruyn, 17 April 1780.

109. Ibid., de Bruyn to Batavia, 19 Feb. 1780, fo. 35.

Despite the low prices, Sultan Alauddin had succeeded in winning over the leadership of the anti-Dutch faction, albeit temporarily, and he continued his efforts to make the contract acceptable to his court. On occasion a number of prominent nobles were allowed to retain the two reals toll which would normally have gone to the ruler, a policy Sultan Iskandar had adopted many years before to appease his own Raja Muda.¹¹⁰ With the unqualified support of his Council, Sultan Alauddin was able to draw up a new programme of sweeping measures all aimed at preventing smuggling and at improving tin production. Some of his strictest orders were issued in an effort to minimise contact between the people of Perak and Selangor, since Sultan Alauddin felt Bugis encouragement was the basic cause of much clandestine trade. Firstly, all commerce between his subjects and the ruler and nobles of Selangor, most notably Raja Ibrahim, was proscribed. Other traders from Selangor would only be permitted to enter Perak on two conditions; they must accept cash in payment rather than tin and they must not try to sell opium privately. Anyone found disobeying these orders would be severely punished.¹¹¹

Secondly, the royal opium monopoly was strictly enforced. No sales of the drug could be made in Perak, except to Sultan Alauddin who then sold supplies to the Raja Muda, the Raja Bendahara, the Sultan Muda and other favoured nobles for a reasonable price. Other members of the court bought opium from them. In an effort to reduce the amount of opium

110. KA 3446 OB 1780, Meyer to de Bruyn, 10 April 1779; KA 3474 OB 1781, Meyer to de Bruyn, 5 Jan. 1780, 4 Sept. 1779. See above, Chapter V, p. 356.

111. KA 3446 OB 1780, Meyer to de Bruyn, 9 Dec. 1778.

entering Perak, Sultan Alauddin told the ruler of Selangor to send supplies only when requested. If this request were ignored, the envoy would be sent back. Finally, if anyone, regardless of rank, attempted to smuggle opium into the Perak or Larut Rivers, his entire cargo would be confiscated.¹¹²

These attempts to control trade between Selangor and Perak were, at least for a time, successful. In the two months from January 20 to March 26, 1779, only one perahu from Selangor with a cargo of smallgoods arrived in Perak.¹¹³ In April 1780 Resident Meyer informed de Bruyn that, as far as he was aware, no Bugis had come to trade in either Larut or the Perak River area.¹¹⁴ A few months later the Chinese captain, sent upstream to investigate the situation in the Kangsar area, returned with the report that the Bugis normally in the area had disappeared.¹¹⁵

Sultan Alauddin made further efforts to prevent smuggling. Heavy beams were placed across the Terong River and the two major tributaries of the Larut River so perahu could not pass. The Sultan Muda gave his promise as "a friend of the Company" that he would do everything in his power to ensure that tin in the ulu areas was delivered to the Dutch, and with his co-operation it was possible to exert greater central control over outlying areas.¹¹⁶ When the Chinese Captain returned from his

112. Ibid. and 10 April 1779.

113. Ibid., 26 March 1779.

114. KA 3491 OB 1782, Meyer to de Bruyn, 17 April 1780.

115. Ibid., 10 June 1780, 14 Nov. 1780.

116. KA 3446 OB 1780, Meyer to de Bruyn, 9 Dec. 1778; KA 3474 OB 1781,

trip upstream in September 1780, he reported that the people in the Kangsar area were all aware of the instructions which had been sent up from Rantau Panjang. Both Sultan Alauddin and the Sultan Muda had declared that all penghulu in the ulu districts, especially the Penghulu of Kangsar, must take measures to guarantee that no tin whatsoever was smuggled. Any offenders, regardless of rank, would be apprehended and reported to Sultan Alauddin immediately.¹¹⁷ The Penghulu of Terong, who had failed to maintain the Larut blockades effectively, was dismissed and another official appointed in his place.¹¹⁸

Finally, Sultan Alauddin took positive steps to stimulate tin production. In June 1780 the Raja Muda, Raja Culan, was sent to Kampar and Kinta "to encourage the people in the mountains to dig tin." He was able to send down a full 37 bahara but remained in Kinta for another month in order to buy up more tin as well as to trap elephants.¹¹⁹ The success of this energetic policy was reflected in the increased tin deliveries from Perak after 1778, which even the Heeren XVII in far-off Amsterdam noted with approval.¹²⁰ In December 1780 the future seemed even more promising when a mission arrived at Rantau Panjang from the "so-called

116. (cont'd.)

Meyer to de Bruyn, 5 Jan. 1780; KA 3491 OB 1782, Meyer to de Bruyn, 17 April 1780.

117. KA 3491 OB 1782, Meyer to de Bruyn, 10 June 1780, 14 Nov. 1780.

118. Ibid., 17 April 1780.

119. Ibid., 26 July 1780.

120. KA 3594 OB 1786, Extract, Heeren XVII to Batavia, 22 Nov. 1782, fo. 33.

King of Patani," addressing itself to Sultan Alauddin and the Sultan Muda, head of the ulu districts.¹²¹

Although Patani history gives no help in identifying the sender of this mission, it is almost certain that he was the chief of the area later called Reman, a district of Patani bordering on Kedah and Perak.¹²² Apparently seizing the opportunity of a decline in Siamese control, he, like other petty Thai chiefs, was seeking to increase his own position. He informed Sultan Alauddin that he was prepared to relinquish his rights to the mines of Rui and Indah, usurped by Patani during the previous reign, if the Perak ruler would grant him a more imposing title than that of "Datuk Sri Paduka Raja Muda," which had been bestowed upon him by the Yang di Pertuan of Kedah. Sultan Alauddin was naturally pleased at the prospect of regaining control over the rich tin area around Kelian Indah. He immediately despatched a letter in which he granted the chief the title of "Sultan Abdul Jalil Karim Allah Mualim Syah," in the expectation that when the nubat was sent a firm arrangement regarding the mines would be reached.¹²³

The following March the letter to Patani was still unanswered and Sultan Alauddin therefore undertook a pleasure trip to the ulu to investigate the matter personally. He set off with high hopes and even

121. KA 3491 OB 1782, Meyer to de Bruyn, 30 Dec. 1780.

122. The name granted to him does not agree with the list of Patani chiefs given in D. K. Wyatt, "A Thai Version of Newbold's Hikayat Patani," JMBRAS, XL, 2 (1967), 16-37.

123. KA 3491 OB 1782, Meyer to de Bruyn, 30 Dec. 1780. According to one tradition, the founder of Reman's royal line was supposed to be a man of the people, Tok Nik. He said he would not give his children

told the resident he would not return until the Patani chief had fulfilled his part of the bargain.¹²⁴ Sultan Alauddin's mission, however, was unsuccessful,¹²⁵ and while he was away in the ulu another incident occurred which likewise illustrated the recurring obstacle to effective government in Perak. While the ulu could not be safeguarded from incursions by Kedah and Patani, Sultan Alauddin was equally unable to protect the distant coastal areas from attacks by marauding fleets.

In February 1781 news was received that Syed Ali, son of Syed Osman and a nephew of the former ruler of Siak, was pirating between Batu Bara and Pulau Sembilan, off the Perak coast.¹²⁶ An exile from his homeland and without an income, Syed Ali had allied himself with several Selangor anak raja and had turned to piracy. Equipped with eight heavily armed baluk they attacked three ships belonging to Raja Ismail of Siak and a month later took two vessels to Bernam while some of the fleet

123. (cont'd.)

royal names because he himself was not of royal descent. W. W. Skeat, "The Cambridge University Expedition to the Northern Malay states and to Upper Perak, 1899-1900," JMBRAS, XXVI, 4 (1953), 86, n. 48.

124. KA 3491 OB 1782, Meyer to de Bruyn, 18 May 1781.

125. Letters to the Patani chief received no answer and Penghulu Unun, the Patani man who had usurped control in the Indah mines, went into hiding and could not be persuaded to meet Sultan Alauddin to discuss the problems. The sudden death of the wife of the Raja Kecil Besar, a daughter of the late Sultan Mahmud, occurred while the court was at Jambi, far in the ulu, and Sultan Alauddin was therefore forced to return prematurely. Ibid., 7 July, 11 Aug., 26 Sept. 1781.

126. Ibid., Meyer to de Bruyn, 22 Feb. 1781. Syed Ali was the son of Syed Osman and grandson of Raja Alam; his mother was a sister of Sultan Muhammad Ali, son of Raja Kecil. Since Raja Ismail's successful return to Siak in late 1779, Syed Ali had been deprived of his former authority and had turned to piracy. Netscher, De Nederlanders, p. 138.

cruised the Perak Coast between Pangkor and Pulau Pinang.¹²⁷ Early in May, Syed Ali left Bernam for Larut and at Sepatang attacked the settlement of Sultan Alauddin's representative, Nakhoda Hitam, posted there to supervise the blockade of the Larut tributaries. The Nakhoda himself was killed, the houses burned and all the goods, women and children carried off.¹²⁸

For several weeks Syed Ali's ships lurked along the coast and even ventured several miles up the Perak River. A little fleet organised by the Perak Laksamana and the Syahbandar with the help of the people in the Tanjung Putus area escorted a Company ship carrying pleas for help over the sand banks, but the Laksamana scuttled quickly back to the safety of the river when he sighted several enemy vessels near Dinding. As he explained to the resident, he was unable to attack them because they were far too large and well-equipped.¹²⁹

With lower Perak effectively sealed off, rumours were rife. It was widely believed that Syed Ali intended to combine with the remnants of the Kedah anak raja in Bernam and place Perak under total siege, but, as in 1759, when Syed Ali's father had threatened Perak, the anticipated attack did not take place.¹³⁰ One can only speculate what might have occurred had it not been for the presence of the Dutch garrison. Sultan Alauddin was particularly incensed because of the involvement of several

127. KA 3491 OH 1782, Meyer to de Bruyn, 22 Feb. 1781, 20 March 1781.

128. Ibid., Meyer to de Bruyn, 18 May 1781.

129. Ibid. and 7 July 1781.

130. Ibid. and above, Chapter V, pp. 340, 343.

Selangor anak raja in the attack on Sepatang, but his protests to Sultan Salehuddin had little result. For a brief time Syed Ali was even allowed to remain in the compound of the Selangor ruler, but by July he had resumed his pirating activities, this time in the Kelang Straits.¹³¹ Although Sultan Salehuddin eventually led out a fleet against them, it was clear that this was to protect Selangor shipping rather than to punish the pirating anak raja as Sultan Alauddin had demanded. No efforts were made to actually capture them and it was this unsatisfactory situation which greeted the Perak ruler on his return from the ulu at the beginning of September, 1781.¹³² On the other hand, he found that his ally, Governor de Bruyn, had not failed him. Company ships were once again cruising the Straits and impounding vessels whose captains could not produce a VOC pass.¹³³

As 1781 drew to a close, Sultan Alauddin could look back on eight troubled years, during which he had been continually forced to justify his decision to renew the contract. He could well have argued, however, that events had shown the wisdom of his policy. Despite the personal failings of individual Governors, the alliance had remained as a bulwark between Perak and the constant threats from outside. By the end of 1781, it seems that the Perak court had finally been convinced of the necessity of maintaining the contract. There was now no mention of abandoning the

131. KA 3491 OB 1782, Meyer to de Bruyn, 18 May, 7 July, 11 Aug. 1781; Melaka Resolutions, 3 July 1781, fo. 96.

132. Ibid., Meyer to de Bruyn, 26 Sept. 1781.

133. Ibid., de Bruyn to Meyer, 17 Aug. 1781, 24 Sept. 1781.

relationship with the VOC in favour of a closer association with the Bugis. In an uncertain world, it appeared that Perak could rely on Dutch friendship and assume that the Company fort would continue to stand as a guarantee against attack. When disillusionment came it was totally unexpected.

Sultan Alauddin was naturally aware of the long-standing commercial rivalry between the Dutch and the English, but he did not realise that relations between the two powers had deteriorated to the point where the outbreak of war was almost inevitable. The European situation was complicated. In the United Dutch Provinces the pro-English Stadhouder was opposed by the French-oriented "Patriots." In London, therefore, the British Government saw its enemy as the French rather than the Dutch and directed its attention towards preventing the VOC trading empire from falling under French control.¹³⁴ Several studies have pointed out, in fact, that the interests of London and The Hague were in many respects complementary.¹³⁵

Across the world in the Malay archipelago, however, the subtleties of European diplomacy were lost. The relationship between England and the Dutch Republic was seen in terms of their century-old conflict in the Asian trade. As hostility in Europe grew, English traders began to regard their own activities, often rank piracy, as almost heroic. While British ministers in London were not generally anxious to antagonise the

134. Harlow, The Founding of the Second British Empire, I, 124; Tarling, Anglo-Dutch Rivalry, pp. 6-7.

135. Ibid.

Dutch, or even to see the end of the VOC, their compatriots, the country traders, missed no opportunity to foment dislike of the Dutch Company among Malays or to present the English as an alternative ally.¹³⁶ Even in 1778 Governor de Bruyn had openly expressed his fears of the consequences of Dutch involvement in a war between France and England.¹³⁷ If the English attacked Melaka, the town would almost certainly fall.¹³⁸

Affairs in Europe came to a head in 1780, when England declared war on the Dutch Republic to prevent its joining the Russian-sponsored League of Armed Neutrality.¹³⁹ Seven months later the news finally reached Melaka. De Bruyn immediately began to examine his position seriously, not only the defences of Melaka itself, but also those in the outlying post of Perak.¹⁴⁰ With only 36 men, it was obviously much too weak to resist an English attack, but de Bruyn did not wish to abandon this strategically-placed comptoir outright.¹⁴¹ He therefore sent a year's provisions and ordered Resident Meyer to defend himself for as long as possible. He should then surrender on the best possible terms.¹⁴²

136. Harlow, The Founding of the Second British Empire, II, 336; SSR G34/1, "Of the Trade of Rhio and the Establishment of a Factory on Pulau Pyang," 1 Feb. 1769 (unsigned), foll. 69-71.

137. KA 3448, Secret, de Bruyn to Batavia, 28 Dec. 1778, fo. 295.

138. Ibid., 31 March 1779, fo. 352. The relative ease with which Melaka could have been taken is described in a contemporary English document, B.M. Add. Ms. 29210, foll. 235^r-237^r.

139. Tarling, Anglo-Dutch Rivalry, p. 6; P. Geyl, Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse Stam (Amsterdam, 1959), III, 130-135.

140. KA 3495, Secret, de Bruyn to Batavia, 17 Aug. 1781, fo. 137; de Bruyn to Meyer, 9 Nov. 1781, fo. 168.

141. KA 3519, Secret, de Bruyn to Batavia, 15 Jan. 1782, foll. 123-124.

A model of an acceptable document of capitulation was sent to Perak which aimed at preserving Dutch dignity in the eyes of the Malays. The surrender was to be made with full military honours and "[the Dutch] should be permitted to march out of the gate with their arms and baggage, the colours flying and drums beating." A vessel was to be provided to transport the garrison, including wives, children and servants, to Melaka. All sick should be adequately tended and the garrison should be given suitable quarters following the actual surrender. In short, the Dutch were to be treated with respect and their dignity maintained.¹⁴³

Surrender of the Perak fort was the worst that de Bruyn envisaged. The Governor placed great confidence in Meyer and also hoped that any hostile English ships would be kept out by the sand bank across the mouth of the river. The fort, furthermore, had been built on a site which could be defended with ease.¹⁴⁴ What actually happened, however, was at complete variance with de Bruyn's carefully laid plans, and almost destroyed Sultan Alauddin's faith in the alliance, to which he had previously given his whole-hearted support.

According to information compiled from later reports, the Company

142. KA 3495, Secret, de Bruyn to Meyer, 17 Oct. 1781, foll. 147-148; 9 Nov. 1781, fo. 168; de Bruyn to Batavia, 17 Oct. 1781, fo. 147. In Perak there was one ensign (Meyer), one sergeant, three corporals, one drummer, twenty soldiers, one junior surgeon, one bombardier and nine riflemen. KA 3387 OB 1778, de Bruyn to Batavia, 20 Dec. 1777.
143. KA 3495, Secret, de Bruyn to Batavia, 9 Nov. 1781, foll. 170-175. A translated copy of this document is in the British Museum as Add. Ms. 29200, foll. 87F-88V.
144. KA 3519, Secret, de Bruyn to Batavia, 15 Jan. 1782, foll. 123-124.

ship, the Bestendigheid, had left Perak for Melaka on December 4, but had unexpectedly returned when challenged by an English vessel. The mere presence of this enemy ship was seen as evidence that an attack was imminent. This was perhaps the most critical juncture in Perak's relations with the VOC, for there was now a real possibility of evicting the Dutch. The question of whether support should be given to Meyer split the court into two sharply divided factions. On the one hand, Sultan Alauddin left no doubt as to where his loyalties lay. When Meyer requested aid, he was told that he need not fear, for the entire court would be mobilised to stand by the Dutch. The river mouth was to be placed in a state of defence, and the old kubu, as well as two belonging to the Laksamana, would be equipped with men and ammunition.¹⁴⁵ A large number of nobles and their followers were sent downstream and Sultan Alauddin's desire to defend his alliance with the VOC was clearly demonstrated by the speed with which kubu were prepared in order to do battle with the English.¹⁴⁶

There is every indication that the support the Dutch could have received from some of the nobles was substantial. Sultan Alauddin's scribe took Meyer's hand and vowed that "as long as there was blood in their veins" the various Datuk of Tanjung Putus would fight beside the VOC garrison.¹⁴⁷ The Raja Muda, Raja Culan, came downstream himself with

145. KA 2517 OB 1783, Report of H. Quansbaring and J. Reijnfrank, 16 Jan. 1782.

146. Ibid. and Diverse papers, Number 10, Report of Junior Surgeon H. Eggersteyn.

147. Ibid.

the proposal that fifty Malays should be hidden in the brush. As soon as the English set foot on land and had proved their hostile intentions by firing shots, his people would leap on them.¹⁴⁸ Despite the friction which had always existed to a lesser or greater extent between the court and the Dutch, a large proportion of the Assembly showed their willingness to take up arms to protect their Dutch allies and safeguard the contract. This in itself was unprecedented in Perak history.

On the other hand, there were some orang besar who welcomed this opportunity of expelling the VOC and, despite Sultan Alauddin's declarations of support for Meyer, he could not command the obedience of this group. The Syahbandar himself was outside the kuala at the time the English ship appeared and remained there for several days. During this time it was said he had allied himself with the English, and that one of the Laksamana's panglima had actually acted as pilot, guiding the English ship over the treacherous sand bar for a reward of one hundred reals.¹⁴⁹ Governor de Bruyn, when faced with these accounts, preferred to see the Syahbandar as the principal collaborator, for he "possessed not a single virtue." He may have remembered that Meyer had been responsible for reporting the Syahbandar's involvement in the smuggling of opium nearly two years before.¹⁵⁰ But regardless of who assisted the English, the fact

148. KA 3517 OB 1783, Eggersteyn's Report.

149. Ibid. The English ship was apparently small enough to pass through the mud flats which would have kept out larger vessels. KA 3545, Melaka Secret Resolutions, 14 March 1783, fo. 84.

150. Ibid., de Bruyn to Batavia, 31 March 1783 and KA 3446 OB 1780, Meyer to de Bruyn, 4 May 1779 and above, p. 508. On the other hand, de Bruyn was so assured of the Laksamana's goodwill that, when a corpo-

remains that there were elements in the court circle, and among the highest officers of the state, who were prepared to flout Sultan Alauddin's commands in search of the profits to be gained from a trade freed of Dutch dominance.

On December 9, Malays coming from the kuala brought a message to Meyer from the English captain. If an envoy were not sent downstream to negotiate, the fort would be attacked and burnt that very night. As a result of the conference which followed, an ultimatum was issued; either the garrison should surrender, or at noon the next day everything would be destroyed.

This somewhat melodramatic situation was given a certain amount of bathos by the fact that Meyer, who was completing his second term as Perak resident, was in no state to take command. Probably a typical product of the loneliness and isolation of such a post, he was already very drunk and not surprisingly his behaviour was totally contrary to the Governor's carefully formulated plans. The English force was not large, and would certainly have been forced to retreat if Meyer had given positive leadership and had accepted Malay help, but, despite the protests of some of his men, he opted for surrender. "What can I do," he said, "against such a large ship?"¹⁵¹ The model capitulation, though signed

150. (cont'd.)

ral was sent back to Perak to begin rebuilding the fort, he was told to ask either the Laksamana or Sultan Alauddin for help. KA 3542 OB 1784, de Bruyn to King of Perak, 29 Jan. 1783; de Bruyn to [unnamed] Corporal, 29 Jan. 1783. One of the duties of a later commissioner to Perak was to persuade Sultan Alauddin to punish the person who had guided the English into the river. KA 3545, Secret, de Bruyn to Batavia, 31 March 1783, fo. 62.

by both parties, proved a worthless scrap of paper. The Dutch goods were confiscated, their houses, the Company storehouse, the salt store-room, the home of the Chinese captain, the Commander's quarters and the fort itself were all set alight, while the ammunition was carried off to be sold in Selangor or Kedah.¹⁵²

Meyer himself and most of the Dutch employees joined the crew of the English ship, which then sailed off towards Kedah. Sultan Alauddin had in fact doubted the wisdom of posting Meyer to Perak again¹⁵³ and, in view of this, the resident's remarks are illuminating. He told the English Captain that he was very pleased to be relieved from a place where he had been sent for a second time "and of which I have been weary for many years." He left Perak he said, with "great happiness."¹⁵⁴

Sultan Alauddin was shocked at the ignominious surrender of the Dutch post. For nearly a decade he had acted on the assumption that, whatever happened, the fort and the garrison would stand. Meyer's

151. De Bruyn felt that the garrison could have forced the English ship, the crew of which consisted of about 180 people, to leave. Some members of the garrison had, in fact, protested against Meyer's decision, the Sergeant reading out the instructions contained in de Bruyn's letter. Meyer maintained that he had been told to surrender if the opposition were too great and argued that he had to think of the welfare of his wife and family. KA 3517 OB 1783, de Bruyn to Quansbaring and Reijnfrank, 29 Dec. 1781; Quansbaring's Report, 16 Jan. 1782.

152. *Ibid.*, Quansbaring's Report, 16 Jan. 1782.

153. In 1778 Sultan Alauddin had expressed his concern at the assigning of Bartolomeus Meyer to Perak for a second time, since this had never been done before. KA 3446 OB 1780, Alauddin Mansur Syah to de Bruyn, 26 June 1778.

154. KA 3517 OB 1783, Eggersteyn's Report.

cowardice was particularly galling. The resident had made no effort to confer with the court Assembly over his decision to surrender and he had even tried to turn the English against Perak. The ruler's anger is clearly evident in a letter received by de Bruyn in late December.

This letter only serves to inform my friend and the Company that the Captain of the lodge has gone over to the English without previously consulting me or any of my nobles. He has surrendered himself and all the effects, the ammunition and weapons as well as the fort. He has also given the English bad advice and this means they mistrust anyone from Perak. I am informing you of what has happened with regard to the English. What will the Company decide to do now? If there is any decision, it must be taken quickly and I must be informed.¹⁵⁵

Sultan Alauddin, perhaps more than the Dutch themselves, realised that this was a most critical point. With the razing of the Company fort, the one unquestioned and tangible advantage of the VOC alliance had disappeared. The entire relationship between Perak and the Dutch now hung in the balance.

¹⁵⁵. Ibid., King of Perak to de Bruyn, trans. 25 Dec. 1781.

Chapter IX

THE FINAL YEARS OF THE DUTCH ALLIANCE

The unexpected and ignominious rout of the Company's garrison in December 1781 was a watershed in Perak's dealings with the VOC. Until 1795, when the Dutch finally left, the alliance was constantly under fire, both from the faction within the Perak Assembly which resented the Company monopoly and from Dutch administrators in Batavia who saw the maintenance of the little fort at Tanjung Putus as a heavy and unwarranted expense. Now it was not only Sultan Alauddin who was fighting to preserve the treaty. One of the dominant themes during this period is the degree to which the last two Melaka Governors, Pieter de Bruyn and Abraham Couperus, endeavoured, by persuasion, argument and threats, to convince their superiors and the Perak court that the contract should be upheld.

Batavia had long considered the fort in Perak to be a financial burden and when it fell in 1781 the Governor-General was not particularly anxious to see it re-established. Governor de Bruyn and the Melaka Council, on the other hand, were horrified at the prospect of losing the income which came from sales of surplus tin, still an important source of revenue for Melaka. De Bruyn therefore did his best to ensure that the ties between the VOC and Perak were not broken. On December 25, 1781,

the very day he received Sultan Alauddin's letter, the Governor made a number of swift decisions all directed towards maintaining the Company's links with Perak. A VOC flag would be flown on the spot where the fort had stood as a continuing reminder of Dutch ownership; letters were sent immediately to the Perak court to denounce Meyer and to assure Sultan Alauddin "who has always trusted the Company that he will be given all help against his enemies." The alliance still held and the Dutch would not desert their friend. Until the fort was rebuilt, however, de Bruyn suggested that Perak traders bring their own tin to Melaka, where they would be paid 34 reals the bahara, two reals more than the contracted price.¹

Despite Sultan Alauddin's objection that he could not enforce measures against smuggling and doubted the willingness of his subjects to undertake the now dangerous voyage to Melaka,² de Bruyn was not easily deterred from his aim of re-establishing the post in Perak and did his best to stimulate a similar feeling among the lukewarm Councillors in Batavia. He argued that the Dutch presence in Perak was vital to prevent the Bugis gaining a hold there, or the English moving in to a trading vacuum. Should Perak fall to either the Bugis or the English, a crucial foothold on the peninsula would be lost and, if the fort were not rebuilt, Perak would become another refuge for pirates and a danger to Straits shipping. Further, continued de Bruyn, Sultan Alauddin was well-disposed

1. KA 3517 OB 1783, de Bruyn to King of Perak, 29 Dec. 1781 and 15 Feb. 1782.

2. Ibid., King of Perak to de Bruyn, 16 Jan. 1782.

towards the Company and had nothing to do with Meyer's betrayal. There was little danger of English ships entering the river again and a post which was properly equipped and commanded by a responsible man could easily withstand a force like that to which Meyer had surrendered.³

De Bruyn's efforts on behalf of the alliance were hamstrung because of Dutch weakness. Initially, two Company cruisers were assigned to patrol the Perak River, but the decline of Dutch military might is attested by the fact that, for the first time, a Melaka Governor encouraged the Perak ruler to prepare his own defences as an insurance against further attacks.⁴ Rumours of total Dutch collapse swept through the archipelago and it was widely believed that "within two or three months" the English would send a force to take Melaka and then proceed on to Java and Ambon.⁵ Though the English were unsuccessful in winning the support of Malay rulers, official documents show that an assault on Melaka was actually under consideration.⁶ Perak itself was caught in the wake of frenzied VOC military preparations when the withdrawal of the Company cruisers needed for Melaka's defence left the country exposed and defenceless.⁷

3. KA 3545, Secret, de Bruyn to Batavia, 14 March 1783, foll. 82-86.

4. KA 3517 OB 1783, de Bruyn to King of Perak, 29 Dec. 1781 and 15 Feb. 1782.

5. KA 3519, Secret, Encik Camiet to Tentief Sembran Baitands Poele, trans. 30 Jan. 1782, fo. 145.

6. KA 3517 OB 1783, de Bruyn to Batavia, 25 March 1782, fo. 70; D. K. Bassett, "Thomas Forrest: and Eighteenth Century English Mariner," JMBRAS, XXIV, 2 (1961), 113; Harlow, The Founding of the Second British Empire, I, 141-143; B.M. Add. Ms. 29210 gives a detailed analysis of the benefits Melaka would bring the English if it were conquered;

The implications of these developments were not lost on Sultan Alauddin. In the previous chapter we have seen how, for eight years prior to the English attack, he had thrown his weight behind the contract and the Dutch alliance. The destruction of the fort caused him to reassess the nature of his relationship with the Company in an atmosphere similar to that which came in the aftermath of the Pulau Gontong episode in 1759. Dutch promises of protection seemed less reliable as Perak Malays reflected on the burning of the post by the English and the flight of the resident. Rumours of impending Company collapse were fully credible to those who had witnessed the humbling of the VOC representatives at Tanjung Putus. These rumours were reinforced by the fact that, from 1781 to 1783, there were only three Dutchmen stationed in Perak, and they lived in the Laksamana's kampung, receiving their monthly allowances and provisions from Sultan Alauddin, who acted as their patron and protector.⁸

In July 1782 de Bruyn finally received the order from Batavia to rebuild the fort, but there were repeated delays and a resident did not arrive in Perak until January 1785. For over three years there was only minimal contact between Melaka and Perak, and during this period trade

6. (cont'd.)

see also KA 3542 OB 1784, Raja Haji to de Bruyn, 9 Oct. 1782; Netscher, De Nederlanders, pp. 137-138.

7. KA 3530, Secret, de Bruyn to Batavia, 13 Sept. 1782, fo. 92.

8. KA 3517 OB 1783, de Bruyn to Quansbaring and Reijnfrank, 29 Dec. 1781; de Bruyn to King of Perak, 29 Dec. 1781; KA 3545, Secret, de Bruyn to Batavia, 31 March 1783, foll. 61-62; KA 3519, Secret, de Bruyn to Batavia, 2 March 1782.

with other Europeans and the Bugis was almost unhindered. In November 1783, for example, the English country trader, Thomas Forrest, came to Perak and was given an audience at court which he described in his Voyage to Calcutta and the Mergui Archipelago.⁹ Two years later, when the new resident reached Perak, he met the Indian scribe leaving to trade in Kedah. Another Indian ship from Tranquebar, flying under a Danish flag, was buying tin for Sultan Abdullah himself, while a French ship and an English vessel from Bengal were anchored in the river.¹⁰

The presence of these ships represented a new trading freedom which Perak Malays were loathe to surrender. De Bruyn's offer of 34 reals the bahara at Melaka had little attraction beside the 36 or 37 reals which they could get at home.¹¹ In March 1782 the Governor informed Batavia that no tin had been delivered for over three weeks, and it was doubtful whether more would appear before the fort was rebuilt.¹² From April 1782 until January 1783 less than ten perahu from Perak arrived in Melaka, and no tin was included in any cargo.¹³ Only 117,568 lbs. of tin were received during the financial year 1781/82.¹⁴

9. Thomas Forrest, Voyage from Calcutta to the Mergui Archipelago (London, 1792), pp. 27-28.

10. KA 3594 OB 1786, Wilner to de Bruyn, 30 Jan. 1785.

11. KA 3542 OB 1784, Melaka Resolutions, 28 Feb. 1783, fo. 66; King of Perak to de Bruyn, 11 Feb. 1783.

12. KA 3517 OB 1783, de Bruyn to Batavia, 25 March 1782, fo. 59.

13. Shipping Lists, Arriving and Departing Ships, KA 3517 OB 1783, KA 3542 OB 1784.

14. KA 3545, Secret, de Bruyn to Batavia, 31 March 1783, fo. 62; Lewis, The Dutch East India Company, p. 103.

This period, when the restraints of the VOC monopoly were absent for the first time in nearly forty years, coincided with one in which Perak was remarkably free from outside threats. Amicable relations with Kedah continued and apparently differences with Selangor were resolved, for a Dutch envoy who visited the Perak court in 1782 remarked on the number of Bugis present.¹⁵ In these favourable circumstances the Perak Assembly refused point-blank to allow the Dutch to return on the old terms. They insisted that the price be raised, and the principle of muafakat or government consensus could not be set aside, despite the pro-Company attitude of both Sultan Alauddin and the Raja Muda. VOC envoys who went to Perak in January and March 1783 to supervise the construction of the new fort encountered a court united in their determination to accept nothing less than 34 reals the bahara.¹⁶

De Bruyn, seeking a reason for the new truculence in the Perak Assembly, found a scapegoat in the Bugis. He claimed that they were in league with the principal Perak nobles and their influence was the root cause of the Company's problems in Perak. Even a speedy return to Tanjung Putus might not solve matters; the only real solution, argued de Bruyn, was the total eradication of Bugis competition by a surprise attack on Riau and Selangor.¹⁷

The vehemence with which de Bruyn pressed for an attack on the

15. KA 3542 OB 1784, Melaka Resolutions, 28 Feb. 1783, foll. 66-67.

16. Ibid., Melaka Resolutions, 28 Feb. 1783, fo. 66; King of Perak to de Bruyn, 11 Feb. 1783.

17. KA 3545, Secret, de Bruyn to Batavia, 14 March 1783, fo. 87.

Bugis was motivated by his conviction that they, even more than the English, were the danger of Melaka's trade. His invoking of the Bugis threat was the more convincing because it was made in the context of the obvious hostility of Raja Haji, who had succeeded as Yamtuan Muda of Riau in 1777. The latter was particularly angry over the capture of a British ship in Riau in 1782 which de Bruyn had authorised. Demanding a share of the cargo and threatening retribution if his claims were not honoured, Raja Haji had massed a large force of over 2,600 men in Muar during October 1782. A few months later Selangor had also made ready a fleet of armed ships,¹⁸ and the threat of a Bugis assault on Melaka, perhaps with the assistance of the English, continued through 1783. De Bruyn was therefore forced to postpone his plans for re-establishing the Perak fort. Deciding to take the initiative in a war which seemed almost certain, he sent a fleet to place Riau under siege, an unsuccessful expedition which only served to feed Raja Haji's anger.¹⁹ It had been many years since there had been such enmity between the Bugis and the Dutch Company.

This hostility, and the events in Riau, disturbed Sultan Alauddin

18. See Lewis, The Dutch East India Company, pp. 244-252 and Netscher, De Nederlanders, pp. 169-174 for a discussion of Raja Haji's grievance and the consequent action taken. Also see KA 3545, Secret, de Bruyn to Batavia, 14 Oct. 1782, fo. 24; 14 March 1783, fo. 87.
19. Riau was placed under siege in November 1782, but an outright attack ended in disaster and the siege was raised. The diversion of Dutch ships to Riau caused another delay in the rebuilding of the Dutch fort in Perak. Lewis, The Dutch East India Company, pp. 252-253; Netscher, De Nederlanders, p. 187; KA 3627 OB 1787, King of Perak to de Bruyn, 5 Aug. 1783; de Bruyn to King of Perak, 24 Oct. 1783; Melaka Resolutions, 20 Sept. 1783, fo. 115.

greatly, since a war between his Selangor neighbours and the Dutch would almost inevitably involve Perak. Faced by the recurrent problem of maintaining the diplomatic balance between two hostile factions, Sultan Alauddin decided to attempt mediation. A large Perak delegation was entrusted with a letter for Raja Haji at Riau, and on December 23rd the envoys arrived in Melaka to inform the Governor of their mission.²⁰ Sultan Alauddin's letter to the Governor asked that the war against Rau be discontinued and hostilities cease, "for those of Riau are my children and those of Selangor my grandchildren. . . . I shall send to Riau in the name of God and try to see if my son [Raja Haji] will listen to the good advice of an old man. I will also deal with Selangor in the same way." He begged that the Governor comply with this request, as a token of the friendship and the contract which existed between them. If it were refused, he could do little more, since he was "a person who possesses no great power" unlike his friend in Melaka.²¹

Sultan Alauddin's effort to mediate in the quarrel between the Bugis and the Dutch is perhaps the most impressive act of his reign. It was something which Sultan Iskandar in 1756 did not attempt and is a tribute to the high value Sultan Alauddin placed on peace in the area. In times of warfare it was the small weak states like Perak which suffered; undisturbed, they could begin to fulfil something of their potential. It is significant, too, that Sultan Alauddin felt his letters to Riau, Selangor and Melaka would influence the Bugis leaders and the Dutch

20. KA 3627 OB 1787, Arriving Ships, 23 Dec. 1783.

21. Ibid., King of Perak to de Bruyn, 5 Nov. 1783.

Governor. Only a few years before Sultan Alauddin had sent his "fatherly advice" to the ruler of Kedah, advocating forgiveness of the Kedah anak raja as a means of avoiding future conflict.²² He fully expected his advice to be accepted and it was in the same spirit that he had despatched his letters to Riau and Melaka. Himself related to the Bugis leaders and a ruler of the state which had been a faithful ally of the Dutch for nearly four decades, Sultan Alauddin felt that he had a role to play which could contribute to the restoration of peace.

His efforts were not successful. In his answer to Sultan Alauddin's letter, de Bruyn unequivocally expressed his hostility towards the Bugis. The envoys were told not to go to Riau because the former relationship between the Company and Riau had been totally severed and because Raja Haji's behaviour towards the Dutch made reconciliation impossible. With this message, the envoys returned to Perak and, even as they left, reports were received in Melaka of Bugis preparations for a full-scale war.²³

The ignoble Dutch retreat from Riau in January 1784 after the failure of the siege made de Bruyn even more determined to break Bugis power in the area. He was also anxious to win back the favour of the High Government in Batavia, which had been extremely displeased at his

22. KA 3491 OB 1782, Meyer to de Bruyn, 30 Dec. 1780. This advice was in fact ignored, and Sultan Abdullah ordered the Kedah anak raja, whom he had placed under arrest while they were planning another attack on Kedah, to be put to death.

23. KA 3627 OB 1787, de Bruyn to King of Perak, 8 Nov. 1783; Departing Ships, 10 Jan. 1784; W. E. Maxwell, "Raja Haji," JSBRAS, XXII (Dec. 1890), 188.

irresponsible wastage of men and ships.²⁴ But de Bruyn apparently did not realise the speed with which Raja Haji would move. Only two weeks after the return of the Dutch fleet, Bugis forces landed at Tanjung Keling, five miles from Melaka. Once again the town lay under siege.

Then [wrote the Melaka Syahbandar], we were in great embarrassment. Pieter de Bruyn, inexperienced and timorous, shut himself up in the fort; the new Vice Governor, a valorious and capable gentleman²⁵ took the command in the outlying works on one side and I took charge on the other side. The enemy hemmed us in closely, except on the seaside.²⁶

Day by day the Melaka register records the continuing harassment of the Bugis troops during a siege which lasted over five months.²⁷ Despite de Bruyn's efforts to hide the weakness of Dutch resistance from his superiors, the superiority of Bugis military power was clear. In the words of Raja Ali Haji, "As time went on, the Melaka people were defeated more and more, until the whole of the territory around the town had been reduced by Raja Haji, and nothing remained to the Dutch but the town of Melaka itself and the fortress."²⁸ The Melaka Syahbandar himself felt that defeat was inevitable. "Raja Haji had ever so many resources,

24. Netscher, De Nederlanders, p. 187; Hoyneck van Papendracht, "Some Old Private Letters," pp. 21-22. One of the ships lost was Malakka's Welvaren, "our strongest vessel" and with it "the flower of our crews."

25. Lemker, the former vice-governor, had been on board Malakka's Welvaren. Hoyneck van Panendracht, "Some Old Private Letters," p. 21.

26. Ibid., p. 22.

27. Maxwell, "Raja Haji," pp. 188-204.

28. Raja Ali Haji, Tuhfat al-Nafis, p. 204.

even more than the notorious Haidar Naik²⁹ on the Coast; he could afford to lose a thousand men as easily as he could bear the loss of ten. And he did not need to pay his men nor to provide for their subsistence; in that way one can wage war for a long time."³⁰

Had it not been for the arrival of an East India Squadron, which included six warships and carried over six thousand men, Melaka might well have fallen. On June 1 the fleet sailed to Teluk Ketapang where Raja Haji's forces had assembled. Seventeen days later a landing was made, and, in the ensuing battle, Raja Haji was killed. His death signalled the flight of the besieging forces and on the following morning a deputation was sent from Melaka to "congratulate the Honourable Heer Jacob Pieter van Braam [Commander of the Squadron] on his victory. At sunrise a salute of 21 guns was fired from the castle walls in honour of the joyful event."³¹

The victory of the Dutch over the Bugis revived some of de Bruyn's former confidence in his dealings with Perak, especially since Raja Haji's death came only three weeks after the signing of a peace agreement between England and the Dutch Republic on May 29, 1784. Since 1781 Melaka had been at war, first with the English and then with the Bugis

29. Possibly a reference of Haidar Ali, Sultan of Mysore, who had been engaged in wars against the British from 1788 until 1782, when he was succeeded by his son Tipu Sultan.

30. Hoyneck van Papendrecht, "Some Old Private Letters," p. 22.

31. Maxwell, "Raja Haji," pp. 202-206; Hoyneck van Papendrecht, "Some Old Private Letters," p. 22; Raja Ali Haji, Tuhfat al-Nafis, pp. 204-207.

but "now," exclaimed the Dutch Syahbandar, "we are at peace with everybody."³²

De Bruyn did not hesitate to capitalise on the rethinking which would undoubtedly result from Dutch repulse of their enemies. On July 1, less than two weeks after Raja Haji's death, de Bruyn sent a jubilant letter to Sultan Alauddin, informing him of the Bugis defeat and the "glorious victory" of the Dutch. Their government had sent men and ships intended to "protect their true allies and chastise disloyal and pact-breaking princes." As soon as the Company's enemies had been totally destroyed, the VOC would return to Perak. In the meantime, Sultan Alauddin should sever any existing connections with the Bugis.³³

This letter was followed shortly after by another from Captain van Braam, the head of the Dutch fleet which had been sent to raise the siege of Melaka. He told Sultan Alauddin of the VOC's successful attack on Selangor, the flight of Sultan Ibrahim to Pahang, and the installation of Sultan Muhammad Ali of Siak as ruler of Selangor.³⁴ This letter had hardly been received when another arrived, bringing news of the fall of Riau. The tide appeared to be sweeping inexorably in favour of the Dutch. "I hope," wrote de Bruyn, "that all the kings and princes in this area shall take warning from the sad fate of the Bugis and their following and never oppose the might of the Company or break contracts concluded with it."³⁵

32. Farling, Anglo-Dutch Rivalry, p. 11; Hoyneck van Papendrecht, "Some Old Private Letters," p. 22.

33. KA 3594 OB 1786, de Bruyn to King of Perak, 2 July 1784.

34. Ibid., van Braam to King of Perak, 6 Aug. 1784.

The triumph of the VOC and the rout of the Bugis in Selangor and Riau meant that Dutch prestige soared. The Melaka garrison might not have acquitted itself well, but there was no doubt as to the superiority of Dutch forces generally. Faced by this realisation, the anti-alliance element within the Perak court was, for the present, silenced. Once more the arguments of those who favoured the retention of the Company contract were heard in the Perak Assembly. Sultan Alauddin himself wrote to say he was overjoyed with the Dutch victory and with the prospect of their return to Perak in the near future.³⁶

In early 1785 Johan Wilner arrived in Perak as the new resident and representative of a governor who now felt he could deal with the Malays from a position of strength. Tin was once again to be delivered for 32 reals the bahara as contracted in the treaty of 1773. As in 1778, de Bruyn was sufficiently confident to make an outright threat. If smuggling continued, and if it was felt that Sultan Alauddin condoned it, then van Braam's warship, which protected the Company's friends but punished its enemies, might well pay an unwelcome visit to Perak. This, wrote de Bruyn, could cause "much unhappiness."³⁷

35. Ibid., de Bruyn to King of Perak, 24 Nov. 1784.

36. This letter is preserved in the van Braam Collection, Admiralty Archives 71. See also KA 3594 OB 1786, King of Perak to de Bruyn, 1 Aug. 1784 and Appendix F.

37. The lodge was rebuilt and a total of 67 men assigned there. It is the remains of this lodge which would have been seen and described by A. C. Kruijt, "Iets over de Vestiging der Nederlanders in Perak," TBC, 33 (1890), 596-599. See also KA 3594 OB 1786, Melaka Resolutions, 14 Dec. 1784, fo. 211; de Bruyn to Wilner, 22 Dec. 1784; de Bruyn to King of Perak, 22 Dec. 1784.

Malay protests at the low tin price and the unwelcome proscription of trade with other Europeans were swept aside. With the knowledge that VOC power was once again unquestioned and that Sultan Alauddin considered the alliance vital for Perak's security, de Bruyn assumed a more domineering attitude towards Perak's relations with other trading nations. Sultan Alauddin was forced to accept instructions from Melaka which would have aroused immediate objections from either of his brothers. In 1786 the resident told him he was not to receive any letters from, or give audience to, any foreign trader unless the resident was personally present. The latter, indeed, ordered several European ships to leave without referring the matter to the court at all.³⁸ The people of Perak were informed that anything they required could be purchased from Melaka either by sending perahu there or by despatching a representative with one of the returning Company vessels. Nor did de Bruyn hesitate to refer to the recent Dutch victories to add force to his argument. The fate of the Bugis was repeatedly cited as an object lesson for those with any thought of defying the Company's orders.³⁹ No longer does the Governor use the "soft words and friendly manner" which had been advocated over three decades before. In the face of Dutch military superiority, Sultan Alauddin had little choice but to bow to the Company's demands and accept de Bruyn's increasing interference in Perak affairs.

But Dutch experience in Perak had shown that such interference was

38. KA 3657, Secret, Wilner and Diederhoveer to de Bruyn, 10 Dec. 1786;
KA 3626 OB 1787, Wilner to de Bruyn, 18 May 1786.

39. KA 3626 OB 1787, de Bruyn to Wilner, 21 July 1785.

not welcomed, and, as de Bruyn's successor was to emphasise, threats could not compel Perak Malays to observe a treaty which brought them to economic benefits.⁴⁰ The Dutch may have established a dominance in the Melaka Straits based on force of arms, but neither the defeat nor the Bugis nor the proscription of European trade could guarantee the Company's economic position. After 1786 the commercial attractions of the newly established English settlement at Penang negated any advantages which might have accrued to the Dutch through its military victories.

Perak was particularly affected by the founding of Penang, for Kedah itself had always been a favoured market. Now the attraction of the area was doubled. Besides offering a higher price for tin, the English had a good supply of opium which was fifty reals cheaper per chest than that offered by the Dutch. Light fully realised the importance of opium and large quantities were sent to Penang specifically to lure buyers and to expand trade.⁴¹ It proved impossible for de Bruyn to compel the Perak Malays to buy only VOC opium, a policy he had tried to enforce in 1785.⁴² Penang also offered a much better market for Indian cloth because of the number of private traders there. As de Bruyn pointed out, the VOC simply could not compete with the variety or cheapness of the textiles which these traders, and especially the English, brought to Penang.⁴³

40. See below, p. 584.

41. KA 3626 OB 1787, de Bruyn to Wilner, 19 Sept. 1785; KA 3655, Secret, de Bruyn to Batavia, 10 March 1787, fo. 426; KA 3833, Secret, Couperus to Batavia, 10 Feb. 1790, fo. 424; KA 3857, Secret, Couperus to Batavia, 15 Feb. 1791.

The establishment of what quickly developed into a flourishing entrepot came at a time when the fortunes of the VOC had reached a nadir. The Company itself was virtually bankrupt and in 1781 the administrators had been forced to ask the United Provinces for a large subsidy.⁴⁴ This loan, only the first of a series, had little effect on Company finances. In 1786 the Melaka Syahbandar told his family in Amsterdam, "As regards the closing of the books, the Company's affairs are in a bad and terrible way; it gets terrible blows; its trade is at a standstill and it is badly in want of funds."⁴⁵ By 1787 a high Company official in Europe was even negotiating with the British Government for "some degree of present assistance for the almost immediate bankruptcy with which they [the VOC] are threatened."⁴⁶

At the same time, English traders had won a major victory in the peace negotiations of May 1784, which followed the cessation of hostilities between Britain and the Dutch Republic. The British had pressed for the concept of free trade in Asian waters, but a mare clausum or closed sea policy had been the mainstay of Dutch trading operations for almost two centuries. If the Company's right to monopolies was not recognised,

42. KA 3626 OB 1787, de Bruyn to Wilner, 19 Sept. 1785; Wilner to de Bruyn, 9 Oct. 1785, 8 Dec. 1785.

43. Harrison, "Trade in the Straits of Malacca," p. 60.

44. Boxer, The Dutch Seaborne Empire, p. 298; Molsbergen, De Nederlandsch Oost Indische Compagnie, p. 207.

45. Hoynck van Papendracht, "Some Old Private Letters," p. 19.

46. Tarling, Anglo-Dutch Rivalry, p. 17; Harlow, The Founding of the Second British Empire, II, 365.

there was little else which could shore up its flagging Asian trade. Despite Dutch protests, however, the sixth article of the Anglo-Dutch treaty provided for "free navigation to the Eastern Seas"; the consequent effects on Dutch trade, notes one scholar, were catastrophic.⁴⁷

In Perak, Sultan Alauddin was again forced into the position of defending an unpopular contract against the criticism of a powerful faction within the Assembly. There can be no doubt that he did his best to force his subjects to deliver their tin to the Dutch. Some of the measures introduced were unprecedented in their severity. Sentences of death and corporal punishment for example, were uncommon in eighteenth century Perak⁴⁸ and confiscation of goods had been the normal punishment for smuggling. In March 1786, however, a man who had been found smuggling tin to Kedah was enslaved, together with his wife and children, and a year later another offender was put to death.⁴⁹ The penghulu in ulu Kangsar and the Terong River area were ordered to exercise extreme vigilance to prevent tin being taken out to Kedah and Penang.⁵⁰ Sultan Alauddin also advocated a strengthening of the Dutch garrison and cruisers

47. Nicholas Tarling, "The Relationship between British Policy and the Extent of Dutch Power in the Malay Archipelago, 1784-1871," Australian Journal of Politics and History, IV (1958), 181; Boxer, The Dutch Seaborne Empire, p. 298; Harlow, The Founding of the Second British Empire, II, 367.

48. KA 3653 OB 1788, Wilner and Diederhove to de Bruyn, 10 Dec. 1786.

49. KA 3626 OB 1787, Wilner to de Bruyn, 26 March 1786; KA 3704 OB 1789, King of Perak to de Bruyn, 2 Aug. 1787.

50. KA 3626 OB 1787, de Bruyn to King of Perak, 15 Nov. 1786; KA 3653 OB 1788, King of Perak to de Bruyn, 12 Dec. 1786; KA 3704 OB 1789, de Bruyn to King of Perak, 18 Oct. 1787.

to patrol the coast. Soon afterwards de Bruyn sent out two ships from Melaka and the people in the Larut area were instructed to buy whatever goods they needed from the captains, who had been issued with a royal letter from Sultan Alauddin explaining the purpose of the cruising.⁵¹

In spite of these measures both de Bruyn and Sultan Alauddin realised they were fighting against losing odds. De Bruyn told Governor-General Altung that it was impossible to inspect all native craft⁵² and there was no means of preventing trade between northern Perak and Penang. As Thomas Forrest, the English country trader, wrote, "the Dutch contract with the King [or Perak] for ten Spanish dollars per pikul, but much of it is smuggled to Pulau Pinang by way of Larut and Kuala Kangsar."⁵³ In 1787 another English trader noted that "with all [the Dutch] precautions, the quantity [of tin] they receive is greatly lessened since the settlement of this island."⁵⁴ In August of that year Sultan Alauddin addressed a desperate plea to de Bruyn. Illicit trade had grown worse and even the execution of one smuggler had not proved any deterrent. His loss and that of the Company grew steadily greater. "What does my friend consider the best way to oppose this, since I do not know what to do?"⁵⁵

51. KA 3653 OB 1788, de Bruyn to Diedenhover, 30 Jan. 1787; King of Perak to de Bruyn, 12 Dec. 1786; KA 3657, Secret, Wilner and Diedenhover to de Bruyn, 10 Dec. 1786; KA 3704 OB 1789, King of Perak to de Bruyn, 27 Nov. 1787.

52. KA 3655, Secret, de Bruyn to Batavia, 10 March 1787.

53. Forrest, A Voyage from Calcutta, p. 27.

54. SSR G34/2 Glass to Gov., 29 April 1789 (FWCP 13 July 1787), fo. 52.

55. KA 3704 OB 1789, King of Perak to de Bruyn, 2 Aug. 1787.

To Sultan Alauddin and now, to de Bruyn, the answer was obvious; the price of tin must be raised. The Melaka Governor, however, was completely unable to convince Batavia that such a move was necessary.⁵⁶ He had to fall back on deputations to the Perak court, but predictably these failed to convince the Assembly that the contract was to their advantage. In all these discussions Company envoys found their principal opposition came from the Sultan Muda, who had once again emerged as leader of the anti-Dutch faction.

In 1781 the Sultan Muda had been described as a man of great power, the people being more in awe of him than of the ruler himself.⁵⁷ His influence had increased as Sultan Alauddin, feeling the pressures of advancing age, relinquished much of his hold on the government. Although respected, the Sultan Muda does not appear to have been popular. The resident reported that he was widely feared because of his cruelty and extortion. He had confiscated the goods of a number of people and those who opposed him had been killed.⁵⁸ Further, it was suspected that the Sultan Muda had poisoned the only son of Sultan Alauddin, who had already been declared heir to the throne, and also the Raja Muda, Raja Culan, who was next in line.

The Dutch were disturbed at the death of the Raja Kecil Sulung, who had apparently overcome his youthful vagaries and now wielded considerable influence over his old father. At his death de Bruyn told the

56. KA 3655, Secret, de Bruyn to Batavia, 10 March 1787, foll. 416, 418.

57. See above, Chapter VIII, p. 510.

58. KA 3704 OB 1789, de Bruyn to Silvester, 19 Dec. 1787.

Governor-General that the Company had lost "a good friend" in Perak, one who had great regard for the Dutch.⁵⁹ His death is indeed strange, since it occurred without any prior warning or reports of illness. As a supporter of the contract and heir to the throne, the Raja Kecil Sulung would have represented a real threat to the Sultan Muda and it is not unlikely that he was put out of the way.

The death of the Raja Muda, Raja Culan, is not so easily imputed to the Sultan Muda, for he had been ill at various times, was already old, and died at a time when smallpox was decimating the population.⁶⁰ Nonetheless, he too was an active supporter of the VOC and the legend of Raja Culan's unnatural death may therefore have some basis in fact.⁶¹ Regardless of the truth of these accusations, it was widely believed that the Sultan Muda had killed both the Raja Kecil Sulung and Raja Culan so that no one would stand in the way of his succession. It was obvious to everyone that Sultan Alauddin, now very old, did not have long to live.⁶²

Governor de Bruyn was justifiably concerned about the future of

59. KA 3594 OB 1786, Wilner to de Bruyn, 30 Jan. 1785, 3 April 1785; de Bruyn to Batavia, 15 June 1785, fo. 49.

60. KA 3594 OB 1786, Raja Muda to de Bruyn, 19 Jan. 1785. In this letter Raja Culan told the Governor he was "sickly and weak." He died on February 10, 1787, and was called Marhum Pulau Juar. KA 3704 OB 1789, Diedenhoover to de Bruyn, 15 Feb. 1787; Silsilah Melaka Kerajaan Negeri Perak, fo. 31, line 5.

61. Winstedt was told that Raja Culan had been stabbed to death by a jealous husband, although Raja Culan's descendent, Raja Culan ibni Sultan Abdullah, said that this story was not true and that his namesake had died a natural death while holding the office of Raja Muda. Winstedt's notes, Misa Melayu, pp. 195, 208.

62. KA 2704 OB 1789, de Bruyn to Silvester, 19 Dec. 1787.

Company-Perak relations should the Sultan Muda succeed to the throne. There had been a brief period when he had co-operated with the Dutch, but in 1785 the Governor had noted with suspicion the Sultan Muda's willingness to give shelter to a Bugis prince, Arung Temujung, who had acted as general (veldheer) for the Selangor troops and who had fled to Perak after their defeat by the Dutch in 1784.⁶³ In Dutch eyes the Sultan Muda had committed the heinous crime of being "connected with the Bugis of Riau and Selangor," and in 1787 de Bruyn described him as "the greatest smuggler in Perak," a man who was said to encourage the people to deliver their tin to him by offering four reals beyond the VOC price.⁶⁴

Unable to make the contract economically attractive, de Bruyn felt that his only recourse was intimidation of the treaty's main opponent. He therefore asked van Braam's successor, William Silvester, to write in strong terms to the Perak court. The Governor hoped that these letters, backed by the threat of the Dutch fleet, would be successful in stimulating the waning tin delivery.⁶⁵

63. Arung Temujung was a Bugis noble distantly related to the King of Bone. He had fled in disgrace from Sulawesi but had gained some distinction in the Malay world because of his claim to be a brother of Bone's ruler. He had come to Perak in 1777 and 1779, but in 1780 went to Selangor where he married a daughter of Sultan Salehuddin. KA 3474 OB 1781, Meyer to de Bruyn, 18 Dec. 1779, 5 Jan. 1780, 25 Jan. 1780; Raja Ali Haji, Tuhfat al-Nafis, p. 210; KA 2920, Secret, Gov. Sinkelaar of Makassar to Batavia, 25 May 1761, fo. 67; KA 3594, Secret, Gov. Reiker of Makassar to Batavia, 28 May 1781, foll. 361-362.

64. KA 3704 OB 1789, de Bruyn to Silvester, 19 Dec. 1787; KA 3626 OB 1787, de Bruyn to Wilner, 21 July 1785.

65. KA 3704 OB 1789, de Bruyn to Wilner, 18 Oct. 1787.

Silvester's letters, couched in the same language as those sent by de Bruyn nine years before, arrived in Perak in November 1787. Silvester pointed out the difficulties encountered by Dutch cruisers in preventing smuggling. Effective measures could only be taken by the Perak ruler himself and by the Sultan Muda. "Kings give orders," he wrote, "but the execution is delegated to others." In this case the executor was the Sultan Muda "well-known for his intelligence and industry . . . in the performing of royal wishes." The Sultan Muda must be aware that the current delivery of tin could not compare with that of former days and as the ruler's representative he should double his watchfulness in order that the tin delivery should increase. In closing, Silvester became more threatening. He had come like his predecessor van Braam, he said, to maintain the Company in its rights and to compel untrustworthy rulers to fulfil their obligations. If this letter were ignored, Perak could "receive a visit" which would not be to its liking.⁶⁶

The Sultan Muda was visibly disturbed by the contents of Silvester's letters.

[He] took well over an hour to read the letters, putting them down a good five or six times and taking them up again. He broke out in a cold sweat and I [the resident] have never seen him so quiet, as I did on this occasion.

When he had finished reading, he asked me what sort of a man the Commander was, for van Braam was well known to him. I told him that this Commander was of as high a rank as van Braam and was at present cruising the areas with a fleet of warships until another Commander should relieve him. This had been

66. Ibid., Silvester to King of Perak, 18 Oct. 1787 and Silvester to Sultan Muda, 18 Oct. 1787.

done for some years to bring all bond-breaking kings who have dealt badly with the Company to reason and to bring those who would not listen to order by force.⁶⁷

At first it appeared as if Silvester's letter had had the desired effect. The Sultan Muda agreed to institute new methods of supervising tin deliveries, by setting barriers across the Perak River at which all passing craft must report. They would be issued with a cap and letter, which would list the name of the trader and the amount of tin he was carrying. Copies of these would be kept and later compared with the amount actually delivered at the fort.⁶⁸ The rest of the Assembly, led by the Laksamana, reaffirmed their loyalty to the Dutch on whom, they said, Perak depended for help in case of attack.

Should it happen that they are attacked by enemies, they will all flee into the jungle and if they cannot hold out any longer because of hunger, they will come to the Company to ask for provisions. His Majesty similarly said he had never had any intention of living with the Company in enmity or unfaithfulness. "But what can I do? I was misled in my old age." He looked at the Sultan Muda and because of this the Sultan Muda was completely quiet.⁶⁹

The Sultan Muda's apparent compliance convinced neither the resident nor Governor de Bruyn. The resident in fact claimed that the Sultan Muda was the only member of the court now opposed to the contract and that the alliance could only be maintained if he were placed under arrest and exiled. He assured de Bruyn that the execution of such a project would not be difficult because the Sultan Muda was regarded with general

67. Ibid., Diederhoyer to de Bruyn, 2 Dec. 1787.

68. Ibid.

69. Ibid., and de Bruyn to Silvester, 19 Dec. 1787.

dislike.⁷⁰ So anxious was de Bruyn to regain control over Perak's tin that he lent his support to this scheme, telling his superiors in Batavia that if this were not done the Sultan Muda would succeed to the Perak throne and the Company might be compelled to withdraw.⁷¹ Convinced by the arguments of the resident and the Melaka Governor, Governor-General Alting also approved the plan, and in December 1787 Engelbertus Lucas was sent to Perak.⁷²

The audacious plot to abduct the Sultan Muda was carefully outlined in Lucas' lengthy instructions. He was told to ask for an audience and insist that afterwards the principal court nobles pay a complimentary visit to the fort to show their respect for his position. If this were unsuccessful, the nobles should be received in a friendly manner and informed that the Sultan Muda must go with Lucas to Melaka. He should be placed on the VOC galley, which should set sail immediately. The remaining nobles should be permitted to return, with the assurance that this action had been taken with the welfare of the Perak kingdom at heart, and that now the country would be freed from a prince who had constantly flouted the wishes of the ruler. If, on the other hand, the Sultan Muda could not be persuaded to come to the fort, those nobles who did should be instructed to inform Sultan Alauddin that his brother should be

70. Ibid., de Bruyn to Silvester, 19 Dec. 1787.

71. Ibid. Because of Diedenhover's misguided impression that this kidnapping would be simple, Governor-General Alting also approved the plan. Admiraliteit XXIX, 67, C. J. Wolterbeek's Papers, Alting to de Bruyn, 23 Jan. 1788.

72. KA 3704 OB 1789, de Bruyn's Instructions to Lucas, 22 Dec. 1787.

delivered up to the commander at the first opportunity, or made powerless to interfere with the tin trade. Should this request be ignored, Perak would suffer.⁷³

Despite the resident's assurances of success, the entire affair was a fiasco. Even though the Dutch argued that this was no ordinary occasion, that Lucas was an ambassador who represented the "Great and Mighty Sovereign of the United Netherlands," neither the Sultan Muda nor any other noble could be persuaded to come downstream. Sultan Alauddin refused to order them to go, since "it never happened before during the time of my forefathers that all the princes went downstream to receive somebody. I cannot and will not deviate from the regulations and customs established by my predecessors."⁷⁴

The failure of this plan is not surprising, since its very conception shows a remarkable lack of insight into Malay attitude. Suspicion of Dutch intentions was still widespread and the arrival of a warship in Perak was not calculated to dispel these. Secondly, in some matters Sultan Alauddin had allowed himself to be intimidated, but court etiquette could not be flouted. On every occasion that the ministers went down to

73. Ibid.

74. Ibid., Report by Diedenhover and Lucas, 5 Jan. 1788, and King of Perak to Silvester, 4 Jan. 1788. Governor-General Alting was extremely annoyed over the "thoughtless and incorrect information" given by Resident Diedenhover. He had indicated that the capture of the Sultan Muda would not be difficult and his furnishing of inaccurate information in an affair of such importance was regarded as serious. KA 948, Secret, Alting to Couperus, 17 April 1789. The Heeren XVII felt it would have been better if the project had never been attempted. KA 3857, Secret, Extract from Missive Heeren XVII to Batavia, 11 Dec. 1790, fo. 35.

see the resident, they had some other ostensible purpose, such as the delivery of tin or a pleasure trip. It was not fitting that they be summoned to an audience by anyone, much less by Lucas, who appeared not much more than an ordinary sea captain. Thirdly, both the resident and de Bruyn had failed to grasp the nature of the relationship which existed between the ruler and his ministers. The latter, while under the authority of Sultan Alauddin, were men of considerable standing in their own right and it would have been unthinkable for them to have been despatched like underlings.

The plot to arrest the Sultan Muda, though unsuccessful, shows the degree to which Company policy towards Perak had changed under de Bruyn's administration. Interference in Perak affairs to the extent of removing the heir to the throne went completely against the policies advocated by men like Schippers. But de Bruyn's apparent lack of foresight does not indicate stupidity so much as his conviction that VOC control over the Perak tin trade was essential for the Company's survival in the peninsula. With the failure of this plan, de Bruyn could only renew his arguments in favour of increases in the tin price. When Batavia reluctantly complied, it was too late. Concessions which might have satisfied Sultan Alauddin several years before were dismissed by his more formidable brother, the Sultan Muda, now the dominating figure in the government. In January 1788 the tin price was raised to 34 reals (36 riksdalders), but this went almost unheeded.⁷⁵ Sultan Alauddin, almost certainly at the urging

⁷⁵. Realia, II, 25 Jan. 1788; AAC, 67 Wolterbeek's Papers, Alting to Couperus, 23 Jan. 1788.

of the Sultan Muda, demanded 44 reals the bahara, since the English in Penang were giving 48.⁷⁶ Low deliveries were exacerbated by a smallpox epidemic in the ulu and during the year 1786/87 only 416,136 3/8 lbs. were brought from Perak.⁷⁷ In August 1788 the resident was simply unable to buy any tin at the existing price.⁷⁸

De Bruyn's suspicion that the effects of Silvester's letter would be short-lived proved correct, for the Sultan Muda continued to express his opposition to the low prices offered by the Dutch. This opposition became of even greater concern to the Governor after the Sultan Muda's installation as Raja Muda in March 1789. Because of Sultan Alauddin's failing health, the Raja Muda was given almost complete authority over the administration and the Dutch were told that control over "the country of Perak and all its dependencies" had been delegated to him.⁷⁹ Even the tone of the letter announcing this new appointment was so different from Sultan Alauddin's previous letters that the Melaka Council suspected it came not from the ruler but from the new Raja Muda himself.⁸⁰ In it he blamed Dutch policy for all the difficulties in regard to the tin trade.

We both lose in the tin. For a long time I have not been able to control it. What does my friend think about our common loss? I have already put the offenders to death and confiscated [their goods?]. Not-

76. KA 3704 OB 1789, King of Perak to Couperus, 2 May 1788.

77. KA 948, Alting to Couperus, 9 April 1789, fo. 355.

78. KA 3704 OB 1789, Walbeehm to Couperus, 26 Aug. 1788.

79. KA 3799 OB 1791, King of Perak to Couperus, 6 March 1789; Silsilah Melaka Kerajaan Negeri Perak, fo. 31, line 5.

80. KA 3803, Secret, Couperus to Walbeehm, 29 May 1789.

withstanding this, they do not cease to carry out smuggling. There will be nothing left to me by an uninhabitable wasteland. I understand that in Pulau Pinang the price of tin has risen to 52 reals the bahara. I have already informed my friend of this and asked for some means to prevent the smuggling. For three years [i.e., since the founding of Penang] we have both suffered a marked loss and I have already told my friend the reasons.⁸¹

The Raja Muda continued to insist that he could guarantee a full delivery only if the Dutch raised their price to 44 reals. His people would then, certainly sell to the Company since, although the English price was high, losses were incurred in transportation. Even when Sultan Alauddin said that he himself would be satisfied with 42 reals, the Raja Muda maintained that this would be of little effect because the people would still obtain a greater profit by going to Penang and they would risk "life and limb for two reals."⁸²

In economic terms the Dutch treaty with Perak was obviously unacceptable. The question then arises as to why, considering its disadvantages, the Perak court continued to press for higher prices instead of unilaterally abrogating the contract. The explanation of this paradox lies in Perak's ongoing search for a protector, an ally who would guarantee the little state's security in an increasingly threatening world. Despite the deterioration in Perak's relationship with the Dutch, the Company alliance, which had withstood the test of forty years, still appeared Perak's surest insurance for the future.

⁸¹. KA 3799 OB 1791, King of Perak to Couperus, 6 March 1789.

⁸². KA 3803, Secret, Walbeehm to Couperus, 6 March 1789.

This is not to say that Sultan Alauddin had not investigated the only feasible alternative, an alliance with the English, for he had not been indifferent to the significance of the founding of Penang. In Malay eyes the English had emerged as the possessor of their own negeri in the peninsula, and were no longer represented merely by passing traders from far-off posts in India. "Territory is territory," ran the adage, "even if it is only the size of a coconut shell."⁸³ The head of Penang, Francis Light, himself encouraged the view that the English were now prepared to assume a more vigorous role in Malay affairs. Even his superiors in Bengal were anxious that, without directly antagonising the Dutch, "every means consistent with the strictest attention to the faith of treaties with European powers should be used to conciliate the esteem and affection of the natives and to teach them to look up to the British as their friends and protectors."⁸⁴

English efforts to convince Malays that the Dutch were not the only power in the area were reinforced by a number of setbacks in VOC fortunes which again raised questions about the Company's military strength. News of English victories in India during the Anglo-Dutch War had soon reached the Malay states;⁸⁵ in 1785 the Dutch garrison in Selangor had fled to Melaka when attacked by Sultan Ibrahim's forces;⁸⁶ in

83. Brown, "Malay Annals," p. 66.

84. SSR G34/1, Gov. to Light, undated, unsigned. Comment on his letter of 25 Jan. 1786, fo. 205^{r-v}.

85. Bonney, Kedah, p. 61, n. 39 and p. 171.

86. KA 3626 OB 1787, de Bruyn to Swijkhardt, 6 July 1785; F. Thierens to de Bruyn, 19 Aug. 1785; Raja Ali Haji, Tuhfat al-Nafis, p. 216.

May 1787 a fleet of Ilanun from Magindanao had overcome the VOC post on Riau.⁸⁷

In the meantime, Perak's relations with Selangor had again deteriorated. Sultan Ibrahim had successfully evicted the Dutch in July 1785 and withstood a Dutch blockade that went on for almost a year. It was widely believed that he intended to attack the Company post in Perak and for a time the state was once again prepared for war, the Laksamana marshalling Perak's little fleet of perahu downstream.⁸⁸ There is no evidence that Sultan Ibrahim did in fact plan to invade Perak, but he was known to be an enemy of the Company and Sultan Alauddin continued to fear that he would become a victim of Bugis-Dutch hostility. Unlike Sultan Mahmud, he had not courted the favour of the Bugis and now lived in constant fear of a surprise attack, even after Sultan Ibrahim's reconciliation with the Dutch in 1786. In June 1787, when Sultan Ibrahim announced his intention of coming to Perak with a large fleet, supposedly to bring back any of his subjects who had fled during the recent troubles in Selangor, Sultan Alauddin expected the worst.⁸⁹

For the first time in his association with Melaka, Sultan Alauddin

87. Netscher, De Nederlanders, pp. 211-221; Raja Ali Haji, Tuhfat al-Nafis, p. 219. For a discussion of Ilanun piracy, see Reber, The Sulu World, pp. 50, 187-190, 207-208.

88. KA 3627 OB 1787, Wilner to de Bruyn, 9 July 1785; de Bruyn to Batavia, 19 Aug. 1785.

89. KA 3704 OB 1789, Diederhoyer to de Bruyn, 5 Aug. 1787; de Bruyn to Diederhoyer, 19 July 1787. A detailed report of this visit was sent to Melaka in Diederhoyer's secret letter of 3 July 1787. Unfortunately, this does not appear to be among the records in The Hague and the only information available comes from de Bruyn's reply of 19 July.

did not make an immediate appeal to de Bruyn. Instead, like other Malay rulers, he decided to approach the English. In July 1787 Francis Light informed Lord Cornwallis that "the King of Perak sent to inform me the King of Selangor was coming to attack him and desired to know if I would give him assistance and if I would enter into a contract with him for the tin."⁹⁰

This date could have been a decisive one in Perak history had it not been for English reluctance to become involved in any relationship which might mean they would be called on to give military assistance. Light's superiors were far from anxious to become embroiled in quarrels between Malay states and Light could not, therefore, comply with Sultan Alauddin's request until he had gained the approval of the Governor of Bengal. "He said that before an answer could be had his country might be lost."⁹¹

Though Sultan Ibrahim left without incident on July 5,⁹² Sultan Alauddin, like other Malay rulers, had found that the assurance and promises of the English country traders were misleading. He could only contrast this with his past requests to Melaka, which had almost invariably been granted. It is not surprising that when Light wrote again to express interest in a "friendly intercourse," Sultan Alauddin in diplomatic terms, explained that Perak's alliance with the Dutch, her "jealous husband" did not permit the attentions of others.⁹³ With Sultan Alaud-

90. SSR G34/2, Light to Gov.-Gen., 18 June 1787 (FWCP, 27 July 1787), fo. 565.

91. Ibid.

92. KA 3704 OB 1789, Diederhoyer to de Bruyn, 5 Aug. 1787.

din's rejection of Light's proposals, the VOC alliance had survived a major crisis.

There were other factors which advocated retention of the treaty. To the north the Siamese had revived once more under Rama I, the founder of the Chakri dynasty, who was not only committed to a war against the Burmese, but was also determined to restore Siamese suzerainty over rebellious dependencies in the Malay peninsula. In 1786 Patani felt the full force of Siamese reprisals for its refusal to submit to vassalage. The country was ravaged and it was not long before Kedah, Kelantan and Terengganu all affirmed Siamese overlordship.⁹⁴

The Siamese threat did not affect only its former vassals. Refugees from Patani fled to the mountains on the Perak border and spilled over into Kedah. Chiefs in ulu Perak were warned to guard against any further incursions into their mines by the fleeing Patanese.⁹⁵ In the same year a report was received that the Siamese were on their way to attack Melaka with an army of 60,000 men. Rama I was said to be determined to drive out all Europeans in the peninsula and had boasted that,

93. William Marsden, A Grammar of the Malayan Language (London, 1812), pp. 146-147. Marsden's Grammar includes a number of letters sent to Light from various Malay rulers which are not included in the India Office collection.

94. Bonney, Kedah, pp. 52-70; KA 3594 OB 1786, King to Kedah to de Bruyn, 12 Sept. 1784; SSR G34/2, Light to Cornwallis, 12 Sept. 1786 (FWCP, 13 Dec. 1786), fo. 173; Ibrahim Sykri, Sejarah Kerajaan Melayu Patani (Pasir Putih, Kelantan, 19617), pp. 93-95; Klaus Wenk, The Restoration of Thailand under Rama I, 1782-1809 (Tucson, 1968), p. 102, n. 380.

95. KA 3655, Secret, de Bruyn to Batavia, 10 March 1787, fo. 416; KA 3657, Secret, Wilner and Diedenhover to de Bruyn, 10 Dec. 1786.

if Melaka fell, the entire Straits would be his.⁹⁶ Although de Bruyn did not feel that the Siamese could take Melaka itself, they were sufficiently strong to plunder surrounding districts as they had done in Patani.⁹⁷ In Penang Light had already prepared his defences and even wrote to the Perak resident to warn him of a possible Thai invasion.⁹⁸ If Rama I followed his plan and attacked Melaka from the Rembau mountains, Perak would lie directly in his path.⁹⁹

Although the threat of invasion was short-lived because of the diversion of Siamese forces to Ava and the Cambodian border, it had been enough to send a ripple of fear through the peninsula. Sultan Alauddin had comforted himself with the thought that the transportation of troops overland from southern Siam would be difficult, but, though the ulu mountains might provide some protection against attack from the north, along the coast Perak's vulnerability was once again exposed. The loosening of centres of control within the Malay world, such as Riau, the increase in the large number of unattached princes, especially in Siak, the presence

96. KA 3653 OB 1788, D. K. Hoffman's Report, 29 Sept. 1786; J. H. Meyer's Report, 27 Oct. 1786; KA 3655, Secret, de Bruyn to Batavia, 10 Oct. 1786, 28 Oct. 1786, foll. 317, 319. There is no indication in Thai sources that an attack was planned on either Melaka or Penang. Wenk, The Restoration of Thailand, pp. 104-105.

97. KA 3653 OB 1788, Meyer's Report, 27 Oct. 1786; KA 3655, Secret, de Bruyn to Batavia, 10 and 28 Oct. 1786, foll. 317, 319.

98. KA 3652 OB 1788, Meyer's Report, 27 Oct. 1786; KA 3757, Secret, Wilner and Diedenhoven to de Bruyn, 10 Dec. 1786.

99. KA 3653 OB 1788, Meyer's Report, 27 Oct. 1786; SSR G34/2, Light to Cornwallis, 5 Oct. 1786 (FWCP 13 Dec. 1786), fo. 188; P. Salarak, "A Translation of the Hmannan Yazawin Dawgyi," JSS, V (1959), 149-152.

of large numbers of Ilanum and Sulu perahu in the Straits all contributed to an increase in piracy. This was levelled not only at native and European shipping, but at coastal settlements as well. In Netscher's words, "from the Bangka Straits to Pulau Pinang on the west and Terengganu on the east of the Malay Peninsula, the seas had never been so unsafe."¹⁰⁰

The endemic problem of the Siak princes had been exacerbated after 1785 when Syed Ali, who had killed Sultan Alauddin's representative in Larut four years before, once more turned to piracy. Joined by several relatives, including his notorious uncle, Tengku 'Lah, he attacked a number of small negeri along the east coast of Sumatra. In 1787 he had allied with the wandering Bugis prince, Arung Temujung, the former leader of Selangor's troops, and together they began to plan an assault on Perak. Rumours of these plans persisted through the following year, as Syed Ali and his fleet moved from pirate haunts like Bernam to equivalent areas such as Batu Bara in Sumatra.¹⁰¹ The Dutch discovered that Arung Temujung was embittered towards Sultan Alauddin and his former friend, the Raja Muda of Perak, because they had rejected his proposal of marriage to the daughter of the late Raja Kecil Sulung. Arung Temujung had also wanted to pick out several Perak nobles to serve in his retinue, but this request too had been refused. He and Syed Ali had vowed that they would make Perak pay for this insult, regardless of the

¹⁰⁰. Netscher, De Nederlanders, p. 227.

¹⁰¹. Ibid., pp. 138-141; KA 3704 OB 1789, King of Selangor to Walbeehm, 26 Nov. 1787, de Bruyn to Silvester, 9 Dec. 1787; Couperus and de Bruyn to Walbeehm, 5 Sept. 1788; Couperus and de Bruyn to C. Martens, 15 Sept. 1788; KA 3802, Secret, Couperus to Batavia, 10 Feb. 1789, fo. 201.

Dutch garrison. There were other ways of attacking than via the kuala, they claimed, and hinted at invasions "from the rear" and collusion with their "good friends" in Perak itself.¹⁰²

Although this plan, like so many others, did not eventuate, piracy in the Melaka Straits only temporarily declined when Syed Ali returned to Siak in late 1787. Once again the Dutch Governor was prepared to play his role as protector of Perak's interests and VOC ships were sent out to patrol the seas between Penang and Kedah and escort Indian ships sailing down the coast.¹⁰³ Even while the Company itself was dying, the Dutch could still offer their ally tangible assistance, and it was this which saved the alliance despite the Company's low tin prices. Continued Dutch support in the midst of a threatening world meant that the appointment of the Sultan Muda to the position of Raja Muda in 1789 did not result in a wholesale rejection of the alliance.

The Sultan Muda's promotion came shortly after de Bruyn's departure from Melaka and the appointment of Abraham Couperus as his successor. Couperus, destined to be the last Governor of Melaka, took up his post in 1788. He had previously been a member of the Melaka Council and had worked under de Bruyn since 1778. Not surprisingly, he absorbed much of de Bruyn's attitudes towards the Malay rulers and adopted similar threats of force and threat when dealing with them. Couperus was later to become a controversial figure because of his surrender of Dutch Melaka

102. KA 3803, Secret, Couperus to Walbeehm, 18 Dec. 1788; KA 3799 OB 1791, Report from an inhabitant of Asahan, 16 Dec. 1788.

103. KA 3799 OB 1791, Couperus to Meyer, 13 Sept. 1789.

to the English in 1795, but he was apparently a man of some ability. Twenty years later, Governor Daendals had no hesitation in appointing Couperus to the Council of the Indies, describing him as "a man whose talents can be of very great use to this colony."¹⁰⁴ During his administration the pendulum of opinion in the Perak court again swung in favour of the Dutch alliance.

Couperus subscribed to the view of de Bruyn and other observers that the tin trade was the mainstay of Melaka's finances and indeed the only one which brought the town any profit.¹⁰⁵ It was vital, therefore, that this trade be safeguarded, and Couperus, like his predecessor, devoted much of his attention to enforcement of the treaty with Perak. One possible weapon appeared to be the hostility which had developed between Sultan Ibrahim of Selangor and the Perak Raja Muda. Sultan Ibrahim had in fact written to Couperus offering to lend the Dutch his own perahu in order that the coastal rivers of Perak could be adequately patrolled. Couperus, knowing that this proposal had also been made verbally in the presence of two Perak nobles, did not hesitate to exploit it when he wrote to the new Raja Muda in May 1789 to congratulate him on his appointment.¹⁰⁶ The Company, he said, indeed had the power to control smuggling, but this would require many smaller ships as well as their own cruisers.

¹⁰⁴. Resandt, De Gezaghebbers, pp. 228-230.

¹⁰⁵. Sonnerat, Voyage aux Indes, III, 23.

¹⁰⁶. KA 3799 OB 1791, King of Selangor to Couperus, 5 March 1789. The reasons for the hostility between the Sultan Muda and the ruler of Selangor are not clear. De Bruyn said that it was "only attributable to the feelings of Sultan Ibrahim towards the Sultan Muda." KA 3833, Secret, Couperus to Batavia, 10 Feb. 1790, fo. 424.

Your Majesty's nobles can testify that the means of controlling smuggling has already been suggested. . . . In only a wink every river and tributary can be filled with small ships and this could result in unwelcome consequences for the Perak kingdom.¹⁰⁷

The Raja Muda genuinely feared that Governor Couperus might accept Sultan Ibrahim's offer, or alternatively recruit assistance from Siak, and the resident hastened to press home this advantage. In front of the entire assembly he set forth the Company's argument that it was not the ordinary people who were involved in smuggling; the principal offenders were the ministers and nobles themselves, and the rulers of the country must be aware of this.¹⁰⁸ There was no doubt that this blunt accusation, combined with Couperus' letter, made an impression, but the Raja Muda was still unsatisfied with the Dutch offer of a new price of 38 reals per bahara, which was far below that of 44 reals which the court demanded.¹⁰⁹

The battle over the price dragged on until November as Couperus' threats of force and predictions of the bleak future which awaited Perak if Dutch offers were rejected grew more explicit. Finally, the Governor once again put forward an ultimatum; either the tin deliveries be increased, or the post would be broken up.¹¹⁰ With the knowledge that the departure of the Dutch would lay the country open to attack from Selangor, Arung Temujung, Syed Ali, or other adventurers, the Raja Muda had little choice but to agree. Appeals to Penang having failed, the Dutch alliance

107. KA 3799 OB 1791, Couperus to King of Perak, 19 May 1789.

108. Ibid., Walbeehm to Couperus, 10 July 1789.

109. Ibid.

110. KA 3803, Secret, Couperus to King of Perak, 12 Sept. 1789.

represented Perak's only real security. Nonetheless, he complied with resentment.

It appears from our friend's letter that he will ruin Perak. We, the inhabitants of Perak are without power and that is why we have given the mouth of the river to our friend in perpetuity. . . . We have no other ally except Melaka. Now our friend says that the time has come when the Company's desires must be followed and the tin delivered according to the contract made and sworn by our predecessors.

We shall follow the desire of our friend. The commander has set the price at 38 reals. We have continually complained to our friend about the loss we suffer, but our friend considered this obstinacy. How can that be? If our intention was to be obstinate, we would not be relying on the Company. . . .

What else can we do to see that our orders are carried out? They have been given to the people verbally, tin has been confiscated and the offenders have been put to death, but none of this brings tin to the Company fort.

We too complain about our loss . . . and our subjects clamour about the low tin price. Before our friend said that Spanish reals were dear and tin cheap. Now it is said that Spanish reals are cheap and tin dear. We are powerless and suffer great loss. The tolls and revenues do not come to us as they should. For all these reasons we complain to our friend. Does our friend think that this is beneficial? We do not bear the loss alone, but the Company bears it with us. We ask that our friend think daily over these our complaints.¹¹¹

This open declaration of Perak's dependence on the Dutch clearly indicates that the Raja Muda, like his predecessors, was not blind to Perak's weakness and vulnerability. With all its disadvantages, the VOC contract was Perak's best guarantee of peace. In the years that followed the writing of this letter, the Raja Muda must have been gratified to

¹¹¹. *Ibid.*, King of Perak and Raja Muda to Couperus, 6 Nov. 1789. One can assume that the Raja Muda, now in control of the government, dictated this letter.

find that the alliance brought unexpected benefits to Perak. In its dying stages the VOC briefly rallied to become an acceptable trading partner for Perak once more and, although the records after 1790 are meagre, it appears that the Raja Muda became reconciled to the Dutch presence.

This development was partly due to rethinking on the part of Governor Couperus himself. In his letter to the Raja Muda in May 1789 he had made suggestions for a revival of the tin trade which belied his apparent belief in force.

Our mutual loss in the tin [he wrote] comes from the poor deliveries and collections of that mineral from Perak. For a long time they have not been worth mentioning and now appear to have ceased entirely. Our friend asks what is our plan concerning this? It is that our friend must try to oppose the smuggling not by destroying land and people but by good laws which will frustrate this evil at its origin, and protect the needy mineworkers from extortion.¹¹²

Couperus also suggested that the tin could be bought directly from the miners and the products they needed delivered to them at a moderate price, a policy which the Dutch may have remembered from Sultan Iskandar's reign.¹¹³ Through such methods, said Couperus, the mines would be more fruitful and the country more prosperous.¹¹⁴

At the same time Couperus was also trying to convince his superiors in Batavia that revolutionary changes in Dutch thinking were necessary if the Company was to be saved. Soon after his appointment, and in

112. KA 3799 OB, 1791, Couperus to King of Perak, 19 May 1789.

113. See above, Chapter III, p. 235.

114. KA 3799 OB 1771, Couperus to King of Perak, 19 May 1789.

response to a request from the Governor-General, Couperus prepared an influential report on possible solutions to the problems concerning Perak and the tin trade in general. His criticism of the Dutch monopoly not only reflects the influence of economic liberalism within the VOC hierarchy, but also indicates some appreciation of Perak's grievances.¹¹⁵ Couperus argued strongly that a contract should be to the advantage of both signatories, and, if one party felt that the terms were not to its advantage, it was entitled to annul the treaty itself. Perak obviously did not see any benefits accruing from the treaty and Couperus did not see any use in the Company's resorting to arms to enforce it, despite his threats to the Raja Muda. The people of Perak were poor and at the first sign of any attack they would simply take up their household effects and flee into the jungle. Their houses could be burned, but in two days these could be erected again. All that would have been accomplished was an increase in the VOC's enemies.

An outright attack on Perak would be disadvantageous in other ways. Not only would the tin trade come to a standstill and perhaps be lost to the Dutch forever; the Company itself would suffer, since small traders who brought native products such as rattans to Melaka would be frightened away and thus an important source of Melaka's income would be threatened. The only way to regain a hold on the tin trade was to offer prices which would compete with those of the English in Penang. The Com-

¹¹⁵. This report has been published by J. de Hullu, "De Engelschen op Poeloe Pinang en de Thinhandel der Nederlandsche Oost Indische Compagnie," BKI, 77 (1921), 606-614. The original is in the AAC, XXIX, 69, foll. 39-49 and dated 13 Sept. 1788.

pany should be satisfied with a small profit until the trade had been recaptured. If tolls on tin were abolished, merchants would readily come to Melaka and Penang would cease to present any danger. At this point, said Couperus, neither Selangor nor Perak had abrogated their treaties with the Company and there was still opportunity for discussion and negotiation. It was yet possible for the Dutch to regain their former position, but if steps were not taken quickly, the English would emerge supreme.¹¹⁶

Similar sentiments were held by a number of Dutch officials in Melaka, and, in a report submitted two years later, A. E. van Braam Houckgeest emphasised the necessity of raising the tin price.¹¹⁷ Endorsing Couperus' arguments, he also pointed out that smuggling was widespread throughout all the areas of the Company's interests. The treaties signed between the native rulers and the Dutch were so much to the latter's advantage that it was natural local traders should seek to deliver their goods, especially tin, where they could find most profit. The English had now gained the ascendancy in the tin trade, which had formerly been of such importance in VOC commerce. According to old Company ac-

116. Ibid., pp. 607-613. Three years later Couperus submitted the same argument against violence, saying that any attempt to force Sultan Alauddin to keep to the treaty terms would only lead to his flight to the mountains. Even if he could have been dragged back, any promises made by him would have been meaningless. KA 3858, Secret, Diverse Papers, 31 Aug. 1791.

117. J. de Hullu, "A. E. van Braam Houckgeest's Memorie over Malakka," BKI, 76 (1920), 284-309. The author, Andreas Everhardus van Braam Houckgeest, was a friend of Couperus and had stayed in Melaka for three months. He had also had many years of experience trading in all parts of the world. Ibid., pp. 284-285.

counts, Perak had delivered over 500,000 lbs. per annum, but now produced less than 300,000.¹¹⁸ Of this, only about 13,000 lbs. came to the Dutch; by inference, most of the remainder must be going to Penang, where the English offered fifty reals, half in cash and half in goods, or 48 reals in cash alone. But, concluded van Braam Houckgeest, Melaka could still rise by offering a market where fair trade and good prices could be found and contracts would prove unnecessary if the Dutch provided the best bargains.¹¹⁹

The arguments of Couperus and his supporters proved correct. Although the Batavian Government regarded Sultan Alauddin's demand for 44 reals the bahara as "shameless," the Governor General belatedly agreed to pay this price when that of 38 reals brought no improvement in deliveries.¹²⁰ The Governor-General's hopes that this unprecedented move would bear results were fulfilled. Tin deliveries showed a marked increase and there was a definite reduction in smuggling. This trend continued and by the end of 1792 there were definite prospects for a renewed vitality in the tin trade.¹²¹ The incursions of the Ilanun pirates in

118. Ibid., pp. 299-300. Houckgeest also remarked that a number of Chinese miners had recently left Perak because of the heavy taxes, p. 298. Figures from the Penang Shipping Lists show that from March to October 1789 892 bahara (44,600 lbs.) of tin were imported. Nearly a hundred perahu arrived from Perak, Kerian, Terong, Larut and Beruas, bringing back piece goods and opium. The Melaka Shipping figures for 1788 list only one ship coming from Perak. SSR G34/4 FWCP 14 Jan. 1790, foll. 75-124; KA 3704 OB 1789, Arriving and Departing Ships, 1788.

119. de Hullu, "Van Braam Houckgeest's Memorie," pp. 292-309.

120. Only 115,448 lbs. of tin were delivered. KA 3852 OB 1793, Couperus to Batavia, 16 Feb. 1791, fo. 42; KA 3858, Secret, Diverse Papers, 31 Aug. 1791.

the waters around Kedah made Penang a less desirable port and Couperus made increased efforts to satisfy Perak's demand for opium.¹²² Couperus was so convinced of the worth of the contract that his arguments in its favour became almost vehement. In early 1793 he told Batavia that the contract with the ruler of Perak was essential in order to safeguard Melaka's income. Without it, Melaka would become an even greater financial burden for the Company and its very existence could well be threatened.¹²³

While the VOC was slowly developing into a more attractive ally in economic terms, several incidents occurred which reinforced its value as Perak's protector. The first was the Ilanun attack on Perak in October 1790. Large numbers of Ilanun had remained in the Malay area after their attack on the Dutch post in Riau in 1787¹²⁴ and the following year it was rumoured that they intended to combine forces with Yamtuan Muda

121. In only five months after the granting of the price rise, 96956 lbs. were delivered. KA 3852 OB 1793, Couperus to Batavia, 16 Feb. 1791, fo. 42; KA 3858, Secret, King of Perak to Couperus, 30 March 1791; KA 952, Alting to Couperus, 28 June 1791, fo. 345; OIC: 107, Couperus to Alting, 27 Feb. 1793, 30 Sept. 1793.

The delivery of tin for 1790/91 amounted to 333,789 lbs.; for 1791/92, 368,408½ lbs.; for 1792/93, 367,163 lbs. OIC: 63, Verslag van Gov.-Gen. en Raad over der stand der Indische Etablissementen, 1794.

122. KA 3852 OB 1793, Melaka Resolutions, 13 Jan. 1792, fo. 70; Walbeehm to Couperus, 27 March, 1792; OIC: 107, Secret, Couperus to Batavia, 26 Feb. 1793. The Dutch were now able to sell opium at 350 reals the chest, while in Penang it cost 400.

123. OIC: 107, Secret, Couperus to Batavia, 27 Feb. 1793. At this time the VOC was over 96 million guilders in debt. Hall, Southeast Asia, pp. 340-341; see also de Heer, Financieele Geschiedenis, pp. 82-84.

124. See Netscher, De Nederlanders, pp. 213-219 for a description of this attack.

Raja Ali and surprise the Company post in Perak.¹²⁵ Although nothing came of this, the Ilanun remained in Malay waters, their numbers increased by later arrivals.

By August 1790 the Ilanun fleet had divided into two. One half sailed to Siak and there tried to recruit further allies. Raja Endut, brother-in-law of Syed Ali, now Raja Muda of Siak, agreed to join them and, with this added strength, the Ilanun announced that they planned to attack the Dutch in Perak. A little over a month later a great fleet sailed from Siak, Raja Endut commanding forty perahu which went directly to Perak. On October 11 Couperus received an urgent letter from the resident, and another from the Raja Muda and nobles informing him of the approach of the pirate fleet and begging for help. Reinforcements were sent immediately, but before they arrived the Ilanun attacked, destroying a kubu at the kuala and driving three Dutch cruisers up to the Company post at Tanjung Putus. In an attempt to capture the fort itself, however, the Ilanun were repelled and by October 14, when help arrived from Melaka, they had already fled.¹²⁶

The alliance between Perak and the Dutch had been vindicated. Though there had been numerous pirates in the area, and countless rumours, this was the first non-European attack on Perak since the days of Sultan Berkabat. As in 1781, it was a time when the Perak Malays had the oppor-

125. KA 3704 OB 1789, de Bruyn and Couperus to Walbeehm, 15 Sept. 1788.

126. KA 3833, Secret, Couperus to Batavia, 13 Sept. 1790, fo. 443 and 11 Oct. 1790, foll. 453-454; SSR G34/4 Light to Cornwallis, 6 Oct. 1790 (FWCP 6 Nov. 1790), foll. 334-335; 5 Dec. 1790 (FWCP 5 Jan. 1791), fo. 370. Unfortunately the Perak's resident's account of this attack has apparently been lost, or never reached Amsterdam.

tunity to unite with the invaders and turn on the Dutch, but true to their legacy of commitment to the Company alliance, Perak Malays once again joined with the garrison in a common effort to repel the enemy. Malay resistance was led by the Laksamana and the Raja Muda himself, and the Ilanun attempted unsuccessfully to win over the support of their followers. The attitude of Sultan Alauddin was indicated by a reply he sent to a letter from Larut warning of the impending attack. If the Ilanun wished to attack the Dutch, he said, they must also defeat the people of Perak "for as long as the Company maintained a fort, they should try and support [the Dutch] otherwise they would lose their country."¹²⁷

The danger, however, was not yet past, for the Ilanun did not readily forgive the failure of the Perak Malays to rally against the Dutch. Some of the houses at Kuala Perak were destroyed and the Ilanun then sailed on to the outlying territories of Larut and Kurau. After an abortive attack on Penang, their leaders announced their intention of attacking Perak again on their return trip.¹²⁸ It must have been with some relief that news was received in Perak telling of the dispersal and flight of the Ilanun after the English attacked their anchorage in the Prai River in March 1791.¹²⁹

Perak's need for Dutch support persisted. After the Siamese in-

127. KA 3831 OB 1792, J. H. Meyer to Couperus, 4 Dec. 1790; Walbeehm to Couperus, 2 April 1791.

128. H. P. Clodd, The Life of Francis Light (London, 1948), p. 74; Bonney, Kedah, pp. 95-100; J. Low, "An Account of the Origin and Progress of the British Colonies in the Straits of Malacca," JIAEA, III (1849), pp. 612-613; KA 3858, Secret, Walbeehm to Couperus, 30 March 1791.

129. KA 3831 OB 1792, Couperus to Walbeehm, 29 June 1791.

vasion of Patani in 1786, precautions had been taken to prevent refugees entering the ulu, but these were unsuccessful. According to one account, people from Patani began to migrate to the isolated areas of upper Perak about 1790, and in 1792 they were once again moving into the Indah district.¹³⁰ In January 1792, a few months before Sultan Alauddin's death, the Raja Muda wrote to Governor Couperus informing him that the Patanese were again in control of the mines at Kelian Indah. This had aroused some concern, since it affected the tin deliveries, already reduced by smuggling to Penang.¹³¹ The Raja Muda asked for ammunition from Melaka, as he intended to go in person and attack the people from Patani now occupying the mines.¹³² Couperus did not delay. On the very day that the Raja Muda's letter was translated, a force of 37 Malays, VOC employees, were sent to Perak equipped with guns and ammunition. Even though the trip to the ulu was postponed by the death of a noble and abandoned altogether when the Patanese returned to the mountains the following year,¹³³ Governor Couperus had yet again shown his willingness to support his friend in Perak.

Piracy along the coast was, like control of the ulu, a recurring

130. OIC: 106, Secret, Couperus to Batavia, 27 Feb. 1793; KA 3852 OB 1793, Walbeehm to Couperus, 30 Jan. 1792; Berkeley Papers, II, 85-86, III, 189-190.

131. KA 3852 OB 1793, Raja Muda to Couperus, trans. 7 Feb. 1792; Walbeehm to Couperus, 30 Jan. 1792.

132. Ibid., Raja Muda to Couperus, trans. 7 Feb. 1792.

133. Ibid., Melaka Resolutions, 7 Feb. 1792, foll. 117-118; Couperus to Walbeehm, 10 Feb. 1792; Couperus to Raja Muda, 10 Feb. 1792. Ibid., Walbeehm to Couperus, 27 March 1792; OIC: 107, Secret, Couperus to Batavia, 27 Feb. 1793.

problem. In late May 1792 the Penghulu of Beruas came to court to report the rich tin discoveries in his district, bringing samples of tin ore as evidence. However, he said, he could not work the mines himself because of the constant threat of piracy. The Raja Muda once more appealed to Melaka for assistance so that work could begin on mines which promised to be among the richest in Perak. The resident himself added his support to the request, for he had investigated the report and had found it to be correct. Couperus, while reluctant to commit the Company to any long term patrols along the coast, said he would gladly assist with the short term loan of a ship, providing the cost were not too high.¹³⁴ Again Perak had reason to be grateful for the Dutch alliance.

While threats from outside continued, the Raja Muda was also facing problems within his administration, for he was not popular among many of his court. From his point of view, an additional reason for retaining the Dutch alliance was the fact that as long as he co-operated with Melaka, the Governor would deal only with him and support him as the legitimate ruler. This was particularly important because of the growing discension in the Assembly. This was so great that Governor Couperus felt reasonably confident the Raja Muda would continue to maintain the contract, if only to shore up his own authority.¹³⁵

Nor was there any other power, Malay or European, to whom the Raja Muda could turn. Perak's policy during the preceding years had isolated

134. KA 3858, Secret, Walbeehm to Couperus, 1 June 1792; Couperus to Walbeehm, 17 July 1792.

135. KA 3858, Secret, Couperus to Batavia, 31 Aug. 1791.

the state from its Bugis neighbours, and the usefulness of the marriage ties had been undermined by the hostility which had arisen between the Raja Muda and Sultan Ibrahim. In Kedah, Sultan Abdullah's energies were directed towards establishing some kind of modus vivendi with the English, who had proved themselves as exacting as the Dutch.¹³⁶ Almost fifty years of association with the VOC had left Perak without an alternative ally. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Raja Muda grew noticeably more amicable towards the Dutch and on his succession in September 1792 he promised to maintain the contract "as long as sun and moon shine on this earth."¹³⁷

The installation of the Raja Muda as "Paduka Sru Sultan Mangsur Shah Chidij Addulla Aptur Rahman" did not lessen his difficulties in dealing with his court. Only five months after his succession, Couperus told Governor-General Alting that "the king depends on the Company in every strain and discord" and needed its support to maintain his kingdom peacefully.¹³⁸ One of the most pressing problems was that of succession.

136. Bonney, Kedah, pp. 98-102.

137. KA 3852 OB 1793, Raja Muda and Nobles to Couperus, 7 Sept. 1792.

138. OIC: 107, Secret, Couperus to Batavia, 27 Feb. 1793. The title of the new ruler would have been copied by the Dutch translator directly from letters received, and it occurs several times. All Malay genealogies known to me give this ruler's name as Sultan Ahmadin or Ahmad Taj al-alam, but all make it clear that this ruler was formerly Raja Muda and Sultan Muda, and was called Marhum Bungsu after his death. There is a possibility that this ruler changed his name, or used both. It should also be noted that his son, whom Winstedt calls Sultan Abdul Malik Mansur Syah, is also called Sultan Mansur Syah and in English records is termed Sultan Mansur Syah II. If counting had been begun from the first Raja of Perak, he should have been Sultan Mansur III. It is possible that either he or the scribe used

Sultan Mansur had no brothers, and none of his wives was royal. This in turn meant that he had no children, male or female, who were anak gahara, or royal on both sides. This posed great difficulties, and for perhaps the first time in its history, there was no prince who could step forward as the obvious heir to the throne. Sultan Mansur must have been concerned about the future and a letter received by the Company in early 1794 suggests that he expected the Dutch to play a part in maintaining order.

It appears from the Ministers' letter of 30 April 1794 that the King of Perak told them in a letter of the appointment of various princes in his kingdom to the principal honours. We have taken note of this, as well as the accompanying request that in case of the King's death the Company will deal with these princes as a sign of trust.¹³⁹

Sultan Mansur thus expected the alliance between Perak and the VOC to endure and the Dutch themselves would not have readily abandoned their post. It is ironic that, at a time when prospects for a satisfactory relationship seemed brighter than for many years past, the contract itself was abruptly terminated as a result of events thousands of miles away. In 1793 the new French Republic declared war on Britain and

138. (cont'd.)

the numeral to avoid confusion with his father, known by the same name. See SSR C34/45 Raja of Perak to Raja of Kedah, 22 Aug. 1814 (FCPP 28 Nov. 1814), fo. 2919. See Bonney, Kedah, p. 130 and n. 13.

139. OIC: 63, Verslag from the Governor-General and Council, 1794. Sultan Mansur married the daughter of the Laksamana, another who was the daughter of Sultan Muzafar by a gundik; a third who was the daughter of the imam, a fourth from Sungkei and a fifth from Sungai Siput. None of these were of royal blood. Silsilah Kerajaan Melaka Negeri Perak, fo. 30V, lines 5-9; fo. 31, line 21; Silsilah Raja Raja Perak II, foll. 12-13.

Holland, and two years later French Republican armies invaded The Netherlands. In February of 1795 the exiled Stadhouder issued the "Kew Letters," with authorised British forces to assume control of Dutch posts to prevent their falling into the hands of the French. "At this juncture," wrote Munshi Abdullah, "my birthplace Melaka, may Allah preserve it from all danger and oppression, passed into the hands of the English."

Suddenly one morning two ships and a ketch came into view sailing off Melaka. Arriving at the anchorage they approached very close in to the shore and fired several times at the Dutch ships anchored there. Then the ships turned out to sea again and disappeared from view. All the Dutch in Melaka and the local people were greatly excited and when it became known that the ships were English, they redoubled their vigilance, for it was feared that the ships would very likely return. But when the time came the English took Melaka without any fighting or trouble.¹⁴⁰

A resolution was passed in the Melaka Fort on August 21 which provided that trading at Perak should continue as before, since it was only a commercial post and provided Melaka with much of its income. Despite this decision, the British sent two warships from Penang, which arrived in Perak on November 5. Resistance would have been absurd in view of the ambiguous relationship between the Dutch and English, and the latter's superior sea power. Resident Walbeehm surrendered the post and, with the remainder of the garrison, was taken to Penang.¹⁴¹ On December 24, 1795,

¹⁴⁰. Hikayat Abdullah, p. 34. See also Tarling, Anglo-Dutch Rivalry, pp. 51-54; OIC, 60^a, General Letters from Batavia, 1793-1795; D. K. Bassett, "The Surrender of Dutch Malacca, 1795," BKI, 117, 3 (1961), 344-358 and G. W. Irwin, "Governor Couperus and the Surrender of Malacca, 1795," JMBRAS, XXIX, 3 (1956), 86-133.

¹⁴¹. AAC, XXIX 71, Resolution, 21 Aug. 1795; James Low, "An Account of the Origin and Progress," p. 616; Netscher, De Nederlanders, p. 241, n. 1.

the once mighty Kompeni Holanda, with which Perak had been associated for over a century and a half, was abolished.¹⁴² Under the impression that the state of Perak had been a Dutch colony, the English later granted it "independence."¹⁴³

142. de Heer, Financieele Geschiedenis, p. 84.

143. Burney Papers, II, 2, 147.

CONCLUSION

Thus ended fifty years of alliance between the Dutch East India Company and the Perak court. The record has been set out. But what, one might ask, have we learnt? Are we simply left with a chronological account of events in a small, relatively unimportant Malay state? Have we merely filled in a gap in the history of the Malay world? Or are there deeper, more far-reaching implications?

In the past, the nature of available sources dealing with the Indonesian archipelago in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries has tended to focus attention on powerful states which played an obvious role in shaping the history of the area. Yet for every Melaka or Aceh there were a dozen weaker negeri which faced different problems and had different concerns. As one of these, Perak's view of the world and its place within it may be more typically "Malay" than that of a great kingdom such as Johor.

This study has attempted to show that, for the larger part of its history, Perak has been a weak state. It was never wealthy in the same way that Johor or Melaka were wealthy; it had no fleets or armies with which to protect itself; rulers found the maintenance of control over such vast tracts of land difficult at the best of times and its very political system contained the seeds of conflict. Perak's rich tin de-

posits, seemingly an asset, meant that it was a tempting lure to stronger powers, and its rulers constantly sought to secure a powerful friend who would guarantee them the protection they could not give themselves.

In this search for "security and independence," Sultan Muzafar signed a treaty in 1746 with the VOC which his successors defended for five decades. What do these years signify in Perak history? Did they, for example, impart to Perak a new strength which enabled it to emerge finally as a strong, united state? It appears not. The evidence, though incomplete, shows that the years after the Dutch departure were not happy ones for Perak, which was repeatedly threatened by surrounding states. In the confusion which resulted from successive invasion and capitulation, first to Selangor, then to Kedah, and then to Siam, Perak seemed at its weakest, apparently lacking any control whatsoever over its own destiny. Its rulers retreated to the ulu areas once more and, with no effective government, Perak's troubles were compounded. Not only were there unprecedented demands from Kedah and Siam; piracy in Perak waters made the entire coastline unsafe; further territory was lost to Kedah and Selangor; rebellious chiefs set up their own centres of control.¹ Reports by English visitors in the early nineteenth century leave the reader with the impression that Perak's fortunes had never fallen so low.

1. Raja Ali Haji, Tuhfat al-Nafis, pp. 243-244; Silsilah Kerajaan Melaka Negeri Perak, foll. 31V-32; Burney Papers, II, 1, 220-221; Anderson, Political Considerations, p. 189; Bonney, Kedah, pp. 128-158; Winstedt and Wilkinson, "A History of Perak," p. 166; SSR G34/67, Raja of Perak to Gov. of Penang, 26 Syawal (FCCP, 5 Sept. 1818), fo. 85; G 34/57 Raja of Perak to Gov. of Penang, 27 Aug. 1816 (FCCP 7 Nov. 1816); F 2, Letters from Native Rulers, Raja of Kedah to Gov. of Penang, 8 Dec. 1819, fo. 24.

The relationship with the Company evidently solved none of Perak's basic problems and led to no enduring changes in the social and political systems which might have contributed to greater stability and security in the future. Yet as Maxwell and Wilkinson noted many years later, Perak Malays looked back on the eighteenth century, and especially the reign of Sultan Iskandar, as a golden age in their history.² But as Maxwell also remarked, the Dutch themselves were only vaguely remembered.³ It was not the memories of the alliance which persisted, but the brilliance of the zaman, and yet it was the alliance which had made the zaman possible.

Had an eighteenth century Perak Malay been asked to describe his conception of the ideal state, he would probably have done so in the same terms employed by many a court chronicler elsewhere. Such a state is governed by a just king, whose wise rule ensures that officials are loyal, trade is brisk, food cheap, and that the country is free from invasion. Above all, the good reign is distinguished by tranquillity, or sentosa, a theme which permeates Malay literature. With peace, all else follows--traders come, food is cheap, fame spreads. These are the ingredients which go to make a zaman memorable.

In these terms, the period between 1746 and 1795 must have seemed a halcyon age, one which contrasted sharply with the years before and the decades after. Certainly it is remembered as such in the Misa Melayu.

2. Wilkinson, A History of the Peninsular Malays, p. 99; Maxwell, "Notes on Two Perak Manuscripts," p. 187.

3. Maxwell, "The Dutch in Perak," p. 268.

Even Sultan Alauddin's reign, with all its problems, is described as a time when sentosa prevailed.

Sultan Alauddin was established on the throne and governed all the people of Perak with justice and generosity, and the fame and reputation of this negeri extended to other countries. He loved his friends and never ceased sending envoys here and there and the rulers of other countries never ceased sending their envoys to Sultan Alauddin because the fame of his justice and goodness and generosity had reached them. And during this zaman and this time His Majesty loved all his children and grandchildren . . . negeri Perak was at peace and tranquil (senang serta sentosa) and this endured a long time. During His Majesty's reign there was no one who caused confusion (huru-hara) and disturbances and he consulted with all his orang besar and hulubalang, his officials and people.⁴

VOC sources buttress the Malay perception. We cannot know what Perak's fate might have been had Sultan Muzafar not signed a treaty with the Company in 1746, but it would undoubtedly have fallen prey to periodic raids by Bugis and Minangkabau adventurers. It is not unfeasible to suggest that the Selangor Bugis might have extended their influence to the Kedah border and even beyond, and the history of the peninsula might have taken a completely different course. As the rout of 1781 showed, the tiny Dutch garrison at Tanjung Putus was in fact as vulnerable as Perak, but for almost fifty years it stood as a symbol of the might of the VOC and a reminder of Perak's great ally. Never once during the decades of the Dutch alliance did Perak suffer devastation such as that inflicted on Kedah by the Bugis in 1770, or on Kelantan and Patani by the Siamese. It was not subjected, like the small settlements along the east

4. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 193.

coast of Sumatra, to constant pillaging and raiding by pirate fleets; nor was it forced to acknowledge its vassalage to a more powerful state, as were Kelantan, Terengganu, Patani, Kedah, and a number of Sumatran negeri such as Asahan.⁵ Peace was not therefore gained at the price of sovereignty and independence. While some Dutch governors may have resorted to threats, they never regarded Perak as Company property as they did Siak and, after 1784, Riau and Selangor. Though its inherent weaknesses were always present, Perak negotiated the troubled world of the eighteenth century with some dignity. There was no doubt in the minds of Perak rulers in the early nineteenth century that the presence of the Dutch fort had contributed to this period of sentosa.

It is a comment on Perak's experience with the VOC that in after years the relationship of the eighteenth century was constantly evoked as successive Perak rulers tried to gain some guarantee of English protection, not merely against invasion from without but against rebellion at home. In 1816 Sultan Mansur II offered Pangkor Island to the Governor of Penang "so as to prevent its becoming a receptacle for piracy. I hope therefore that my friend will cause it to be looked after and watched as the Dutch used formerly to guard Kuala Perak in the days of my revered father."⁶ Two years later, when a British envoy arrived in Perak, the

5. See above, pp. 470, 576; KA 3954 OB 1786, King of Kedah to de Bruyn, 12 Sept. 1784; SSR G34/2, Light to Cornwallis, 12 Sept. 1786 (FWCP 9 Oct. 1786), fo. 172; Syukri, Sejarah Kerajaan Melayu Patani, pp. 85-95; Wenk, The Restoration of Thailand, p. 102; Netscher, De Nederlanders, pp. 141-145.

6. SSR G34/57, Raja of Perak to Gov. of Penang, 17 Sept. 1816 (FCCP 7 Nov. 1816).

ruler tried to persuade the English to agree to a defensive alliance, whereby "the Company would guard the Perak River and country from all attacks and stand in the same relation to it as the Dutch did formerly."⁷ In 1825, seven years afterwards, when Perak had been ravaged by invasion and internal dissension, Sultan Abdullah attempted once again to ally himself to Penang as his forbears had been allied to Melaka.

The king repeatedly urged me to remain in the country and establish a factory. . . . He adverted to the great profits which the Dutch formerly derived by the tin trade, when they had a factory in Perak, and said that Perak could never be tranquil without the superintending control of a European government.⁸

Nor was the example of Perak lost on other Malay rulers. Though they may not have been willing to sign treaties with the Dutch, it is significant that both the rulers of Selangor and Kedah, who had jeered at Perak's supposed subservience to the VOC, appealed to the English to establish a similar arrangement in their own countries, as did the rulers of Riau and Terengganu.⁹

We have seen that, when Sultan Muzafar signed a treaty with the Dutch in 1756, he did so not for economic gain, but to obtain a guarantee against the threats posed by the Bugis of Selangor. While some of the orang besar and anak raja, not burdened with the responsibility of govern-

7. SSR G34/67, Cracroft to Clubley, 3 Aug. 1818 (FCCP 5 Sept. 1818), fo. 25.

8. Burney Papers, II, 3, 77.

9. KA 3359 OB 1777, Hensel to Crans, 12 April 1775; Bonney, Kedah, 27-78; SSR G34/1 "Of the Trade of Rhio and the Establishment of a Factory on Pulau Byang, 1 Feb. 1769, foll. 69-70; Marsden, Malayan Grammar, pp. 147, 154.

ing, were prepared to ignore one of the basic functions of the alliance in their demands for greater profits in the tin trade, the men who succeeded Sultan Muzafar never forgot that Perak was a weak state. The lessons of the past had been well learnt and the tenacity with which Sultan Iskandar and his brothers held to the Dutch alliance is remarkable in its consistency.

This is not to say that the rulers of Perak were prepared to buy peace at any cost. Sultan Iskandar and Sultan Mahmud refused to consider any lowering of the tin price, and in 1773 the Dutch envoy could not force Sultan Alauddin to agree to thirty reals the bahara as he had hoped to do.¹⁰ Each Perak ruler, in fact, felt that the Dutch alliance should rightly offer both security and economic advantage, and when Sultan Iskandar succeeded in 1752 there was no doubt in his mind that this was fully possible. With this conviction, Sultan Iskandar endorsed the treaty wholeheartedly. When it became apparent that in some matters, such as the supply of reals, the Dutch did not measure up to expectations, Sultan Iskandar went to considerable lengths to shore up the alliance and make it acceptable to his subjects. His willingness to supplement Dutch anti-smuggling patrols, his decision to build kubu at Tanjung Putus to provide Perak with added defences, his attempt to encourage tin production, all contributed to the working relationship which developed between him and Governors Boelen and Schippers.

During Sultan Iskandar's reign the alliance withstood the test of confidence in 1759 and survived to establish a high standard of Company-

¹⁰. See above, pp. 388, 403, 489-90, 499-500.

Perak co-operation. Sultan Mahmud benefited from his brother's strong rule and, when he in turn succeeded followed Sultan Iskandar's example and renewed the contract. Unlike his brother, however, Sultan Mahmud saw Perak's destiny as intimately linked with that of Selangor and hoped to find a solution to his dilemma by maintaining a dual alliance of friendship with both the VOC and his Bugis neighbours. In 1772, when the Dutch decided to lower the tin price, the treaty with the Company suddenly became less attractive. Yet Sultan Mahmud was loathe to accept the responsibility for ending the relationship between Perak and the VOC and begged the Dutch to stay at least until his death. He fully realised the enormity of his decision, but Company admancy pushed him, albeit reluctantly, to make a choice in favour of the Bugis.

With Sultan Mahmud's death, the balance once more tipped in favour of the alliance. The new ruler, Sultan Alauddin, was even prepared to compromise on the tin price to guarantee the maintenance of the treaty. At the time of his succession in 1773, the Malay world had become more threatening and more dangerous, and it was a world from which Perak could not retreat. As a result of Sultan Mahmud's policy towards Selangor, Perak was now deeply involved in the affairs of its neighbours and the value of the alliance increased in direct proportion to the danger posed from outside. Perak's weakness and vulnerability had been exposed too many times to consider the possibility of setting aside the VOC contract, despite the unsatisfactory tin prices.

In this context, the English attack on the fort in 1781 came as a shock to the Perak ruler. Nonetheless, Sultan Alauddin was willing to

see the Dutch re-establish the post at Tanjung Putus and, though Perak nobles continued to press for higher prices, they were still prepared to accept terms less advantageous than those offered by the Bugis and other Europeans in return for the presence of the Dutch garrison. Sultan Alauddin persevered in his efforts to achieve the same high standard of co-operation with Pieter de Bruyn as Sultan Iskandar had had with previous Melaka Governors. The failure of his tentative approaches to Penang in 1787 served, if anything, to strengthen Perak's commitment to the VOC, for there now truly seemed no alternative besides the Dutch Company. It is ironic that during this period, the last stages of the alliance, the Perak tin trade became as vital for Melaka's well-being as the fort at Tanjung Putus was for Perak's. In the face of continual criticism from both Batavia and Amsterdam, both de Bruyn and Couperus held grimly to the contract with Sultan Alauddin and did their best to ensure its survival. All these efforts were in vain, for by this time Perak's great partner of former days, the Kompeni Holanda, was an empty shell. VOC sources suggest that the surrender of Dutch Melaka to the English and the consequent collapse of the alliance came as a completely unwelcome development to Sultan Alauddin's brother, who succeeded in 1792. He had not only come to rely upon the Dutch himself, but looked to them to ensure a smooth transition of power in Perak after his death and a peaceful reign thereafter.

The decades of peace that the Dutch contract brought gave Perak a brief breathing space in its troubled history. Free of outside incursion, it began to flower, to attain some of the benefits which accrued to more

powerful states by virtue of their greater strength. When Perak Malays remembered the years after Sultan Iskandar's accession as a time of peace, they thought not so much in terms of the treaty itself but of the fruits which the alliance had brought. It was these years which established criteria and standards towards which later rulers strove. It is surely no coincidence that it was this period of confidence and assurance that produced the Misa Melayu and other texts such as the Silsilah Raja-Raja Perak. Only rarely in these works is there any mention of the Dutch, and yet in themselves the hikayat are a tribute to the peace and prosperity which the alliance brought. In a strong warlike state such as Aceh, rulers and subjects could achieve fame through their exploits in military campaigns, like the celebrated Gocoh Pahlawan in the Hikayat Deli, or the warriors whose feats are recounted in descriptions of Melaka's wars against Haru and Kampar.¹¹ Glory in battle was denied the ruler of a small state. Fame came to him through achievements--pleasure trips, court ceremonies, expeditions of foreign lands, the reception of envoys--which were possible only during a time of sentosa. In a period which the Misa Melayu depicts as a glorious zaman, state occasions are unlimited as the ruler distributes his kurnia to his people and receives back from them their persembahan. Now Perak rulers no longer flee to the ulu to escape the incursions of invaders but are free to govern over a properly conducted court in which suitable activities, such as the writing of chronicles and poetry, can be sponsored. Nor is the administration of

11. Hikayat Keturunan Negeri Deli, foll. 22-92. I am grateful to Mr. A. C. Milner for bringing this text to my attention. See also Brown, "Malay Annals," pp. 120-123.

the country neglected, for this is also a time of muafakat, of discussion between ruler and officials, when foreign missions and common people alike are given audience in the balai and justice is meted out to all.

European records, admittedly phrased in a differing idiom, reinforce the view of this period given by the Misa Melayu. The Dutch alliance brought not only security but increased prosperity to Perak, a prosperity which it was not to enjoy again until well into the following century. The VOC treaty meant the existence of a steady market for tin and provided an undisturbed atmosphere in which the pace of life continued virtually uninterrupted. Crises came and went but had little effect upon the people as a whole. In 1818, however, when W. J. Cracroft visited Perak as a British envoy, he commented on the lack of trade and agriculture, attributing this partially to the constant fear of attack. "All the people are employed in preparing for defence and have all their families in boats ready to retreat to the smaller rivers."¹² The remarks made by Schippers in 1766 contrast markedly. "Since the honourable Company has been in Perak, the king has governed his land and kingdom in peace. . . . During this time he has been unhindered in his constant enjoyment of the advantages of his country. . . . Merchants deal in his kingdom unafraid and yearly come to take away his elephants."¹³

In this period of stability, tin production expanded as new areas in the ulu were opened, and the Chinese began working in the Kinta and Sungkai areas. It appears that Perak was beginning to attract population,

12. SSR G34/67, Cracroft to Clubley, 3 Aug. 1818 (5 Sept. 1818), foll. 38-39.

13. See above, p. 484.

for by 1795 there was a substantial Chinese community in Larut.¹⁴ A paper presented by Baron von Wurmb to the Batavia Society in 1786 shows that Chinese migrants quickly introduced innovations in tin-mining techniques¹⁵ and thus set the stage for the great development of the tin industry which was to come late in the following century. "Merchants," Schippers wrote, "deal in Perak unafraid" and indeed, although tin could no longer be bought legally, traders from Sumatra, Riau, Selangor, Kedah and even India could buy and sell other goods there safely. Perak waters, though not totally free of pirates, were nonetheless patrolled regularly by Company cruisers and trading links to other areas in the Malay world could be maintained. The sale of products other than tin therefore flourished. In 1788, for example, Perak rattans were considered a vital contribution to the Melaka market.¹⁶ The effects of stability on the economy were seen at the most mundane levels. During his mission of 1761, Everard Cramer mentioned that the Raja Muda was supervising the laying out of rice fields near the Dutch fort but when Low arrived over sixty years later, he noted that the banks of the Perak River "in more prosperous times . . . under rice cultivation" were now uninhabited.¹⁷

While every Perak subject shared, to some degree, in the comparative prosperity of the period from 1746 to 1795, the greatest beneficiary

14. SSR G34/7, Mannington to Shore, n.d. (FWCP, 13 Feb. 1795), fo. 121.

15. Baron von Wurmb describes the more efficient smelting system which the Chinese introduced. "Bijdrage tot de Natuurlyke Historie," VBG, IV (1786), 561. See also Appendix B.

16. de Hullu, "De Engelschen op Poeloe Pinang," p. 609.

17. See above, p. 393 and Low, "Observations on Perak," p. 499.

was, of course, the ruler himself. Each treaty signed with the VOC reasserted the ruler's economic privileges and his superiority over the rest of the court. Even in the last years of the alliance, when smuggling was rife, the Dutch continued to pay their tolls to him. These tolls, combined with his own tin sales and the taxes on mines meant that the ruler's position as the wealthiest man in the state remained unchallenged, in contrast to the nineteenth century when he was a pauper in comparison with some of his chiefs. The Dutch also contributed to the strength of the ruler in a less direct way, for in matters connected with the treaty they never dealt with anyone other than him. The Perak ruler was always regarded as the paramount authority and the Governor, while seeking to influence him through advisors, never treated him as anything except the legitimate authority. The support provided by the Dutch gave the Yang di Pertuan a recourse which his rivals did not possess and, from the time of Raja 'Alim's exile in 1749, no Perak ruler faced any real threat to his position. Backed by the Dutch treaty, a ruler could govern as well as reign. All the evidence shows that, in contrast to the nineteenth century, Sultan Iskandar, Sultan Mahmud and Sultan Alauddin wielded full administrative authority. With the security of the Company garrison at Tanjung Putus, they could formulate their policies with some thought to the future, with the confidence that proposals put forward today could be executed to-morrow.

The strength of the ruler's position during this time and the relative freedom from outside pressures meant that all three brothers, but especially Sultan Iskandar and Sultan Alauddin, had the opportunity

to travel through the country, imposing the stamp of central authority over villages many miles from the capital. Sultan Alauddin, for example, may never have made a great sea trip, but he took a thousand members of his court to Jambi on the headwaters of the Perak River specifically to investigate disputes which had broken out in the ulu mines.¹⁸ Journeys such as this must surely have contributed to a feeling of unity within the country, to a sense of Perak, not simply as a collection of rantau areas and isolated kampung, but as one kerajaan, with a coherence of its own. The Perak over which Sultan Iskandar asserted his authority is essentially the Perak of to-day.

Finally, Perak's alliance with the Dutch gave it an unprecedented standing within the Malay world. It was no longer the vassal of a more powerful state, but the ally of the great Dutch East India Company and as such was courted by neighbouring rulers. Sultan Mahmud installed the first Sultan of Selangor, and Sultan Alauddin invested a Patani chief, advised the ruler of Kedah and even sent envoys to Raja Haji in an effort to prevent the outbreak of war between the Bugis and the Dutch. The VOC alliance had come about because of Perak's awareness of its own weakness, but the relationship with the Dutch brought Perak into contact with the outside world in a new and profound way. Any shift in the political balance was now of extreme importance to Perak rulers for, as a Dutch ally, they were intimately concerned with the rise and fall of VOC fortunes and with developments in other Malay states as well. In 1818 Cra-

18. See above, p. 533 and KA 3491 OB 1782, Meyer to de Bruyn, 18 May 1781.

croft remarked that "the first persons of the country evince by their questions and conversation an utter ignorance of any place beyond the bounds of their own country."¹⁹ The contrast between his comment and the political awareness of Perak rulers just a few decades earlier is striking. When the Misa Melayu tells us that during the reigns of Sultan Iskandar and of his two brothers "the fame of Perak spread to other countries" it is not just a comment dictated by convention. The years of the Dutch alliance left Perak with memories of peace, stability, prosperity, achievement, of a period when the country could be justly called Daru'r Rizwan, the Abode of Grace.

19. SSR G34/67, Cracroft to Clubley, 3 Aug. 1818 (FWCP 3 Aug. 1818), fo. 39.

Appendix A

TRANSLATION OF RAJA CULAN'S SYAIR, "VERSES ON THE RAJA'S TRIP TO SEA"¹

1. Praise be to God, praise manifest
Give out to Allah, Lord of all
Thanked be the Prophet, our Penghulu
Makes great the daulat of our ruler.
2. Four companions now be thanked²
Support the raja with his nubat
Ties are close with every person
Country crowded, filled with people.
3. Syeds, Prophets, intercede
Daulat of our king upstands
Extending always wealth and greatness
Gleaming, shining, clear and bright.
4. Prayers offered by learned men
Daulat of our kings upstands
Fully blessed by this world's Lord
Perfection flows about the throne.

1. The syair is a less popular and less well-known form of Malay poetry than the pantun in that each stanza, though also made up of four lines, is part of an entire poem and is naturally linked to the stanza before and to that which follows. The rhyme scheme is a-a-a-a. In a pantun the symbolism and allusion of the first two lines make clear the meaning of the second couplet. There is almost no scholarly research which has been done on the syair form. Professor Teeuw has suggested that it was first introduced into the Malay world in the early seventeenth century by Hamzah Fansuri, a poet in the Acehnese court. At first the syair form was used only for subjects dealing with religion, but it gradually became an acceptable form for secular topics as well. As yet there is no evidence that the syair existed as a literary genre before 1600, but during the course of the following century, it appears that other poets began to imitate Hamzah's model. A Teeuw, "The Malay Sha'ir. Problems of Origin and Tradition," BKI, 122, 4 (1966), 429-446, especially pp. 431-432 and 440.

4. Wazir: ministers.
3. Name given to a mass of literature embodying stories about the sayings and doings of the Prophet for the guidance of Moslems.
2. The Prophet's four companions were Abu Bakar, Umar, Othman and Ali.

12. TuanKu, pardon my presumption
This story of our time composed is
Shines the throne in negeri, village
Like the sea and reefs are we.
11. Offer I this document
In the presence of my king
May his greatness, daulat increase
Flow out the news of bounty, fame.
10. Raja he of noble birth
Clever, munificent and wise
To his brother ever faithful
Escorts him always as a friend.
9. Ruler's brother, Raja Muda
Orders government for his lord
Hulubalang, officials, young and old
Not one of them forgets his place.
8. Minister he, a wazir noble⁴
Town, bazaar, beneath his rule
Deals with matters clear or subtle
Adat always is his guide.
7. TuanKu's daulat still upstanding
From him justice flows out daily
Raja Bendahara, country's regent
Hulubalang, menteri, follow him.
6. TuanKu Raja, prudent, wise
In God's decrees and hadith versed³
Composed I then this swair about
The learned raja's pleasure trip.
5. Bountiful is the TuanKu Sultan
Versed in all the holy truths
Learned, wise and ever-prudent
Our faith to him is all-revealed.

13. Thanks to God's all-mighty bounty
Sultan Iskandar's daulat grows
When he makes a trip or journey
Blossom negeri, towns and ports.
14. Offer I this narrative
A story to my bounteous lord
I a slave of little worth
Follow him as best I can.
15. Weak and frail I, thrown away
Living as a humble bat
Dwelling in a vacuum⁵
No goal or aim is ever reached.
16. Yet I am bold to make my sembah⁶
Asking pardon be extended
Lower am I than a midden
Living like a piece of filth.
17. Truly I sat down to write
Understanding not my craft⁷
Like a perahu with heavy anchor
But I ask my prince's pardon.
18. This story tells about a time
With the will of God prevailing
Our prince the raja, great and strong
Left to play and view the sights.
19. The daulat of our lord and king
Flows out, established on the throne
This story then I humbly proffer
A fort was built at Tanjung Putus.
20. The upheld daulat of our prince
Gathered the hulubalang and the menteri
All the people of the land
Assembled, coming day by day.

5. Literally, hanging in the space between heaven and earth.

6. Sembah: obeisance.

7. Literally, does not know suitable analogies and comparisons.

21. Assembled they from everywhere
Hulubalang, officials all
 Each minister beneath the throne
 The wishes honoured of our king.
22. Raja Muda, ruler's brother
 Obeisance makes he to his lord
 Raja Bendahara present too
 Beneath the royal kingly throne.
23. With the will of God Almighty
 To whom his slaves are obligated
 Our lord and raja great and strong
 Each village will be visited.
24. Long ago this had been promised
 Flashed again across his mind
 Now desires to build a kota
 Peace and strength will thus increase.
25. Bounteous is our lord and Sultan
 Sits in state upon his throne
 Came to him the perfect impulse
 And then commanded Sri Mengerna.⁸
26. Conferred he then with all his brothers
 Officials, menteri, old and young
Hulubalang, people, all assembled
 Wait for orders and commands.
27. Said the king to those assembled
 To his brothers he explained
 "The present time is now my zaman
 Best that I should build a fort.
28. Well I know the Dutch are there,
 But their hearts are lacking strength
 I myself am not yet old
 I wish to leave a lasting sign.
29. We three brothers will discuss it
 All the ministers as well
 The people are in our protection
 Harmed at all they must not be."

8. Sultan Iskandar.

30. Hearing then the royal order
 Royal foot upon their head⁹
 "Then and now we're slaves and servants
 Whatever's ordered shall be done."
31. Came to sembah, came they all
 In the presence of our king
 "King and lord, oh throne most perfect
 Where then should the fort be built?"
32. Said the king in all his excellence
 Said to all his noble lords
 "For kerah duty call the people
 I myself will go downstream."
33. Raja Muda, ruler's brother
 Raja Bendahara present too
 Hardly had the words been spoken
 Royal words were carried out.
34. Several days then came and went and
Menteri, hulubalang all were there
 Gathered all the country's people
 Their coming cannot be described.
35. Every hulubalang had gathered
 Numbers passing reckoning
 Boats came down from off their framework.¹⁰
 Decoration fine and rare.
36. Royal perahu called Kerketa Indra
 Worked by craftsman Sang Setiara
 Beauty, bearing, found no equal
 Seemed the work of heavenly beings.
37. Carving, curving, also square was
 Painted clouds of many hues
 Wealthy, mighty, Sultan's vessel
 Filled observers with amazement.

9. To place the ruler's foot upon one's head is part of the act of homage (junjung).

10. Galang: framework supporting perahu in slipway.

38. Painted were the walls with gilt
Studded jewels, Palembang gold
Painted flowers and clouds resemble
Beauty of a fairy sprite.
39. Famous perahu, with jewels set,
Flaming, glowing, in the night
The boat of Sultan Excellent
Observers cannot find a flaw.
40. Descends it then in perfect glory
Varied hue and decoration
Regalia, flags, are all in place
Appears it like a walimana.¹¹
41. Pennants snaking, stretched out thread-like
As a naga, seven horned¹²
All who saw expressed amazement
Shook their heads in puzzled awe.
42. Yet another, newly crafted
Fine appeared, beyond compare
Curling carving, painted was it
Naga-snake it seemed to be.
43. Orang Utan carved aforefront
Like a lion seeking prey
Was the gift of Yang di Pertuan
The boat of noble Raja Putera.
44. Fine its carving, gleaming, shining
The work of craftsman Sang Setiar
All equipment now was ready
Every young man, youth was there.
45. This perahu was called Raksasa Indra
Appearance like a flying lion
Painted clouds processed around and
Its appearance had no match.

11. Walimana: harpy, man-bird, endowed with speech and celebrated in legend.

12. Naga: a huge snake with a horn and on its forehead a luminous stone (gemala) with which it lights its way at night. The perahu naga, or dragon boat, was formerly used by Perak sultans. It was a two-masted boat with square headed dipping lugsails, a deckhouse rudder and galleries both fore and aft. The figure head represented a dragon. Warington Smyth, "Boats and Boat-Building," p. 105.

46. Within were many guns and weapons
Cannon, rentaka, quite complete¹³
Muskets, blunderbuss, can't be counted
Studded all with previous jewels.
47. The counting, reckoning, is not done
Stories many, more recounted
Boats are all brought off their galang
Resembled cocks with spurs tied on.
48. Ruler's perahu brought to the water
Like a tiger leaping down
Finely wrought in all its crafting
Composed I then this svair, this verse.
49. Now the royal boat is floating
All that's needed in its place
Flags and pennants, each one standing
Beauty cannot be described.
50. Ranged and ordered all the boats were
Ammunition, guns complete
Superb, let nothing more be said for
Nothing there offends the eye.
51. Then when several days had passed by
Present all the menteri, hulubalang
Assembled all the country's people
Variety defies description.
52. After everyone had gathered
Waiting for the time that's right
Sounded cannon with the rifles
Soldiers, warriors, came they all.
53. Boat of Raja blessed with daulat
Fitted out and quite complete
Many kinds of cloth and brocade
Not one flaw can be discerned.
54. Raised the flags and special banners
Yellow is the royal hue
Guns complete, cannot be counted
Cannon many, turn, revolve.

13. Rentaka: swivel gun.

55. Lucky cannon placed aforefront
There's no foe who dares oppose
The daulat of our lord be thanked for
Those we meet become our friends.
56. Son of Perak, lucky cannon
Those who hear it lose their mind
Bullets seek above and under
Entering even in a cauldron.
57. Came a fluttering, hearts excited
Wednesday was the day we left
People followed, hundreds, thousands
Brothers, mothers, left behind.
58. When equipment all was ready
Regalia ranged of many hues
Left the Sultan his istana
Appeared he truly like a king.
59. Blossomed then the four umbrellas
Each set properly in its place
All the guns and royal regalia
Wondrous, marvellous, to behold.
60. Nafiri blown before departure,¹⁴
Blown the trumpet, struck the drum
Beat the gong and keep on beating
Anxious hearts of those who stayed.
61. All of us among the escort
Proceeded then to board our boats
Standards were already upright
Pennants, flags, had been unfurled.
62. Appears our Sultan on the deck
Neath the payung shot with gold¹⁵
All round him pages standing
Old and young has each a task.
63. Not yet finished is the story
Orders, customs of the time
Myself, I lack a total knowledge
Fear longwinded to become.

14. Nafiri: royal trumpet. See Appendix D.

15. Payung: umbrella

64. Raja Daha, royal child
The ruler's brother's oldest son
With the will of God Almighty
Gains he mercy mixed with bounty.
65. Of an age he can be wedded
Bearing, manners, both refined
Loved is he by Sri Betara¹⁶
Will become the ruler's son.
66. He's a noble anak raja
Sweet, refined, in all he does
Ordered by our lord and ruler
Stands upon the painted boat.
67. Raksasa Indra is his perahu
Beyond compare its bearing is
Looks to be a fearsome lion
Danger cannot make it quake.
68. Flags and pennants flash and gleam
Oars and boats like centipedes
Noble, handsome, all the people
Captured tigers newly freed.
69. Two brass cannon placed in front are
Rowed by young men, friend by friend
Leaves he then, Yang di Pertuan
As a cloud streams through the sky.
70. Raised the Sultan's boat its anchor
Ruler's brothers his escort
Beauty cannot be recounted
Flowers scattered, strewn around.
71. The vessel of the Raja Muda
Garuda it appears to be¹⁷
Crafted finely, lines are elegant
Guns were many, money too.
72. Perahu is called Kota Berida
Cannot imagine greater beauty
See its movement and its fittings
One would be deprived of speech.

16. Sultan Iskandar.

17. Garuda: griffin, winged mount of Vishnu. Probably referring to a carved figurehead on the boat.

73. Ruler leaves, he follows after
Boat is still not quite prepared
Working still are all the people
Every servant leaves his mark
74. Raja speaks with prudence, wisdom,
Whatever's done is done with care
All the guns are fully guarded
Much is brought for all affairs.
75. See the perahu and see how perfect
Complete with money, goods to trade
Iron weapons like tempered steel are
Sharp and keen whate'er the task.
76. Leaves His Highness, Raja Muda
All that's needed surely there
Brother-ruler then he follows
Escorted by attendants all.
77. Raja Muda's son leaves firstly
Appearance charming and refined
Gong and drum are loudly beaten
Unceasing sound of rolling thunder.
78. Truly anak raja, he is
Fit to wed, behaviour sweet,
Carries out each task and duty
Dishonour he will never meet.
79. Son is he of Raja Muda
All his goods, equipment there,
Old and young among his people
Some Rawa, some Minangkabau.
80. Raja Bendahara, worthy minister
Also is a ruler's son
His boat is called Si Ketam Batu
Guns and weapons all aboard.
81. Ordered by Duli Mahkota¹⁷
Acts as minister neath the throne
All the people in the country
Follow him unquestioningly.

18. Literally, dust under the feet of royalty, i.e., Sultan Iskandar.

82. Follows he the mighty ruler
Travels through negeri and town
God Almighty gives his blessing
Leaves he at a time that's right.
83. All the weapons there complete
Equipped with cannon, swivel-guns
Placed in front the biggest ones
Like a naga's horn are they.
84. Raja Rahman, royal son
Follows in another's care
Has not reached the age of faith
Cannot be considered strong.
85. Royal brother, Raja di Hilir
Present was he in boat
Truly he'll come downstream later
Sharpened all his weapons are.
86. He's the brother of the ruler
Appearance like a spreading kuala
Follows he his royal brother
Perahu is charming, called Shahada.¹⁹
87. No curves at all, a mounted steed is
Revolving guns point out like fingers
His friends have never sadness known
Obey the king in all they do.
88. Raja Kecil Bungsu, ruler's brother
His sloop is shining like the sun
He's the youngest royal brother
As sweet is he as milk and sugar.
89. One boat stands by itself apart
The one of Datuk Paduka Sri Raja
Most cleverly made by a skilful craftsman
It is not long he's been a servant.
90. Infallible are the guns and weapons
And the money all is there
Given a cannon by Duli Mahkota
Its title is Padam Pelita.

19. The following verses, 86-92, have been accidentally omitted from the published version.

91. The one in charge is Megat Sri Rama
With him older, younger brothers
His age is not yet very old
Will not discard his reputation.
92. Raja Hitam, a noble youth is
By nature and appearance sweet
His penjajab he has called Selasi
Made by a Keling from Mangku Sari.
93. He's a brother of our ruler
Tall, upstanding, though yet young
If an enemy should threaten
Better he should lose his soul.
94. Truly other anak raja
Paid back the money they received
He is drunk from smoking ganja
Carousing with his Bugis friends
95. Panglima Keling Muhammad Nina
Beard and moustache shine and glisten
Should some mischief make come
He'll find it better he were dead.
96. Rahim's another anak raja
Not yet ready to be wedded
He has come just for amusement
Sharp and keen like tempered steel.
97. Let us mention then together
Orang Kaya Paduka Sri Rama
Though his age is not yet old
Hopes he to become panglima.
98. Fine his perahu and looks the part.
Royal food will here be stored
People many, also able
Present with their weapons, tools.
99. There's a man, Malay descent
Appears a trader long since rich
A different wood that's in the bundle
Like a faded flower bud.²⁰

²⁰ Meaning that he is not the same as the Malays around him.

100. Old is he, approaching death
Gold and money he has not
With a perahu he follows too
Together with Maharaja Muda.
101. With the order of our king
Maharaja Indra comes along
Fine his perahu which meets the eye
Equalled by his weapons, guns.
102. Follows Duli Yang di Pertuan
Truly pleased, yet somewhat sad
In his perahu he has no friend
Unknown remains his very speech.
103. His daily aim and deep desire
Was to seek a noble name
Should he royal favour gain
A peaceful village spot he'd ask.
104. If this were not granted to him
Where else could he turn for help?
Every order he accepted
Hard or easy, he was willing.
105. There's another royal brother
Newly reached the age of marriage
Follows in the ruler's care
Meanwhile, manner, bearing fine.
106. Maharaja Indra, outstanding youth
Together is he with Malays
Follows he the king most learned
Fit that he should be panglima
107. Raja di Baruh has a kakap
Complete it is with all officials
To see its bearing and appearance
Ikan Siakap seems to be.²¹
108. His body shows approaching age
Thinks no more of things forbidden
Loved is he by Raja Muda
Both are always with the ruler.

21. Ikan siakap: sea perch.

109. He is one of two, both brothers
Raja Alang, aged the same
Sultan's sea hawk is his boat
Like a bird in flight appears.
110. Raja Syarif, pious prince
Chosen of the Hashim race²²
Thanks to Allah's intercession
He has reached a high estate.
111. Syarif Abu Bakar, elder brother
Both together in one boat
Have moreover life and spirit
Any work they'll carry out.
112. Hashim Jemali, brother too
Like them, has a small kakap.
Follows then His Majesty
Offers prayers for safety, peace.
113. He is of a noble race
Reliable and trustworthy
With the will of God Almighty
Has received a rank that's high.
114. Raja Kenayan has also come
Brothers he has brought with him
Together in the prince's boat
Among them he is made the captain.
115. Amir and Koraish, friends are they
Escort they Duli Yang di Pertuan
Follow they ruler's noble son
Faithful, trusted men are they.
116. Now the story is completed
All the wazir have been mentioned
Hulubalang, officials equally
Penjajab too enumerated.
117. Orang Kaya Besar, an old wazir
Appointed by the former king
Foremost is he, wisest too
Loved is he by our gracious lord.

22. The name of the Prophet's great-grandfather, the founder of the Hashemite clan.

118. Treasury minister is he
In the country's government
Malabarese among his escort
Fine and splendid is his boat.
119. Pictured beast upon the mast
Like a painted wayang²³ is,
Blows the wind both nightly, daily,
Air-borne then it seems to be.
120. Orang Kaya Temenggong, wazir most noble
Perahu is made without a flaw
A naga's statue it appears
Crafted by a Bengal man.
121. Appearance like a chart or map is
Complete with weapons and with guns
All the pages named together
Refuse to have a name that's base.
122. Assisted by Pakih Si Raja Dewa
Strong is he but rather old
Orders given, he obeys them
Never does he disappoint.
123. Judge or hakim he's appointed
Body strong, garuda-like
When foes or mischief-makers come
He will never run away.
124. Datuk Menteri, excellent wazir
Holy, of the Hashim race
Wishes he to come along but
Bidden is he to remain.
125. Sri Dewa Maharaja, head of pages
With our king he's very close
Ordered by His Majesty
Brings with him the country's drum.
126. Known this man to be a trader
Has no equal in the land
Received the bounty of our king
The title Raja Lela Mahkota.

23. Wayang: Shadow play.

127. Assistant of Dewa Maharaja
Task of any kind he'll do
His perahu is not of lowly rank
The king's regalia there is found.
128. All the wazir have been counted
Mentioned too the hulubalang
Several scores of boats and pilang²⁴
Unusually large, this force.
129. One hulubalang called Rakna Mahkota
Peerless rantau's people governs
Granted to him by the king
A newly-crafted penjajab.
130. Maharaja Indra Dewa, deputy
Agrees with him in all his words
Whatever royal orders given
They will carry out forthwith.
131. Attendant called Lela Pekerma
With Raja Bijaya, brothers five
Follow then the excellent raja
In one baluk are they all.
132. Sri Indra Dewa with Jana Putra
Mentioned are they now together
Syarif Mustafa whose race is chosen
Also with them in the perahu.
133. Orang Kaya Bungsu, nobly born
With Maharaja Derma Wangsa
Searching are they constantly
Gaining fortune their desire.
134. Follow they then His Majesty
Together in an penjajab
Naught offends, although it small is
The name is written on the flag.
135. Sri Lela, trusted confidant
His perahu is named Senjani Tanding
Should it sail with other perahu
Its speed would be beyond compare.

24. Pilang: Large canoe like boat, about 42 ft. long, 5 ft. wide.

136. The penjajab of Sri Indra
Middle-sized, yet finely made
Loved is he by Sri Betara
Relied upon in conference.
137. Orang Kaya Paduka Sri Raja
Has a kakap, simply made
Gold he has, and goods on hand
Does not join in others' plans.
138. Sri Pekerma is a hulubalang
His perahu is called a sampan balang²⁵
Wazir, minister's son is he
He will even give his life.
139. Penjajab of Indra Paduka
A fighting cock is he in courage
If some danger should appear
He will never turn his face.
140. Penjajab of Raja Lela Wangsa
Like that of Indra Paduka
As a goose appears to be
A name that's good is not destroyed.
141. Kakap of Paduka Sri Indra
Decoration incomplete
See his bearing and appearance
A prisoner he could never be.
142. Now to Raja Indra Mahkota
Older hulubalang neath the throne
He is also going with them
Rank increases with his age.
143. Not yet finished is the counting
Kakap, penjajab and the hulubalang
Should I number one by one
Pens and ink would all be gone.
144. Orang Kaya Paduka Tuan
Friend of Sri Agar is he
Left behind by Yang di Pertuan
Palace guards for Raja Perempuan.

25. Sampan balang: war boat, two-masted galley for boarding becalmed ships.

145. Another page is Sri Marat
 Stands he with them as a sign
 The king our noble lord has left him
 Like a perahu with heavy cargo.
146. Left he then, Duli Mahkota
 Men, equipment, perfect throne
 Sounds of guns is loud and noisy
 Grand, can hardly be endured.
147. Royal boat then raised its anchor
 Cannon in the bow all fired
 Friend by friend the young men paddled
 Saddened are those left behind.
148. At the time the ruler left
 Thick the water of the river
 See kakap and penajab
 Strung together, like ships of war.
149. Sultan, Tuanku, nobly born
 Leaves for pleasure, happiness
 Goes from Pulau Indra Sakti
 At Kuala Bidor calls a halt.
150. Rays of sun then change to dusk
 Anchored there the ruler's boat
 Flowing stream and rising tide
 Caused one of the perahu to sink.
151. Bold and valiant Bugis man
 From a far-off village came
 With the will of God Almighty
Perahu had sunken, goods destroyed.
152. Perahu was anchored in the kuala
 Word mistaken, error made
 Accident came suddenly
 Knew he then not what to do.
153. When the perahu had clearly sunken
 Sad was he within his heart
 Came to see the wazir ul alam²⁶
 Skilful divers he requested.

26. The Bendahara.

154. Raja Bendahara, clever prince
Bugis came and made obeisance
Begged a perahu his goods to salvage
One third then reward would be.
155. Then the Raja Bendahara
Pitied he the trader's plight
Gave he straightway orders quickly
So the goods would all be saved.
156. Then the perahu was lifted up
Wetted goods spread out to dry
This story cannot be completed
Royal boat its anchor raised.
157. Ruler, Sultan, Tuanku leaving,
Goes on down to Tanjung Putus
People gather, hundreds, thousands
Discussions held, decisions made.
158. Tuanku Sultan, Lord most powerful
Hundreds, thousands, soldiers round him
Stayed a time at Tanjung Putus
Waits for distant folk to come.
159. Waiting rakyat build a kampung
Made a place to fight their cocks
Cocks were many, spurs all fastened
Those victorious leaped and jumped
160. Adat this, became our custom
As a wound rubbed through with salt
Those defeated, faces souring
Hearts within run hot and cold.
161. Lacking reals, pockets empty
Harried by defeat were they
Sat with heads bowed down like cobras
Looking for a place to hide.
162. Fighting cocks, a wicked pastime
Allah's prophet has proscribed it
Those victorious, those defeated
Who can know what may result?
163. All the anak raja-raja
In their kampung crowd to play
Cocks and spurs with magic charmed are
Many are the reals spent.

164. I would like to tell a story
Not a myth or parable
Sultan, royal ruler's boat
Penjajab's cargoes loaded high.
165. Tin was brought down by the ruler
Hundreds of bahara worth
Changed for reals with the Dutchmen
So they would be satisfied.
166. Dutchmen looking, hearts were frighted
Saw the fleet of penjajab
Though this work would not be easy
Surely there will come some good.
167. After all the people gathered
With their pegawai complete²⁷
Ordered by our lord and ruler
Everybody built the fort.
168. Tanjung Putus has three channels
Rose the kota facing out
This side, that side, each opposing
In the island's centre too.
169. Charming was that spot and lovely
Kampung was already there
What was planted yielded bounty
Low, abundant coconuts.
170. All penghulu with their followers
And officials each set up
Everybody with his duty
Finished everyone the task.
171. Those who worked were close and faithful
Firm as if they're glued together
Daulat of our lord increases
The king now wants to go to sea.
172. Talked the ruler with his brothers
Hulubalang, pegawai, young and old
Raja Bendahara, Raja Muda
Gathered all the penjajab.

27. Pegawai: officials.

173. Afterwards, when time has passed
Present were the hulubalang
Kakap, penjajab, cannot count them
All brought down from off galang.
174. Just about a month was spent
Gunshields for penjajab made
Present all the friends and comrades
Equipped with weapons, clothes and food.
175. Those without who money lacked
Received the bounty of our king
Bounty too gave Raja Muda
And also Raja Bendahara.
176. Those without a perahu their own
Given were they by the king
Daily ordered boats made ready
Searched they then for what they lacked.
177. Prepared were all the flags and pennants
Each was fitting for a king
Some were black and others crimson
Perfect as a scented flower.
178. Sails all of cloth were made
Though the royal aim was pleasure
Not to visit countries far
Yet waves expected, windy weather.
179. After all was finished, done
Each penjajab and kakap
From their bearing and appearance
It seemed they'd never meet defeat.
180. Those who stayed to guard the fort
Felt a sadness in their hearts
They had hoped to act as escort
As well as to amuse themselves.
181. Sri Nara di Raja, Bentara Kiri
With the Datuk Menteri too
And noble Maharaja Lela
Ordered were to guard the state.
182. All of them were men of standing
Each one was a willing servant
Could be trusted to be faithful
Disloyal they would never be.

200. Cik Ali's title is Maharaja Desa
And a faithful slave is he
Receives the bounty of our king
With noble nature, rank increases.
201. Encik Siram, slave most valued
Entitled Raja Dewa Bungsu
A worker in the royal kitchen
Now the youngest of panglima.
202. Demeanour and behaviour seen
All the slaves of Duli Tuanku
Seem as though they're off to war.
Wherever needed they will go.
203. An expedition in this zaman
Marvellous, not seen before
They look as if they will attack
Perhaps they will go out and fight.
204. All assembled, all were ready
Each penjab, sampan, kakap
Prepared with sureness and with vigour
Many different shapes and styles.
205. When each one had there assembled
Like a cock that wants to fight
Should they opposition meet
Spurs will break and keris will splice.
206. All penjab with panglima
Reciting names is not complete
Titled each, and each his name
Like a noble cock are they.
207. Daeng Tomaning Raja Bugis
Included was he in the escort
Strong enough, though body old
Any task he'd carry out.
208. Syed Ja'afar, illustrious man
Saintly, of the Hashim race
Followed he our wealthy king
Penjab's fittings all complete
209. With an anxious heart he came
Fortune's favour hoped to find
His father called him home to Kedah
But he has many debts unpaid.

210. One official, man unequalled
Loyal slave beneath the throne
But he acted somewhat badly
The ruler ordered him dismissed.
211. His fortune had been rather flawed
His task unfinished, he's dismissed
Truly fate has broken with him
Follows he with a face that's pale.
212. There was too a younger man
Hunting women in the village
Yes indeed he had a boat
But aroused he royal wrath.
213. Thus he follows us along
Bearing fitting for panglima
While before he had a title
His former name's returned to him.
214. Nakhoda Raja had a boat
Filled with weapons, goods to trade
Senior was he, but not old
He could do whate'er was asked.
215. With him was Nakhoda Trader
From Selangor where he lived
Came to Perak, wants to join us
Follows he our prince and lord.
216. His son is Megat Indra Bungsu
Numbered is among the servants
Looking at his stance and bearing
Could be ordered by the ruler.
217. Sang Setia Sura brought his boat
He who made the royal craft
Comes he from a distant place
Loyal is he to the king.
218. Abang Jiwa, a panglima
Like a soldier of Berama.³²
Ordered to go first downstream
A reputation his desire.

219. Panglima Watchman he becomes
Investigates inlets and snags
No matter whether hard or easy
Quickly does he grab and seize it.
220. Panglima Tobak had a sampan
A Bugis man and very able
Making war was his desire
Has already goods put by.
221. After all was finished, ready
I will not prolong the tale
Of those who came as royal escort
Half of them have not been named.
222. Gone the day and almost nighttime
Came Bendahara, waziru'l-alam
Entered he to make obeisance
Orders he had carried out.
223. Now baginda Raja Muda
Came to bow before His Highness
All the ministers are there
Waiting for the king's command.
224. All the orders of baginda
Follow faithfully his brothers
As do all the retinue
They will do whate'er is asked.
225. Raja Bendahara, great Panglima
Godown is he in the market
Trading goods both large and small
Under him Makassar men.
226. Orang Kaya Besar, Panglima Dalam
Assistant of the Bendahara
Morning, evening, makes obeisance
Brings affairs both private, public.
227. Orang Kaya Temenggong, War Panglima
Extraordinary is his bearing
Pennant crimson, gleaming, shining
Will not accept a name that's base.
228. Robes of honour given all
Consulted then the calendar
Which time is thought both right and fitting
On the morrow to depart?

229. When discussion was completed
To-morrow will the ruler leave
Prayers offered, asks for blessings
Increased, combined with mercy, virtue.
230. After evening came the next day
Assembled all the people there
Tenth day of the month it was
Midday and rising Jupiter.
231. Hoist petard of royal perahu
Splendour matchless still remains
Yellow pennants standing stright up
Flags and banners too are raised.
232. Flags arranged and all complete
Officials too ranked splendidly
Each panglima in his manner
Speech and bearing is quite fitting.
233. Weapons in the ruler's perahu
In the bow two cannon stand
Cannot be opposed at all
Foes they meet become our friends.
234. Son of Perak, lucky cannon
Those who hear it feel quite faint
Bullets searching high and low,
In the deepest cauldron, vat.
235. Prepared and ready all equipment
No flaw or defect can be seen
Tuanku Raja, blessed with daulat
Rays of face like lightning flash.
236. Tuanku Sultan, noble raja
Rays are like a moon that's full
In panglima's clothing garbed
Face cannot be looked on long.
237. Sits in state on Kerketa Indra
Court attendants homage pay
Under moving, turning payung
Maidens, slave girls wait on him.
238. Attendants, courtiers, friend with friend
Like processing clouds are we
Hearts of those who stay are sorrowful
Some are weeping, moved by sadness.

239. Daulat, Tuanku, excellent lord
 Light is clear and brightly glows
 Like a naga's jewelled head
 Flawless are its gleaming rays.
240. Malay villagers have this jewel
 They consider to be priceless
 Those who stay are melancholy
 Some are sick because they're sad.
241. The ruler sits upon his throne
 In a cabin carved with gold
 Regalia there and all is perfect
 Rays reach out to everywhere.
242. A page is called Indra Mahkota
 He is present 'neath the throne
 Whatever order he is given
 He will fully execute.
243. Official called Maharaja Indra
 Royal confidant is he
 Appointed by Duli Betara
 Steersman of Kerketa Indra.
244. Then the time had reached midday
 Sultan's perahu came floating down
 Open payung, flags all hoisted
 Seemed it like a naga flying.
245. Raja Muda, Sultan's brother
 A mount of jewels, diamonds, gems,
 We can see him shining, gleaming
 Like a lamp among the fleet.
246. Raja Bendahara, waziru'l-alam
 He's the brother of our king
 Like a mount of jewels and sapphires
 Vigilant both day and night.
247. Behaviour sweet and quite refined is
 In religion seems sincere
 His son is Raja Abdul Rahman
 Like a pearl placed in the hand.
248. Raja di Hilir, younger brother
 Very faithful to the ruler
 Doubled is a mount of jewels
 Gleaming sweetly, fine and handsome.

249. Now to Raja Kecil Bungsu
Like a pinnacle topped with gems
Rays are gleaming as the sunshine
Like a diamond in a bowl.
250. Brothers, sisters, parents-in-law
Included in the expedition
Complete with money and expenses
Faces shining, sweet, refined.
251. Raja Tengah, noble prince
Sweet, refined and gracious too.
Clouds are painted on his boat
Pictured clouds process around.
252. From his boat Raksasa Indra
Appears it like a flying sprite
Appears the country's mountain peak
Diamond-studded, pearls and gems.
253. His pages number many friends
Seems as if they go to fight
Now Panglima Raja Pahlawan
In the bow with Nakhoda Malik.
254. Nakhoda Malik, a panglima
Resembles Maharaja Berama
Always faithful to the ruler
Has not yet received a title.
255. Raja di Hilir, anak raja
Descended he of royal blood
Like a captured moon or sunset
Shining gleaming countenance.
256. Follows he his lord and father
Love, affection, in his heart
Given money when he lacks it
From his father Raja Muda.
257. He's a noble anak raja
Behaviour wise, sincere and pious
Like a diamond in our zaman
Gleaming bright within one's grasp.
258. Raja di Baruh with Raja Alang
The two of them unusual
As a pearl kept in a bottle
Gleaming, shining, radiant.

259. Truly are of youthful status
But they almost adult are.
Both are favoured by His Highness
Jesting, flirting, sweet of speech.
260. Raja Hitam, lovely youth
Seems like gold that's newly fired
Behaviour gracious, cultivated
Arms are curving, nails are long.
261. Among the many royal servants
I am like a lump of salt
Look the same, behaviour different
Whate'er I do devoid of grace.
262. Follow in the royal escort
Like a sterile rambutan³³
Flower thickly like the others
But the fruit cannot be seen.
263. Miserable among this gathering
Forgotten I amidst discussion
No perahu have I or sustenance
Ask the bounty of my prince.
264. My lord commanded, I composed
No wit at all and lacking gold
Between the former days and now
The difference is a hundred-fold.
265. Daulat Tuanku, all pervading
Gleaming like the clearest moon
I am his eager willing slave
But sick men cannot gather shells.
266. After all the words are ended
Metaphor, analogy, simile, image
Raised the royal boat its anchor
With the order of waziru'l alam.
267. Then were all the anchors raised
Sultan left in splendid state
Sound of cannon loud and noisy
Dark, misty, black, the smoke arises.

33. A tree which yielded the well-known rambutan, so called from its hairy integuments.

268. When all the boats had left from thence
Paddled first Si Ketam Batu
All the kakap with one mast
Like a swarm of flying ants.
269. Perahu arranged in rows together
Sound the paddles noise and clamour
Flags and pennants flapping, waving
Spread out like a bat that's flying.
270. Zaman sekarang, royal array
Marvellous, no common sight
When it's seen by anyone
An army it appears to be.
271. When the anchors had been lifted
Boomed the guns like distant thunder
Happy all the warriors, champions
Felt as if they would attack.
272. Shouting, cheering, fierce and bold
As are those who go to war
Hearts of each panglima heated
As if they all attackers were.
273. Now to all the anak raja
Each his own appearance, bearing
Charmed were all the guns and weapons
Red-gold clouds at sunset seen.
274. Pennants, flags, were flapping, waving
Paddles moving to and fro
Fired the muskets, blunderbusses
Loud the sounds of merriment.
275. Raja Muda, royal prince
Sampan towed on which he sits
Follows royal brother's boat
Who knows what might disturb the peace?
276. Justice of this raja famous
Greatness of no common man
Like a diamond in its setting
Gleaming, shining, are its rays.
277. Raja Setia with Encik Bada
In the boat of Raja Muda
Panglima one, the other captain
Both relied on by our king.

278. Fleet of Perak's ruler seen
Terrified the Dutch Captain
Cannon fired he not at all
Afraid his fort would be attacked.
279. Infidel Dutch, accused people
Inexplicably afraid
Thought that they had done some wrong
Said the ruler angry was.
280. Suspicious, saw the Perak men
Heard the firing of the guns
Hearts within were gloomy, sombre
Thought their fort would be attacked.
281. Now penjajab all arranged
River crowded, bank to bank.
Bearing, manner of the people
Resembled those who go to war.
282. Infidel Dutch, their hearts afraid
Faces changed to pallid white.
Godown door was closed and shut
Fearful of the ruler's might.
283. The expedition passed the fort
Returned relief then to their hearts
Came with message, interpreter
See him act so gracious, sweet.
284. Now we'd passed kota Holanda
All the ships of Duli Baginda
Youths were many, pleasuring, flirting
Laughing and exchanging jokes.
285. Our ruler's now at Terus Dalang
Escort now beg leave to go
Hearts within were very sad
Uncommon their concern and worry.
286. The day had almost changed to dusk
Anchored when Duli Syah Alam
Directly at the strait's entrance
With the order of waziru'l-alam
287. When His Majesty had anchored
Struck the gendang, nubat played
All penjajab, great uproar
From evening till the morning prayer.

288. Came the evening bright and clear
With ease could everything be seen
The king then goes down to his sampan
Leaves to have fun catching shrimp.
289. Royal brothers followed him
Crossed the straits, each one abreast
Many scenes came to the eye
Shrimp and fish were caught with nets.
290. Anchored there, a pretty spot
Clamour, sounds of merriment
Those who'd gone, their fishing done
Returned to eat their sweetmeats, cakes.
291. Day and night, backwards and forwards
Sounded tunes of drum and gendang
Many those who netted fish
Soup was made from ikan belanak.³⁴
292. Care was taken with the nets
Afraid of singing fish within
Stinging spikes are powerful
Those they touch fall suddenly ill.
293. There was also a slave of Allah
His tale concerns duplicity
I wish to name him but I dare not
Because he lack fine qualities.
294. Came he then up to my perahu
I gave him cakes, rendang to eat³⁵
He quickly left to hunt for shrimp
Keris was left, could not be found.
295. High and low we searched for it
As he beat his breast in sorrow
His sadness cannot be recounted
It was stolen by a thief.
296. About two evenings came and went
Sounded Bendahara's gong
Sultan's boat continued down
Towards the river Ketam Dalam.

34. Grey mullet.

35. Cooked nothing more than a little oil or fat. Has come to refer to a meat cooked with spices and coconut milk.

297. Ruler anchored, once again
Penjajab spread across the kuala
 See the ocean's flame light up
 Many ill with aching heads.
298. Too long the story to relate
 Hard it was to hold one's seat
 Hurlled by waves in slippery perahu
 Sweat poured out, our bodies wet.
299. Now the day began to dawn
 Sounded gendang and nafiri
 Heard the sound of noble gong
 Paddled forthwith to the ruler.
300. When clearly everything was seen
 Sounded then the gong three times
 Followed then we all the ruler
 Looking fearful at the sea.
301. Listen to the Raja Bendahara
Kakap, penjajab, anchors raised
 Ruler's boat, Kerketa Indra
 Quickly paddled to the kuala.
302. Swiftness, speed, cannot be faulted
 When we passed outside the kuala
 Pulau Sembilan in the distance
 Close to us is Tanjung Kepah.
303. Kakap, penjajab, like a guard
 As the fish in water seen
 Offered we prayers aloud and quiet
 Sails all ready to be raised.
304. All made ready, oars were poised
 Uttered we prayers for favouring wind
 Shift the rigging, pull the sail
 Now we go towards Pulau Katak.
305. Sails of cloth so very fine
 Just like flowers are arranged
 To manage them no easy task
 Never stopping, raise and lower.
306. Comes the wind, begin to bail
 On Tanjung Karang break the waves
 Clinking, clanging, sounds a bell
 Such a sound the rigging makes.

307. Arrived we then at Teluk Batu
Fickle, changing, was the wind
Some penjajab lingered there
Ached our bones as after war.
308. Between the shore and Pulau Sembilan
Many penjajab left behind
Each and every friend and comrade
Cannot swallow what is eaten.
309. Tuanku Sultan, blessed with daulat
Sails he on with full escort
Rose the wind as sheets were tightened
Boats then entered in the straits.
310. After Pangkor Strait was reached
Those who lingered sitting thinking
Paddles fell from listless hands
As if they'd drunken too much wine.³⁶
311. At Pulau Pangkor Sultan anchored
Struck the gongs and beat the drums
All who'd lingered came up hurrying
Noise and clamour, great uproar.
312. A minister of Duli Tuanku
Behaviour gracious and refined
Bestowed upon him was a place
Waits at Sungai Pangkalan.
313. He's a servant always willing
Long he's served within the palace
Given the title Laksamana
Goes wherever he is sent.
314. Came he then from Pangkalan³⁷
Followed by his comrades, friends
Perahu complete with guns and shelter
Friends are many, trustworthy.
315. Came to pay the ruler homage
Pangkalan people with him too
Guns and weapons all complete were
Appearance cannot be described.

36. i. e., they were sea-sick. See also stanza 297.

37. Larut.

316. Penghulu Pematang, his assistant
Amar Pahlawan also came
His desire both day and evening
To collect his unpaid debts.
317. Drawing close the perahu were seen
Panglima looked out, fired shots
Thought the perahu were foes or pirates
Comrades none we have at sea.
318. Prepared he also to attack
Thought they weren't the perahu of friends
Suddenly he realised that
They were coming to pay homage.
319. Three penjajab then came on
Made obeisance, day and night
Royal foot upon their heads
Offered shellfish, several gantang.
320. Gifts like these his following offered
They'd collected in their baskets
He's a servant by descent
From a line of faithful slaves.
321. After nighttime came the day
People all enjoyed themselves
Came the dawning day upon us
Sounded nubat, drum, nafiri.
322. Now broad daylight, clear and bright comes
Noisy sound of people talking
All the party came ashore, for
Many sights were there to see.
323. When the morning sun appeared
Sultan rose again to leave
Enjoyed himself by the old godown
Splendid sights defy description.
324. This lodge was built some time ago
Holanda were the ones who made it
Surely great men once lived here
Left it when they were attacked.³⁸

38. Raja Culan is referring to the attack on the redoubt Henriette in 1689. The fort was rebuilt in 1746 but abandoned in 1748 when the lodge was moved to the Perak River. In 1761 Everard Cramer

325. Ruler's brother, Raja Muda
Goes ashore before his brother
Orders all the palace servants
To prepare a bathing place.
326. Sultan has returned from pleasure
Goes to bathe at Sungai Penjaring
Raja Muda has prepared it
Jars and vessels all collected.³⁹
327. At that time I too was there
Midst merriment of those who gathered
I myself a pancuran made⁴⁰
Followed all the rest ashore.
328. Having bathed, the king returns
Goes aboard his boat directly
All the escort present were
Many sights both sad and happy.
329. When the Friday prayers were over
Raised were all the flags and banners
The boat of Tuanku blessed with daulat
Sails then into the strait.
330. Penjabab ranged then, row on row
All the sails were crowded close
Unequaled swiftness of the boats
Brings them into Kuala Dinding.
331. Anchored in a narrow river
Many perahu wedged side by side
Left and right were squeezed and harassed
Smaller ones fear to be crushed.
332. Steadied then and lowered anchor
Noisy, loud was the commotion
Some went on about a mile
To mencari rezeki.
38. (cont'd.)
stopped at Pangkor and investigated the condition of the old fort.
He found that the outside walls were still upright, although they had
been overgrown by bushes and trees. KA 2954 OB 1763 Cramer's Report,
12 June 1761. The remains are still visible to-day.
39. Malays bathe by pouring water over themselves.
40. Pancuran: conduit made of hollow bamboo.

333. All the slaves of Duli Tuanku
Differing manners and behaviour
Entered they into the jungle
Seeking knots and balls of damar.⁴¹
334. After night then came the day
Consulted they with each other
Some with sampan, fishing pari⁴²
Of them some were netting catfish.
335. To the moment of the dawning
Until appearance of the sun
We ran to every single beach
Tridents brought to spear the fish.
336. We like to see the wealth of Allah
Some things good and some things bad
Sea crabs, land crabs, we could find there
Inside every upturned stone.
337. Barnacles and oysters there
On almost every single rock
Those who wished for food to take them
Hit and struck with tools of iron.
338. In a place His Highness bathed
In a river, water falling
Rocks were many, large as elephants
Crashed the waves in thunderous roars.
339. Many kinds and many colours
Murmuring sounds, we dawdle, looking
Tuanku Raja, gracious, noble
Would like to bathe here every time.
340. Now a story is related
A tale of the present time
A rumour uninvestigated
Made difficulties for everyone.
341. When the day was almost done
Panglima Garang came with haste
Said, "I wish to tell about
Many perahu, their sails spread out.

41. Damar: resin.

42. Sting ray, skate.

342. I have seen them several times,
Twenty perahu I calculate
Lie athwart the Pangkor Strait
Raja, hulubalang, I know them not."
343. Orang Kaya Temenggong was angry
Heard the tale of Panglima Garang
Ordered all the folk made ready
Because he was a bold panglima.
344. Then they went to waziru'l-alam
Together with Panglima Dalam⁴³
Directly then to Duli Syah Alam
Reporting all the rumours, news.
345. His Majesty, most powerful king
Summoned the valiant hulubalang
"Go to see, investigate
Who the people, from what village."
346. Then went all the men together
To carry out the ruler's orders
Every promontory visited
But not a soul came to the eye.
347. Nothing could be clearly seen
They returned to make obeisance
Reported all that they had done
The rumour was too rambling, lengthy.
348. Daulat Tuanku, lord most excellent
Who had thought this from the first
Indeed a ship comes towards us all
An English captain from Bengal.
349. He has anchored in Pangkor Strait
Very near the old godown
Has fired the cannon like a drum
Has many sailors, loud of mouth.
350. His Majesty heard the clear report,
And very pleased was he to hear
Those whose skill was speech and words
Were summoned by our lord and king.

43. The Orang Kaya Besar.

351. Panglima Maharaja Indra Muda
And also came one more, Sri Lela
Daeng Tomaning, older man⁴⁴
Summoned by His Majesty.
352. Another, Megat Indra Bungsu
Was ordered to accompany them
Encik Tadung, interpreter
Commanded by our king to go
353. After night then came the day
Those commanded all set off
In a sampan they, with sails
Went directly to the ketch.
354. Met they then the orang Inggeris
All came up with ready keris
English speech sounds cerus-caris
Ordered them to sit in lines.
355. Speech was eloquent after boarding
Sat down, ruler's words delivered
Spoke they only two, three words
Looking at their guns, equipment.
356. "We were ordered by the Sultan
To ask the Kapitan to come
To Sungai Dinding where the fleet is
Please come sir, and do not linger."
357. The captain heard the words as spoken
Then without further ado
Came down as proper to the sampan
Sailors followed, not objecting.
358. Entered Sungai Kuala Dinding
Saw the perahu in rows before them
Side by side, gunshelters ready
Marvellous, nothing could compare.
359. Saw appearance of this fleet
Hearts within them quaked with fear
Ordered to paddle by the Captain
Quickly towards the Sultan's boat.

⁴⁴. See stanza 207.

360. When they had come beside the boat
The ruler ordered them to halt
Turn a little, drop the anchor
In his boat a place was made.
361. All the wazir of the ruler
Were in the presence of the throne
Power apparent to the English
With their gifts they came aboard.
362. Made obeisance to the ruler
Taking hats from off their heads
Many presents they'd brought with them
Trading goods brought from Bengal.
363. Now the words of Sultan spoken
Asks the Captain for a cannon
Whichever one is made the best
A fitting price should then be fixed.
364. The Captain bowed, his fingers raised
"To-morrow I will bring it here
A cannon that's superbly made
Its value to be paid in tin."
365. There they sat, conversed once more
His Majesty most truly pleased
Showed to them his kurnia
Food to eat from our country.
366. Remarkable, the Captain's pleasure
In each monsoon he'll return
Counts the months and gives his promise
Asks permission to return.
367. When the next day had arrived
Fulfilled was then the promise made
Brought down the cannon from the ketch
Paddled over by the sailors.
368. Two cannon, were identical
Brought over by interpreter
The ruler ordered them examined
In case there was defect or flaw.
369. The ruler's brother then was ordered
To pay the cost weighed out in tin
I'll not continue with this story
All commands were carried out.

370. Two cannon bought of equal worth
 Their bullets were like nyir gading⁴⁵
 Their beauty such that has no equal
 The ruler called the one Sri Dinding.
371. The other one was called Sri Pangkor
 The two were carved identically
 No defect could be detected
 Their children just like buah gelugor.⁴⁶
372. I have finished now this story
 All discussion was completed
 Raised the ruler's boat its anchor
 Sailed on to Cucuran Hantu.
373. With the daulat of our ruler
 The ocean's roughness changed to calm
 Stories told by older people
 Happiness could not be seen.
374. Now we've gone to Pantai Remis
 A beach where santan can be gathered,⁴⁷
 Rolling waves and clouds have gone
 No one's in peril or accident.
375. Came the wind athwart us blowing
Kakap, penjajab, turning, crossing
 Stories cannot all be counted
 His Majesty reached Pulau Talang.
376. Sailing on, we laughed and joked
 Anchored then at Teluk Sera
 All the people and the soldiers
 Noisy, clamorous their voices.
377. Went ashore to white-sand beach
 Rest exhausted, tired bodies
 Some were hot, their limbs perspiring
 Went down to bathe at Sungai Taseh.

45. Beautiful coconuts associated with romance, not found on earth.

46. A fruit of fluted appearance.

47. Santan is the liquid obtained by squeezing coconut meat.

378. This place was charming, very pretty
 Many rivers in the bays
 Mountain ranges, rolling, rocky
 Many kinds of sampan, perahu.
379. In a river on a rock,
 A pancuran constructed there
 Raja Muda present too.
 Made the royal bathing place.
380. After daytime came the night
 I will not prolong the tale
 All the slaves of Duli Syah Alam
 Behaviour was both seen and hidden.
381. Then the morning light appeared
Penjajab masts stood row on row
Perahu were all arranged in lines
 Anchors raised, oars all brought out.
382. Anchors raised, left Teluk Sera
 An accident involved one perahu
 Thanks to safety, peace of daulat
 It was saved with Allah's help.
383. Mountain winds were changing, fickle
 Masts were broken, sails upturned
 Crewmen grasping, springing, jumping
 Rising, falling, thrashed by waves.
384. Rising, falling, tossing perahu
 Those inside were anxious, fearful
 When hurled down by waves especially
 Felt as if they all were flying.
385. Thanks to daulat, inner, outer
 Freed were we from threat of ocean
 All penjajab set sail again
 Fortune frowned on one lone perahu.
386. Behaviour of our friends and comrades
 Varied was as on we went
 The ruler reached Sungai Pengkalan
 But I was left some way behind.
387. Halted I at Teluk Sera
 Repairs were needed, changed my mast
 I am poor and have no brother
 Stay behind alone with misery.

388. Perhaps I have not shown due bakti⁴⁸
 No one wants to wait for me
 Good there is a comrade with me
 Gather wood and change the mast.
389. Teluk Sera, Sungai Beruas
 Spacious kuala, beaches broad
 Left behind, we felt defeated
 Goal unreached, our hearts were sad.
390. Came the middle of the day
 Mast with forked prop was exchanged
 Anchor raised, and sails unfolded
 Floated this lone perahu along.
391. Day was gone and came the evening
 Prayers uttered, hands held out⁴⁹
 No other perahu there could I see
 And none there were my passage blocked.
392. Sailed on, a single perahu
 Entered then at Kuala Terong
 I did not know these bays and rivers
 Night grew dark, moon overcast
393. Day was gone and almost night
 Things were vaguely visible
 Pulled the sail to middle-mast
 Blown by wind like someone waving.
394. So much happened on the way
 With my friends and comrades there
 A day and night we were behind
 But finally reached Sungai Pengkalan.
395. The Sultan's boat at Kuala Jebong
Kakap, penjajab, linked together
 My heart began to leap and dance
 To rejoin the ruler's escort.
396. Orang Kaya Laksamana, came to sembah
 Together with Penghulu To' Muda
 Tuanku Sultan, excellent lord
 Begged him to stay with them awhile.

48. Faithful work.

49. Moslems pray with the hands extended before them, palms uppermost.

397. "Daulat, lord, most gracious highness
Come up to another rantau
My humble hut awaits your pleasure
A lovely spot, with medan quiet.⁵⁰
398. Said at first our king and ruler
"Better that I here remain
I have many people with me
They will perish if I leave them."
399. Amar Pahlawan made his sembah
Speech, behaviour, both refined
"I've only now met with Your Highness
Brought my men and women too."
400. Then said Raja Setia Lela
Bowing down with lowered head
"I am just your lordship's watchman
My king will want to see this place."
401. Said His Highness, "If that's so
Bring the penjajab upstream
Whichever place has been made ready
Bring boats up, both fore and aft."
402. Anchor raised of royal boat
Dropped at Laksamana's wharf
This spot was lovely, really perfect
Padang to horizon stretched.⁵¹
403. Folk from Jebung, Pematang gathered
Morning, night, they paid their homage
With the gifts they carried with them
Bananas, sticks of sugar cane.
404. Laksamana, astute and clever
His mother too a noble lady
Royal food brought every day
Whate'er they lacked, baginda gave.
405. A buffalo was slaughtered there
Everybody was invited
The raja and the orang besar
Asked to come up to his home.

50. Medan: a broad field.

51. Padang: a broad, open space.

406. Entertained each one with food
Laughing, joking, having fun
He's a servant nobly born
Disloyal he will never be.⁵²
407. Penghulu of Rawa, Minangkabau
Obeisance made, brought slaughtered ox
Coconuts and woven baskets
Island-like and small this place
408. Several days then came and went
Stories, incidents, events
Some went to see to seek their fortune
Some daily went out fish to catch.
409. Those who stayed behind in quiet
Gambled, cock-fought, won and lost
To Pulau Pinang many went
Some were happy seeking wives.
410. Now Panglima Wayang Jiwa
Went to sea, his head tucked down
Attacked a perahu, a rented one
Wished to bring this booty back.
411. People ran to land, ashore
Afraid of punishment by death
Slowly pushed on through the jungle
Unknowing, they went quite astray.
412. Scurrying, hurrying, on they ran
Through undergrowth and scrub they trampled
With the daulat of our ruler
Finally came to Tanjung Kepah.
413. The perahu lay there, all topsy-turvy
The panglima then towed it along
Brought it back to Duli Baginda
With the cargo that was in it.
414. Among the crewmen there was one
Prevented was from paying homage
Murdered by his four shipmates
His body thrown among the rushes.

52. Literally, will never turn away his face.

415. Now it was about a month
Baginda stayed at Sungai Pengkalan
 People walked to pay their homage
 Bringing gifts and their provisions.
416. Penghulu, through the morning, evening
 Brought presents gifts of many kinds
 Woven bags and coconut strung
 Many stalks of pinang, sirih.
417. After all was finished quite
 Obeisance, homage paid our king
 In royal eyes each man the same
 Some had come to talk with him.
418. Tuanku Sultan, excellent king
 With his brothers all together
 Changed the name of Sungai Pengkalan
Negeri more fitting for its title.
419. Appointed folk to buy and sell
 Bestowed upon them capital
Baginda wishes now to leave
 Everything he'll leave behind.
420. There was a Bugis man unmatched
 Appointed was he mata-mata⁵³
 Skill at trading already known
 Predictably a wealthy man.
421. He had money, more was given
 And the title Sri Lela Indra
 He'd been in some huru-hara
 Body flawed because of this.
422. Now he was ordered by baginda
 Money given for every matter
 Should any trader come to him
 He can purchase merchandise.
423. Now the ruler wants to leave
 Assembled all the hulubalang
 Crowds of people can't be reckoned
 From Bukit Gantang up to Talang.

53. Literally, the eyes which are not eyes, i.e., the ruler's representative who is required to report to him on affairs.

424. When everybody had assembled
The boats went down to Kuala Jebung
All penjajab linked together
Left cock-fighting place alone.
425. Another night the ruler stayed there
Assembled all those in his escort
Sultan, mighty king, departs
Forthwith to the wide broad sea.
426. After evening came the daytime
Sounded then nafiri, drum
Every anchor raised to leave
Each man sailed and sang his song.
427. Sailed we on in merriment
Joking, laughing, having fun
The wind was good, the time was right
Not one reason for concern.
428. Perahu flashed by from out the north
Sailing through across the kuala
Pretended they to chase each other
Running till they reached the middle.
429. Sailed on until night came
In the front was waziru'l-alam
I will not prolong the tale
Royal boat then dropped its anchor.
430. Another night, then broke the day
At Teluk Sera the ruler stopped
Picnicked on this famous beach
So many stories, incidents.
431. Some sampan then explored the kuala
Some used dragnets, and some cast nets
There were others who used fish-hooks
Sharks, sting rays, too much to gather.
432. Some went on to Sungai Bunting
To the mudflats with their baskets
Search for shellfish, lift the baskets
Made kenas and then kerinting.⁵⁴

54. Kenas: shellfish mixed with rice or sage for preservation; kerinting:
dried salted shellfish.

433. Two nights we stayed there at that teluk⁵⁵
 Like to play there midst the rocks
 Much enjoyment, not just one kind,
 Sailed then on to Cucuran Hantu.
434. When the light had changed to darkness
 Spent the night at Labuhan Bilek
 Some servants of Duli Syah Alam
 Went to fish at Teluk Dalam.
435. Evening came, just like a candle
 Dropped again penjajab anchors
 Some went paddling on in front
 There were some who stopped behind.
436. I will not prolong my tale
 Refreshed ourselves along the way.
 Ruler stopped at Pulau Pangkor
 Everybody anchored there.
437. Two nights further here were passed
 Where the king enjoyed himself
 All the maidens and the servants
 Played together on the beach.
438. On the beach we gathered remis⁵⁶
 To make rendang, also tumis⁵⁷
 Some with sugar sweeten it
 Others pencuk like and pais.⁵⁸
439. When we all had finished playing
 Many were the sights we saw
 I do not wish to be long winded
 In times to come considered base.
440. The next day came, and very early
 Assembled all those who had come
Daulat of our lord and ruler
 Does not wish to main longer.⁵⁹

55. Bay, curve of river.

56. Remis: shellfish.

57. Tumis: frying in oil with onions and seasoning.

58. Pencuk: fruit salad; pais: fish baked in banana leaf.

59. Main: play, amuse oneself.

441. Everything was quite prepared and
 Raised the royal boat its anchor
 Brisk the wind which sprang behind us
 Sailed on forward all the fleet.
442. Baginda, Sultan, excellent king
Daulat, beaming clear and bright
 That very day came in the kuala
 Returned without an accident.
443. Now we enter Kuala Perak
 Roll the sails, take out the paddles
 Noises loud of shouting, cheering
 Firing cannon act as heralds.
444. Daulat and greatness flowing out
 Not declining, rather growing
 Some slaves of Duli Khalifah
 Met some folk at Tanjung Kepah.
445. Acehnese had met an accident
 A dozen people in their party
 They were brought by Raja Alang
 To pay homage while returning
446. Waziru'l-alam investigated
 This perahu of Aceh had been sunken
 Attacked by pirates at Tanjung Dalam
 Made their sembah to the ruler.
447. So many stories, can't be counted
Baginda reached Terusan Dulang
 All the wazir, hulubalang
 Delight was quite extraordinary.
448. After evening came the morning
 Came the Orang Kaya Menteri
 Welcomed Perak's ruler home
 Heartfelt joy cannot be told.
449. Tale of trip upstream short will be
 All provisions were exhausted
 Every perahu with its gunshelter
 Not a one was left behind.
450. Then they came up to the kota
 Fired the cannon, loud and strong
 Gathered all the learned, pious
 Made obeisance to our lord.

451. Offered prayers of thankfulness
 Welcome, king, now safely home
 Came the people soldiers, warriors.
 Paid their homage, not delaying.
452. Came the people, old and young there
 Gave allegiance to our king
 Men and women, youth and age there
 Bringing gifts, whatever they had.
453. Head of Dutchmen also came
 Brought his sampan near the boat
 Before afraid, but now relieved was
 Like a sick man newly healed.
454. Tuanku Sultan, Duli Mahkota
 Went ashore to see the kota
 His retinue all followed him
 Guns and weapons all arranged.
455. Kota there, together three
 Saw their siting still unchanged
 Arranged were all the weapons too
 And appointed the panglima.
456. Then appointed Duli Mahkota
 Paduka Sri Rama Panglima Kota
 His assistant Raja Lela Mahkota
 Many people placed beneath them.
457. After all was done, completed
 Kota firm and very sturdy
 Guns and weapons ranged in scores
 Appearance and their bearing fine.
458. Our ruler did not stop there long
 Returned to Pulau Indra Sakti
 Hundreds, thousands, soldiers were there
 Continually come before him.
459. Came he then up to the palace
 Sat he then upon his throne
 Assembled there the common folk
 Bringing gifts of many kinds.
460. To the mahalizai each one came
 Bringing gifts, bouquets of flowers
Tetampan wore as homage paid⁶⁰
 Royal foot upon their heads.

461. Baginda Sultan now is older
Extends he mercy to his brothers
Heart within is very happy
Noble, handsome countenance.
462. Now his royal relatives
Obeisance pay to royal mother
Bringing to her what they have
Many kinds of valued goods.
463. Come the brothers to menghadap
With the royal relatives
Every brother, anak raja
Each one duly honour pays.
464. Assembled, come from everywhere
Crowded is it in the palace
In the presence of the raja
Offer fried rice that is coloured.⁶¹
465. Day by day and never stopping
Came they there to pay their homage
Baginda raja, noble lord, he
Kurnia gives to all his people.
466. After the obeisance done
On his throne the king established
Sits he ringed by happiness
No one there does not feel love.
467. Thus ends the story I have told
The Sultan and the present time
His daulat is a thing unique
Increases daily, rays more clear.
468. Tuanku Sultan, Duli Mahkota
Daulat flows out from his throne
I a slave, base, mean, and lowly
Offer up this svair, this story.
469. Tuanku, forgive this slave of Allah
Verse discordant, errors many
Composed it from a tired heart and
Live I as a wandering trader.

60. Tetampan: oblong piece of royal cloth worn over the left shoulder when attending court.

61. Probably referring to yellow rice (nasi kuning) used for ceremonial occasions.

470. Extend forgiveness to this servant
Does not possess real clarity
Heart within depressed and anxious
Rhyme discordant and ill-matched.
471. My lord commanded, I composed then
And I do whatever asked
Rhyme discordant, sweetness lacking
People listening won't be pleased.
472. The tale is told of Duli Khalifah
Daulat, greatness, ever growing
I a slave come here to sembah
Ask a place so I can go there.
473. Tuanku, gracious prince and noble
Your humble slave makes here his sembah
If I am any use at all
Ask, I will go anywhere.
474. My living has been difficult
My life has been a life of pain
It is always my desire
To do my duty to my king.
475. Among the folk Malay descended
I am by all men surpassed
In no way can I be useful
Except when told to make karangan. 62
476. Wherever sent, there I will go
Whatever place, my duty do
Only seeking for my food
Whate'er I have I give my lord.
477. I a slave have had no fortune
Simple life is like a statue's
On the ruler am dependent
Bobbing upstream, downstream bobbing.
478. As before I felt emotion
See the sights in royal escort
Constantly went everywhere
Now it is another time.
479. The wish of Allah is accomplished
Who takes away from all his servants
From former days and up till now
I have experienced the same.

480. Beg for pardon, be not angry
Offer I this for amusement
This is called pantun seloka⁶³
Offered merely for your pleasure.
481. We call the palace Mercu Alam
Pillars standing round about
Our king sits on the royal throne
Superb, cannot be matched or equalled.
482. Pillars standing round about
Shining red, octagonal
Superb, cannot be matched or equalled
Like an emerald, coloured jewel.
483. Golden red, octagonal
Painted clouds process around
Like an emerald, coloured jewel
Tuanku in the Perak desa.⁶⁴
484. Painted clouds process around
Studded all with Chinese mirrors
In the desa Tuanku rules
And governs all the common folk.
485. Studded all with Chinese mirrors
Bordered, also canopied
Governs all the common folk
People fitting homage pay.
486. Bordered, also canopied
Polished, latticed, trellis work
People fitting homage pay
Daily bring their offerings.
487. Polished lattice, trellis work
Carved, the water lily curls
Daily bring their offerings
Those beneath their homage pay.

63. The rhyme scheme is a-b-a-b, but its distinguishing feature is the fact that the second and fourth line of each stanza become the first and third lines of the next.

64. Desa: village.

488. Carved, the water lily curls
Pulau Indra Sakti's palace
Those beneath it homage pay
Hourly, daily, never cease.

This ends the syair of His Majesty's trip to sea.

Appendix B

TIN MINING IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY PERAK

The area where tin was mined was much less extensive than in present day Perak. The great valley of the Kinta River was largely untapped and Larut produced only a small part of the total. The relatively primitive methods of mining demanded that the work be done in places where tin was readily accessible and the favourite ones were at the base of foothills and by the sides of the major rivers. A survey of the principal tin producing areas made by a Dutch envoy in 1768 indicates that mining was concentrated almost solely along the Perak River and its tributaries, and in the ulu districts around Kuala Kangsar and present day Kelian Indah. (See Maps 5 and 6.)

It is well known that the course of the nineteenth century witnessed a number of changes in mining techniques and it would be interesting to compare these with methods used during the period prior to the influx of Chinese who were responsible for a number of innovations. Unfortunately, during the entire period of the Dutch residency in Perak, no representative of the Company ever went up to the mines or gave any personal account of how the tin was actually extracted. According to a paper presented by Baron von Wurmb to the Batavia Society for Art and Science in 1785, which was accompanied by an exhibition of specimens of

Perak tin,¹ this was because no Europeans or their employees were allowed near the mines. However, he compiled a certain amount of information from hearsay and from reports given by former Company employees from the VOC post. Combined with information gathered by later observers, van Wurmb's material gives a fairly accurate picture of the manner in which mining was carried out.

When work was done in the valleys, the surface to be mined was cleared of large trees, roots and rocks. Shafts were then dug to a depth of seven or eight feet. After a deposit of tin was found, it was washed and separated from the sand by water which was carried from springs to the mines through hollow logs. If there were no springs in the vicinity, wells were dug and the water from these was used to wash the ore.² In 1786 Light described a similar method in somewhat more detail as it was practised on Ujung Salang.

The ore is dug in wells four feet square. Four men join to a pit; two of them open the pit, while the other collect bamboo leaves and frames for the sides. Four pieces of wood about eight or nine inches round notched and let into each other make the frame. These are placed within the pit at the distance of five or six feet; at the back of these are thrust down small long bamboos and behind them are put leaves to prevent the earth and water entering the pit. A pahola is erected at one end, a bucket hung by a rattan sewer

1. Baron von Wurmb, "Bijdrage tot de Natuurlijke Historie," p. 558. A translation of the section of this paper relating to tin mining can be found in the Mackenzie Private Collection, India Office, Ms. 36, number 4, entitled Malacca Tin Ore. Unfortunately there are a number of misleading errors.
2. Ibid., p. 559. See also MacNair's description given a century later, Perak and the Malays, p. 30.

to draw up the earth and ore, the other end is balanced by a weight. A dam is made by the side of the pit; at the bottom is placed a mat and then filled with water. One man remains in the pit to dig up the ore and works the pahola. The ore is brought up mixed with stone and clay and thrown among the women who sit there to receive it into wooden platters, by breaking the clay with their fingers and twisting round the platters the ore is soon separated and laid aside. In the evening they wash the ore in a running stream to carry off the finer particles of the sand. It is then dried and carried off to the smelting house.³

It is possible that it was the remains of shafts such as these which were found by Alexander Hale, the Inspector of Mines, when he visited Lahat in the Kinta Valley in 1885. These were termed lompong Siam by local Malays, although it is highly improbable that Siamese ever worked them.⁴ The large number of mines in the same area points to a major problem which early Malay miners encountered--that of the flooding of the shafts by water springing from the lower levels. If timber supports were not used, it would have been very easy for the walls of the shafts to be undermined and as soon as this occurred the shaft was abandoned and another dug very close.⁵ This type of mining meant that although surface veins were exhausted, the ground was seldom worked out and in the tin areas there would have been many flooded and abandoned mines.⁶

3. "Description of the Island of Junk Ceylon by Captain Francis Light," in Anderson, Political Considerations, pp. liv-lv.
4. A. Hale, "On Mines and Miners in Kinta," JSBRAS, XVI (Dec. 1885), 303-310; W. E. Everitt, A History of Tin Mining in Perak, Ms. 1053, A.N. (1952), p. 2; Ooi Jin Bee, "Mining Landscapes of Kinta," MJTC, IV, 6 (1955), 6.
5. Everitt, A History of Tin Mining, p. 2. To minimise this flooding, the shafts were often sunk in the slopes of hills, but there is no evidence that baling was used. Ooi, "Mining Landscapes," p. 6.

It is apparent that the method described by von Wurmb is basically the same as the lanpan method described by later observers. Here a ditch (parit) was cut from the nearest stream and the earth (karang) thrown into the parit. The dirt (now termed isi parit) was then stirred to break up the lumps of clay and separate the stones. The tin sand, called biji, was washed to extract the tin and von Wurmb reported that gold could sometimes be found in the sand which remained. The same techniques of crushing was also used for the lode deposits in the hills.⁷ Von Wurmb does not mention dulang washing or panning, but this must have been one of the most common methods of obtaining the metal, for after heavy rains streams were filled with the alluvial tin washed down and a Danish botanist who visited the peninsula in 1779 commented that "on the whole Malay coast people are said to collect the tin in this way" (i.e., by gathering alluvial deposits).⁸

The smelting was done in two different ways, according to von Wurmb. The first was that used by the Malays. A hole was dug in the ground in which the ore and charcoal were placed. These were then mixed together and the heat of the charcoal melted the tin, which then ran into a mold hollowed out in the ground.⁹ This was not a very satisfactory sys-

6. Everitt, A History of Tin Mining, p. 51. The Melaka Governor in about 1819 complained that by this method many veins near the surface were exhausted. SSG G34/13, Memorandum by William Farquar, n.d.

7. Von Wurmb, "Bijdrage," p. 559; Everitt, A History of Tin Mining, pp. 50-51.

8. J. Koenig, "Journal of a Voyage from India to Siam and Malacca in 1779," JSBRAS, XXVII (Oct. 1894), 80.

9. Von Wurmb, "Bijdrage," p. 559.

tem and the Dutch also undertook some re-smelting themselves.¹⁰ The Chinese, who began to mine in Perak in any number only after 1777, introduced a more efficient system, similar to that employed by the Europeans. An iron pan was placed over a clay furnace and the pan itself placed at an incline so that it was easier to draw the melted tin out with spoons and pour it into molds, which were also hollowed out of the ground. The charcoal used was from the wood of the tree Kempas Cina Kelangi, because that from any other tree gave too weak a blaze to melt the tin.¹¹

Tin mining was not by any means a full-time occupation with the Perak Malays, but was secondary to many other matters. In 1826 James Low observed that though the mines were in operation the entire year, some people did not begin to work there until after the rice harvest was completed. "The tin is gathered by both sexes and persons of all ages they work from 5 a.m. to 10 and from 3 p.m. till 6."¹² The eighteenth century Dutch material indicates that this pattern was often interrupted. The miners could be called downstream for kerah duties, as beaters in an elephant hunt, to participate in a court celebration, to honour a ruler during a royal illness. Little work was carried out during certain periods

10. KA 2712 OB 1754, van Heemskerck to Batavia, 31 Jan. 1753 (Melaka Resolutions, 24 Aug. 1752).

11. Von Wurmb, "Bijdrage," p. 561. Kempas is a large tree (*Coompassia Malaccensis*) the timber of which is used for masts and spars. Wilkinson, Malay English Dictionary, I, 552; see also MacNair's description, Perak and the Malays, pp. 30-32.

12. Low, "Observations on Perak," p. 498. Light, writing about Ujung Salang, also comments that the entire family was involved in mining. SSR G34/1, Light to Ross, 30 March 1784, fo. 155v.

in the Muslim calendar, such as the fasting month. Added to these interruptions were natural disasters such as epidemic, floods or drought. Delay in the monsoon rains meant that water for sluicing the tin would no longer be available, since water in the smaller streams would dry up. Transportation also became difficult at such times, and in a dry spell delivery dwindled noticeably.

Von Wurmb also remarked on the superstitions and beliefs attached to tin mining. Malays believed that the tin ore was alive, moving about under the ground in the form of a buffalo.¹³ It was born of the lode tin, called ibu timah, the tin's mother,¹⁴ and because of its special powers, it was necessary that certain people have control over mining operations. These were the Malay pawang, who not only divined the tin but were also possessed of special powers which enabled them to placate the spirits (hantu) of the mine in order that the mineral could be extracted.¹⁵ Von Wurmb remarked that the ruler of Perak had refused to

13. Von Wurmb, "Bijdrage," p. 559; Skeat, Malay Magic, p. 250. Some Malays also saw the earth as a woman with tin ore as its mother's milk and gold as its blood. W. G. Maxwell, "Miscellaneous Notes," JSBRAS, XLIX (Dec. 1907), 106.
14. Von Wurmb, "Bijdrage," p. 560; Everitt, A History of Tin Mining, p. 51. Light commented that the tin in Ujung Salang was found "under a stiff yellow clay which they say it grows in." SSR G34/1, Light to Ross, 30 March 1784, fo. 155V.
15. For the duties of a pawang, see Skeat, Malay Magic, pp. 253-271, and Everitt, A History of Tin Mining, pp. 52-54; for the qualifications, see Rigby, pp. 27, 44, 51. Some of the special feats of pawang are given in the genealogies collected from the pawang families of ulu Perak. One, for example, fixed a stone on top of a mountain and foretold that no tin would be found as long as the stone was visible. When the stone was worn away, tin was found. Berkeley Diaries, III, 193. Frank Swettenham remarked that "A Malay pawang has the same nose for tin that a truffle dog has for truffles." About Perak (Singapore, 1893), p. 33.

allow crude ore to be carried away and in 1829, when the English suggested that the ore be shipped to Penang for smelting, the request was refused on the grounds that no good would follow if the ore were taken away from Perak. It was said that the spirits would cause the ore to sink and bring about death and starvation amongst the people if this injunction were ignored.¹⁶

During the eighteenth century the ruler and his court supplied the Dutch with the bulk of the tin, the ordinary people only delivering in very small quantities. A certain protocol decreed how royal supplies should be handed over to the resident. When a large amount of tin had been collected in the royal storehouse, the resident was informed and a deputation sent downstream to deliver it, usually headed by one of the principal anak raja. The relative infrequency of these deliveries meant that the amount brought down was usually large and, since the supply of reals at the fort was never great, it was often exhausted after the ruler had sold his tin. This was a source of discontent to the ordinary people, but there was little they could do about it since it was customary for the ruler and his relatives to deliver their tin before the rakyat. If it was known that the supply of reals at the Company post was low, the ruler would sometimes send a message down that no tin was to be accepted until he and his nobles had delivered theirs.

Royal tin, recognisable because it was stamped with the ruler's seal, was weighed in the presence of the royal warehousemaster (pakhuis-

16. Von Wurmb, "Bijdrage," p. 558; F 5, Letters from Native Rulers, Raja of Perak to Res. Commissioner of Penang, 18 May 1829, fo. 160.

meester), a court scribe who was called the "tin secretary" (thin schrijver), other officials deputed by the ruler, as well as two or three VOC employees. This supervision was necessary to prevent disagreements concerning the quality of the tin or the accuracy of the scales.¹⁷

The royal tolls were reckoned up by the court scribe. Sometimes the Dutch paid this toll to the traders, who themselves reimbursed the ruler but it was also customary for the resident to retain the tolls until the amount reached five hundred reals or more, when it would be tallied by the secretary and delivered to court.¹⁸

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17. A typical gathering at the weighing house was made up of the Orang Kaya Besar, the warehouse master, the Indian scribe and his son, the Resident and two junior Dutch officers. The Raja Bendahara, who had brought the tin down, would normally have been present but had been taken ill. KA 3446 OB 1780, Meyer to de Bruyn, 9 Dec. 1778; KA 2885 OB 1761, Visboom's Day Register, 9 July 1759.
18. KA 3446 OB 1780, Meyer to de Bruyn, 9 Dec. 1778; KA 3519, Secret, de Bruyn to Batavia, 2 March 1782, fo. 153.

Appendix C

THE ART OF ELEPHANT HUNTING

The Malay states inherited from India a particular veneration for elephants, as well as a feeling that there was a certain connection between these animals and royalty. In India it was said that "the creation of elephants was holy and for the profit of sacrifice to the gods, and especially for the welfare of kings. Therefore it is clear that elephants must be zealously tended."¹ In many Malay states, elephants were a royal monopoly, and elephant hunting was regarded as the sport of kings.² As Raja Culan points out, "It is the custom of Malay kings to be extremely fond of hunting elephants."³ It is not fortuitous that three brothers fighting over succession to the Perak throne should be reconciled in an elephant yard, for this was a fitting place for a king to be.⁴ Skill in handling elephants was a royal art, and a text from Aceh takes care to demonstrate that Sultan Iskandar Thani was very successful in the hunt.⁵ When a Frenchman visited Aceh during the reign of Sultan Iskandar Muda

1. Franklin Edgerton, The Elephant Lore of the Hindu (New Haven, 1931), p. 47.
2. W. W. Skeat, Malay Magic (New York, 1967), p. 35; McNair, Perak and the Malays, p. 111.
3. Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 97.
4. Silsilah Raja-Raja Perak, fo. 32, line 9.

(1607-1631), it was said that "there never was a prince of Achin that had such dexterity in managing these animals."⁶

Because of the particular awe with which elephants were regarded in the Malay world, only certain people possessed the knowledge and power to trap them. As in India, Siam, and Burma, the science of elephants (ilmu gajah) was highly esteemed. The Sejarah Melayu notes the story of Sriwa, who had "an uncanny knowledge of elephants and horses,"⁷ The capture of one of these animals was considered a great feat, and this, combined with its inherent value, made an elephant a suitable gift for a king.⁸ Even in the late nineteenth century this attitude was common: "Though [the Malay] reduces the elephant to subjection and uses him as a

5. Teungku Iskandar, Bustanu's-Salatin, pp. 56-57.

6. Harris, Navigantium Atque, I, 745.

7. Brown, "Malay Annals," pp. 130, 149-151. In Indian knowledge of elephants and horses was part of statecraft. Edgerton, The Elephant Lore of the Hindu, p. 2, n. 1. Munshi Abdullah records that during the time Colonel Farquar was Resident of Melaka (1811-1818), a Pawang Gajah came from Trengganu "who was of Kedah extraction and was skilled in elephant lore and all kinds of sorcery." Abdullah decried the common belief that "the elephant pawang is well versed in sorcery and the magic arts and he has the jinns under his control," but does give a useful description of an elephant hunt. Hill, Hikayat Abdullah, pp. 66-69.

8. There are various examples of elephants being sent as gifts. Sultan Tajul Alam of Aceh sent eight elephants to an envoy from Gujerat. "Never was there a raja who bestowed gifts on his subjects like this one." Teungku Iskandar, Bustanu's Salatin, p. 60.

In 1693 the ruler of Perak sent a gift of an elephant to the ruler of Johor. KA 1426 OB 1694, Vosburgh to Outhoorn, 9 May, 1693, fo. 182v.

In 1752 Batavia requested some elephants from Perak to be sent as a present to the Susuhunan of Java. KA 2692 OB 1753, van Heemskerck to Mossel, 5 May 1752, fo. 6. For other references, see KA 2776 OB 1757, Dekker to Mossel, 9 April 1756, fo. 28; KA 2801 OB 1758, Dekker to Mossel, 26 Aug. 1757, foll. 47, 51.

beast of burden, it is universally believed that the observance of particular ceremonies and the repetition of prescribed formula are necessary before wild elephants can be trapped and trained."⁹ The elephant mantera translated by W. G. Maxwell had formerly been in the possession of the Sri Adika family of Perak, and a visitor to Perak noted that elephant drivers were themselves often men of good position, for it was thought to be an honourable profession.¹⁰

In Perak, elephants were found in the mountain areas of upper Perak and on the plains of the Kinta valley. From here they were brought down to the coast for sale.¹¹ References in the Misa Melayu indicate that the methods of trapping were similar to those described by Thomas Bowrey in seventeenth century Kedah. Five or six tame elephants were sent out into the jungle to decoy wild ones into a specially constructed compound. When one or two had been enticed into this enclosure, the tame elephants "fell upon them and beat them severely until the keepers came out and put their legs in the stocks." The tame elephants remained with them, and being fed a good diet, the wild animals became tame in about five weeks.¹²

9. Skeat, Malay Magic, p. 35.

10. Most of these manteras are derived from Siam. See W. G. Maxwell, "Mantra Gajah," JSBRAS, XLV (June, 1906), 1-55; see also McNair, Perak and the Malays, p. 117.

11. KA 2567 OB 1747, Albinus to van Imhoff, 9 Nov. 1746, foll. 448, 450. A principal reason for Sultan Muzafar's reconciliation with his nephew in 1746 was the fact that he could not bring his elephants down to the coast for sale while the Bugis were in control of the hilir area. Ibid., 18 Aug. 1747, fo. 413.

12. See Maxwell, "Mantra Gajah," 40, for a description that closely tallies with this one, which is found in Bowrey, A Geographical Account, pp. 273-274.

The elephant trade to India and Ceylon prospered during the seventeenth century because of the rich buyers, notably the Moghul kings. One was reported to have 1,500 elephants in his army.¹³ The demand declined in the following century as a result of the disintegration of the Moghul Empire and disturbances in North and Central India. Although Indians called intermittently at Perak after 1746, the heyday of the elephant trade had gone. The incursion of the English into the Indian cloth market meant that even when the Indians arrived in the Malay states, they could not rely on a ready market for their goods.¹⁴ The adoption of gunpowder in warfare and the use of steam in machinery also superseded the use of elephants in many activities.¹⁵ Now fewer princes in India could afford to maintain the great stables of the past, and this lessened demand meant that interest in elephant trapping in the Malay states declined. By 1836 James Low noted that although previously Madras had taken a number of elephants annually from Kedah, there was almost no hunting undertaken.¹⁶ In 1877 an old man from Bengal purchasing elephants for the

13. P. Wolseley Haig and Richard Burn (eds.), Cambridge History of India (New Delhi, 1965), IV, 72.
14. S. Arasaratnam, "Dutch Commercial Policy in Ceylon," pp. 120, 123; S. Arasaratnam, "Some Notes on the Dutch in Melaka and the Indo-Malayan Trade 1641-1670," JSEAH, X, 3 (1969), 490; John Crawford, History of the Indian Archipelago (Edinburgh, 1820), III, 199; KA 665, de Klerk to de Bruijn, 30 June, 1779; H. Murray, et al., Historical and Descriptive Account of British India (Edinburgh, 1844), III, 42.
15. Murray, Historical and Descriptive Account of British India, III, 42.
16. James Low, A Dissertation on the Soil and Agriculture of the British Settlement of Penang or Prince of Wales Island in the Straits of Melaka (Singapore, 1836), p. 14.

"Raja of India" found only 31 which were satisfactory, although he had travelled throughout the peninsula.¹⁷

Thus when the ruler of Perak in 1816 begged the Governor of Penang to send a "chuliah" (Indian) ship to trade elephants, promising to forego all customary presents and tribute, he did not realise he was trying to revive a source of revenue already doomed.¹⁸ A letter from his successor to the governor thirteen years later gives some indication of what this trade had meant to Perak in years past:

I have now to request the assistance of my friend that he will, if possible, endeavour to induce one of the Chuliah vessels wishing to procure elephants to come this season to Perak and to load with as many elephants as may be necessary. . . . It appears to me that if a ship could be sent yearly to take in elephants, the circumstances of the inhabitants would be considerably increased and a means of livelihood afforded them which would be a great relief and assistance to the poor people. This I beg to make known to my friend, and if approved I . . . will give directions to collect and prepare elephants and order people to catch more.¹⁹

17. Emily Sadka, ed., "The Journal of Sir Hugh Low, Perak, 1877," JMBRAS, 27, 4 (1954), 100.

18. SSR G34/57, Raja of Perak to Gov. of Penang, 28 Aug. 1816 (FCCP 7 Nov, 1816).

19. SSR F5, Raja of Perak to Gov. of Penang, 17 May 1829, fo. 159.

Appendix D

THE PERAK NUBAT

The two main pieces in the nubat were the gendang and the tabal, the drums. The frame of the gendang was traditionally said to be made of teras jelatang (stinging nettle) and the drum-head from the skin of lice (kulit tuma). According to Perak beliefs, these had been passed down from Demang Lebar Daun himself.¹ There was also a kettle drum (nekara) made from the same materials.

The nafiri was a long silver trumpet with a large mouth (ceropong) on which was carved a tusked dragon whose uplifted tail ended in a lingga. The nafiri had a special connection with royalty and it was believed that beads of perspiration could be seen when the ruler was ill. Both the gendang and the nafiri were only sounded when the ruler was present in person and were therefore given special veneration. The kettledrums could be beaten in his absence. The latter were sometimes sent out to greet and escort a royal guest or to call the people together to hear a royal proclamation. When the Dutch mention the "musical instruments" that accompanied their boat upriver to the royal residence, it would refer to the kettle drums and the other instruments in the nubat rather than the gendang and nafiri. The other important instrument in the

1. RKP SP 9/14, foll. 41-42.

nubat was the clarinet, or serunai, which was also made from teras jela-tang.²

The nubat was said to be under the charge of the orang kalur, and though they are not mentioned in the Misa Melayu, there is a reference to the orang kalur standing guard over the body of a ruler who died about 1801.³ According to information gathered during the nineteenth century, these orang kalur inherited their position from their fathers and, like the Perak ruler, claimed descent from the descendents of Alexander the Great, Sultan Iskandar Zul-karnain. A tax was levied for their support and no one else could touch the nubat. Their chief was Datuk Setia Guna, who was in charge of airing the instruments. From time to time they would be placed in a small building encircled with a line of fowl's feathers stuck in the ground. No one could cross this line under paid of a fine. Once every two or three years the Sultan Muda revived (memulih) the nubat, and, according to a genealogy dating from the early eighteenth century, this was in fact his major duty.⁴ Liquid was poured upon the royal drums and the nafiri and this was said to vanish as if the instruments were actually drinking.

The nubat was played in Perak on state occasions such as the installation of a ruler or chief, the marriage or circumcision of a member of the royal family, at the end of the fasting month and on the feast of

2. Winstedt and Wilkinson, "History of Perak," p. 159; Wilkinson, "Some Malay Studies," pp. 82-83.

3. Silsilah Melaka Kerajaan Negeri Perak, fo. 31v, line 5.

4. RKP, SP 9/15, fo. 1.

pilgrims (Hari Raja Haji). It was also played when the ruler went to the river for ceremonial ablutions and prayers, when water for lustration was brought from the river at a ruler's wedding, and at the death of one of the royal family.⁵

There are several tunes for the nubat listed in a colophon appended to the text of the Misa Melayu, eight of which are said to be old, having come "out of the sea," and the other eight being added later.

5. See Maxwell, "Perak History from Native Sources," (1882), p. 104; Winstedt and Wilkinson, "History of Perak," pp. 159-160; W. Linehan, "The Nobat and the Orang Kalau," JMBRAS, XXIV, 3 (1951), pp. 60-68; Tungku Nong Jiwa, "The Kedah and Perak Nubat," Malaya in History, VII, 2 (1962), 7-12; R. O. Winstedt, "The Perak Royal Musical Instruments," JMBRAS, VII, 3 (1929), 453; Raja Culan, Misa Melayu, p. 194.

Appendix E

TREATIES BETWEEN PERAK AND THE VOC DURING THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

I. Treaty Between Perak and the VOC, 25 July 1746

Articles of peace and indissoluble friendship, concluded between the king of Perak, named Sultan Malpasaar Johan Berdollat Peer Alam [Sultan Muzafar Johan Berdaulat Syah Alam] on the one side and the United Netherlands Patented General East India Company on the other side negotiated by us, the undersigned, being His Excellency Heer Wilhelm Bernhard Albinus, Governor and Director over the town and fortress of Melaka, besides the authorised members of the Political Council.

1. Because His Majesty desires nothing greater than an indissoluble alliance with the Honourable Company, he has presented it with a place below the king's fort and the Laksamana's residence. A building will be erected there for the safety of peaceful trade according to the manner which the Company considers suitable.
2. His Majesty will permit only the Company, with the exclusion of all other nations, to collect all the tin that Perak produces. The Company will pay 26 ducatoons for the bahara of 375 Dutch lbs. which will be weighed with the Company scales and weight. Two Spanish reals will be paid as toll and the Company will not be subject to any further tolls or duties.
3. His Majesty will firstly promulgate a mandate that ships wishing to go outside must first anchor at the fort to be inspected and that he will not at any time permit anyone to smuggle tin outside. In case of capture their entire cargo will be declared liable to confiscation, half for His Majesty and the other half to the discretion of the Honourable Company.

Contracted to-day, 25 July 1746, in the balai of the Laksamana in the presence of the Raja Muda, named Siandaar (Iskandar) and the Datuk Laksamana Nakhoda Posama.

(From J. E. Heeres, "Corpus Diplomaticum Neerlandico Indicum," BKI, 96 (1938), 430-431.)

II. Treaty Between Sultan Muzafar and the VOC

Translated Malay contract made between the King of Perak on the one side and the military lieutenant, Johan Levin Essche, on behalf of the General Netherlands Patented East India Company on the other concerning the salt trade there.

In the year of Muhammad 1164, named Jim,¹ the seventh day of the month Rejab, Paduca Siry Sulthan Malfarsa Lilulla Sul Alam (Paduka Sri Sultan Muzafar li-Allah Syah Alam), the king of Perak, has been pleased to give the contract for salt to the Honourable Company at the time that the Company's agent here was Essche, under condition that the Honourable Company give a koyan of salt annually to the Yang di Pertuan, and by this token no one except the Company can trade in salt. In this regard the Yang di Pertuan has come to an agreement with the Honourable Company and as a sign this paper is ratified with my seal. Tamat. (The end.)

III. Treaty Between Perak and the VOC, 13 March 1753

Contract and indissoluble treaty between Paduca Siry Sulthan Iskandar Sul Karney (Paduka Sri Sultan Iskandar Zul-karnain), King of Perak on the one side and Mr. Thomas Schippers, merchant and fiscal at Melaka as well as commissioner and envoy to that court on behalf of the Netherlands Patented East India Company on the other side.

1. Firstly an upright, true and indissoluble friendship and correspondence shall be maintained between His Majesty and the Netherlands Company.
2. The esteemed King promises all the tin from Perak and areas under his jurisdiction to the Honourable Company; the Company shall pay 26 ducatoons or 32 Spanish reals for the bahara of 375 Dutch lbs.
3. Besides that the Honourable Company must pay two Spanish reals only as toll for each bahara of tin.
4. The tin suppliers must bring the tin down themselves to the Company's fort, as has been done up till now. There it will be weighed with the Company's scales and weight.
5. The king shall immediately decree through his whole kingdom and to all ships that wish to go outside that they must first and foremost

1. Jim: the third year of the eight year Muslim cycle.

anchor at the Dutch fort to be inspected there, as was done after the signing of the contract in the year 1746 between the former king Sultan Muzafar Berdaulat Syah Alam and the Honourable Company. Furthermore, according to this contract, each and every individual is obliged to deliver all his tin to the Honourable Company for the fixed price.

6. Should anyone at any time dare to smuggle tin outside without giving it to the Company, he shall, if captured, have his entire cargo confiscated. Half of this will go to the king and the other half will remain at the discretion of the Honourable Company.
7. Finally, the king promises to offer a helping hand to the Netherlands Company in all matters and to oppose and prevent all disadvantageous and dangerous plans that might at times be contemplated against the fort here by enemies of the Honourable Company and by those who wish it ill. On the other hand, the Company is bound to ensure that no subjects of His Majesty or other free merchants will be caused any hindrance or annoyance. The Company promises to assist each and every one reasonably and justly.

Contracted in the Kingdom of Perak outside the king's dalam [residence] on the island of Misquit on the 13 March in the year after Christ's birth 1753, or in the Moslem year, name Ba [sixth year of Moslem cycle], 1166, eighth day of the month Jumadil-awal in the presence of the Raja Muda, the Bendahara Besar, the Tenenggong, Laksamana, Syahbandar and all the orang Kaya or nobles.

(From F. W. Stapel, Corpus Diplomaticum Neerlandico Indicum (The Hague, 1955), pp. 1-2.)

IV. Additional Articles Signed on 3 June, 1759

Separate articles concluded between Paduka Sri Sultan Iskandar Zul Karnain King of Perak, on the one side, and the honourable and gallant gentleman, Jan Jansz. Visboom, military captain and also commissioner and envoy to that court on behalf of the Netherlands East India Company and thereby authorised by the most honourable and respected gentleman David Boelen, Governor and Director of the city and fortress as well as the Council of Melaka, on the other side. This is a clarification of the treaty and indissoluble contract signed on the 13 March in the year 1753 between His Majesty and the former commissioner and envoy Mr. Thomas Schippers.

1. Regarding an elucidation of the 4th and 5th article of the former contract that His Gracious Majesty as well as other suppliers, shall

deliver his tin to the Company fort to be weighed there with the Company's balance and scale.

2. His Majesty, as head of the merchants, also promises that his own ships as well as those of others shall be inspected and, if tin should be found in them, it shall be confiscated as mentioned in article 6, but the king's ship shall be given back.

Contracted and concluded in the kingdom of Perak in the king's balai at Kota Lumut in the presence of the Raja Muda, the Raja Bendahara, the Temenggong, Menteri and Maharaja Lela on 3 June 1759 or in the Moslem year 1172, the 7th day of the month Syawal.

(From Stapel, Corpus Diplomaticum, pp. 182-183.)

V. Treaty Between Perak and the VOC, 17 October 1765

Contract and indissoluble treaty between Paduka Sieri Sulthan Mochamoet-cha (Paduka Sri Sultan Mahmud Syah), King of Perak, on the one side, and Everhard Cramer, junior merchant, receiver, and licence master as well as commissioner and envoy to that court on behalf of the Netherlands Patented East India Company on the other side.

1. Firstly, an upright, true and indissoluble confidence and friendship shall be maintained between His Majesty Paduka Sri Sultan Mahmud Syah and the Netherlands East India Company.
2. To this end His Majesty promises to deliver and have delivered all the tin in his entire Company to the Company, with the exclusion of all other European and native nations and people.
3. For this the Company promises to pay 36 1/3 guilders for 125 lbs. of 11 1/3 round Spanish reals, and thus for the bahara of 375 lbs. 34 round Spanish reals only.
4. The King promises and undertakes to bring down all the tin that His Majesty sells to the Company to its fort, without ever deviating from this under any pretext whatsoever. At the fort His Majesty's tin will be weighed with the Company's balance, like that of all his subjects and suppliers.
5. The king promises to take all possible precautions against smuggling and to interdict and forbid any carrying out of tin on pain of confiscation of ship and cargo.

6. And should it happen that any ill-natured person tries to carry tin out secretly and to sell it to someone other than the Company and is captured, the ship and cargo will be confiscated immediately without any form of trial and the proceeds from this shall be divided between the king and the Company.
7. All ships (not excepting those of the king and nobles) which wish to go outside must anchor at the Dutch post to be properly inspected.
8. And in case a crew engage in any hostile activity and escape from the hands of the Dutch during the inspection of foreign ships, the king promises once and for all to charge his subjects to follow such evil-doers and to give them over to the resident. The Company for its part promises to do the same in such cases.
9. The king also promises that when any Europeans or European, Native or Natives in the Company's service desert and take refuge in his kingdom, they will be immediately taken into custody and the resident shall be informed. They will be given over without any delay and such people will not be permitted to embrace the Moslem religion.
10. The king further promises to co-operate with the Netherlands post in all cases and to oppose and prevent what might be undertaken to its disadvantage with all his might. No further permission will be given for the equipping and the sending to sea of pirates.
11. The Company promises that if any of its servants cause any annoyance, danger or harm to His Majesty's subjects, they will be fittingly punished and retribution and justice will be meted out to each person.
12. It is further concluded that this treaty will remain firm and constant as long as the mutual alliance between the Company, the king and his successors, lasts. The words of this treaty will convey its force and validity and all that has been agreed and concluded in this treaty shall be maintained and observed sincerely. The king promises this as well as the Company.
13. Lastly the king promises to publicise this contract throughout his entire kingdom in the same way as former treaties.

Contracted in the kingdom of Perak in the balai of the recently deceased king on the island Indra Sakit, 17 October in the year after Christ's birth 1765 or in the Moslem year 1179, the 29th day of the month Rabi'ul akhor in the presence of the Raja Bendahara, the Orang Kaya Besar, the Temenggong, and other nobles.

(From Stapel, Corpus Diplomaticum, pp. 255-257.)

VI. Treaty Between Perak and the VOC, 20 December 1773

Contract and indissoluble contract between Paduka Sirie Sulthan Alaidin Mantsur Iskandar Moeda Chaliphatur Rahim [Paduka Sri Sultan Alauddin Mansur Iskandar Muda Khalifatu'r Rahim], King of Perak and Anthony Abraham Werndly, merchant and fiscal at Melaka as well as delegate and envoy to that court on behalf of the Netherlands Patented East India Company.

This treaty resembles that of 1765 in all respects except for articles 3 and 9. Article 3 reads:

The Company promises to pay His Majesty 32 round Spanish reals only for each bahara or three pikul of 375 lbs.

Article 9 is similar to the former one except that the Company also promised to give over any of Sultan Alauddin's subjects if they sought refuge with the Company.

The conclusion reads:

Contracted in the kingdom of Perak in the balai of His Majesty on the large island [i.e., Pulau Besar] in the year of Muhammad 1187, the 5th day of the month Syawal on Monday in the morning, and in the year after the birth of Jesus Christ 1773, the 20 December, in the presence of His Majesty, Raja Bendahara, and all the other nobles.

(From Stapel, Corpus Diplomaticum, pp. 377-379.)

VII. Pass Issued to the Maharaja Muda, Son of Sultan Iskandar, on 27 May 1765

The pass was set out as follows:

Royal seal

This seal is that of the King of Perak, called Paduka Sri Sultan Iskandar Zulkarnain Khalifatu'r Rahman.

The Maharaja Muda has been sent out by the King of Perak with eight large and small baluk, of which two are going to Kedah to get rice and the remaining six will cruise back and forth. The above-mentioned King of Perak has let the undersigned know about this and other matters,

and has asked for a pass, which could not well be refused, but was given with the express warning that in any meeting with Company ships, he must first drop anchor and after that must send a small vessel with no more than three or four men to inform the commanding officer and show him this. The said captain of the Company's ship is informed that he should exercise all caution and in every aspect observe the honourable orders and instructions given by His Excellency Thomas Schippers.

Signed 27 May 1765 in Perak,

H. J. Wiederholt

(Included in KA 3075 OB 1767, Wiederholt to Schippers, 11 June 1765.)

GLOSSARY

<u>adat</u>	Malay custom
<u>anak baik, anak ceteria</u>	Son or daughter of a noble
<u>anak gahara</u>	Of royal birth on birth sides
<u>anak raja</u>	Son or daughter of a raja
<u>anak sungai</u>	Tributary stream or river
<u>anugerah</u>	Royal bounty
<u>arak</u>	Fermented rice drink
<u>baginda</u>	King, prince, ruler
<u>bahara</u>	About 375 lbs.
<u>bahasa</u>	Language, etiquette
<u>balai</u>	Hall
<u>balai penghadapan</u>	Hall of audience
<u>baluk</u>	Cargo boat
<u>barat</u>	West
<u>Bendahara</u>	First Minister
<u>bentara</u>	Court attendant
<u>bingkisan</u>	Gifts accompanying a letter
<u>bulan</u>	Month
<u>bulan puasa</u>	Fasting month

<u>comptoir</u>	A VOC post where a Governor or Resident was usually attached
<u>corgie, corgee</u>	20-22 pieces of cloth
<u>Chuliah, Chooliah, culia</u>	Indian, especially Muslim traders from the Coromandel Coast
<u>ciri</u>	Address to ruler or chief at his installation
<u>cap</u>	Seal
<u>Daeng</u>	Title used in southwest Sulawesi for high or low nobility
<u>dalam</u>	"Inside," the ruler's palace
<u>daulat</u>	Special powers of a ruler, royal sanctity
<u>derhaka</u>	Treason to the ruler
<u>daru'r rizwan</u>	Abode of Grace (Perak's official title)
<u>gantang</u>	A measure of weight, about five <u>kati</u>
<u>gendang</u>	Large drum in Malay orchestra
<u>gundik</u>	Secondary wife
<u>hikayat</u>	Story, account
<u>hilir</u>	Downstream
<u>huru-hara</u>	Confusion, disturbance
<u>hulubalang</u>	In Perak, a district official
<u>imam</u>	Moslem official who leads the Friday prayers
<u>istana</u>	Royal residence
<u>ja'ahan</u>	Territories

<u>kafir</u>	Infidel
<u>kakap</u>	A boat with a narrow beam and low free board used for river travel
<u>kati</u>	About 1 1/3 lbs.
<u>kebesaran</u>	Greatness
<u>keling, kling</u>	Tamil Indian
<u>kerah</u>	To call people together for corvee labour
<u>kerajaan</u>	Government; the state of having a raja
<u>keris</u>	Malay dagger
<u>khalifah</u>	Religious head of state
<u>kota</u>	A fort, usually of stone
<u>kuala</u>	Mouth of river
<u>kubu</u>	An earth stockade
<u>kurna</u>	Bounty
<u>last-post</u>	A Dutch comptoir regarded as a financial burden
Laksamana	Minister in charge of river shipping and the coast; responsible for preparing fleets in time of war
<u>mahaligai</u>	Palace
<u>Marhum</u>	The deceased
<u>mata-mata</u>	Ruler's representative, "the eyes which are not eyes"
<u>mencari rezeki</u>	Seek one's fortune
<u>menghadap</u>	Make obeisance
<u>menteri</u>	Minister

<u>mesyarat bicara</u>	Assembly where decisions were made by discussion between ruler and officials
<u>mukim</u>	Settlement usually round a mosque, consisting of at least forty people
<u>nafiri</u>	Malay trumpet associated with royalty
<u>naga</u>	Dragon, snake of supernatural size
<u>nakhoda</u>	Ship's captain
<u>negeri</u>	State or settlement
<u>nubat</u>	Malay orchestra
<u>orang besar</u>	Literally, great man; a noble
<u>orang kaya besar</u>	Literally, great and wealthy man; a senior noble
<u>padi</u>	Unhusked rice
<u>pancalang</u>	Trading ship
<u>pantun</u>	Rhymed couplet, the symbolism of the first two lines making clear the meaning of the last
<u>parang</u>	Cleaver, machete
<u>pawang</u>	Expert in any art requiring use of talismans, formulas and special magical knowledge
<u>pemanku</u>	Regent
<u>pengarang</u>	Writer
<u>penghulu</u>	District official usually in charge of a river settlement
<u>penjajab</u>	Light Bugis warship with a mainmast but small enough to be propelled with oars if necessary

<u>Perdana Menteri</u>	First Minister
<u>persembahan</u>	Offerings to ruler symbolising allegiance
<u>perahu</u>	Malay boat without deck, propelled by paddles
<u>pikul</u>	100 <u>kati</u>
<u>pinang</u>	Areca nut palm
<u>pulau</u>	Island
<u>rakyat</u>	Ordinary people
<u>Raja Muda</u>	Literally, young ruler; the heir to the throne
<u>rantau</u>	Stretch of river
<u>sepak raga</u>	Malay football using ball of rattan
<u>silsilah</u>	Genealogy
<u>sirih</u>	Betel leaf prepared for chewing with areca nut, gambier and lime
<u>syair</u>	Long poem
<u>Syahbandar</u>	Harbour master
<u>ta'aluk</u>	Subject, dependent
<u>tabal</u>	Drum of installation
<u>tanda pinang</u>	Areca nut sent as part of marriage proposal
<u>tuanku</u>	Your Highness (form of address to a ruler)
<u>tungku, tengku</u>	Form of address to important raja
Temenggong	In Perak the third minister after the Bendahara and Orang Kaya Besar
<u>ulu</u>	Upstream

wakil

Representative

waris negeri

Heirs of the country, the principal anak raja

wasiat

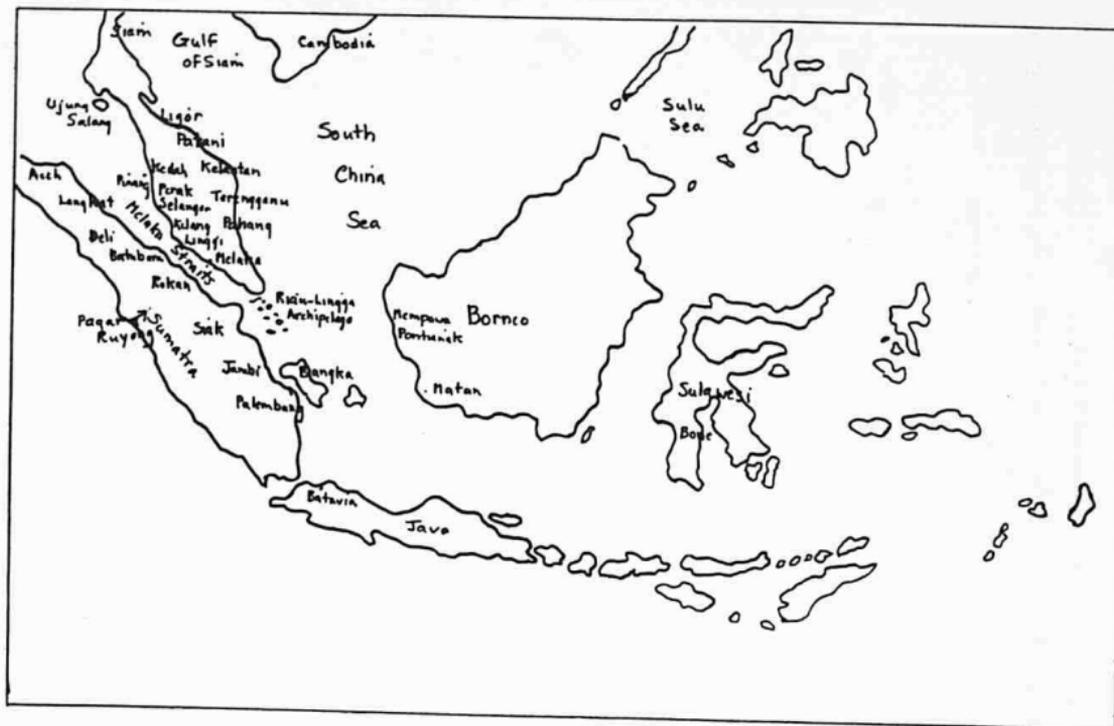
A dying man's last testament

Yang di Pertuan

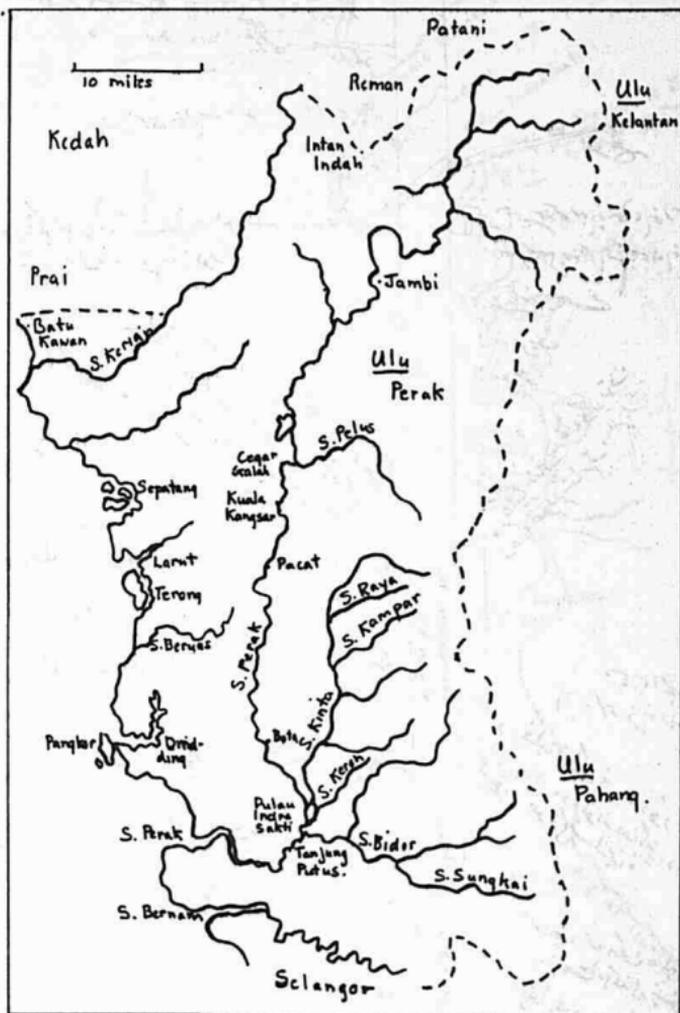
"The one who is lord," the ruler

zaman

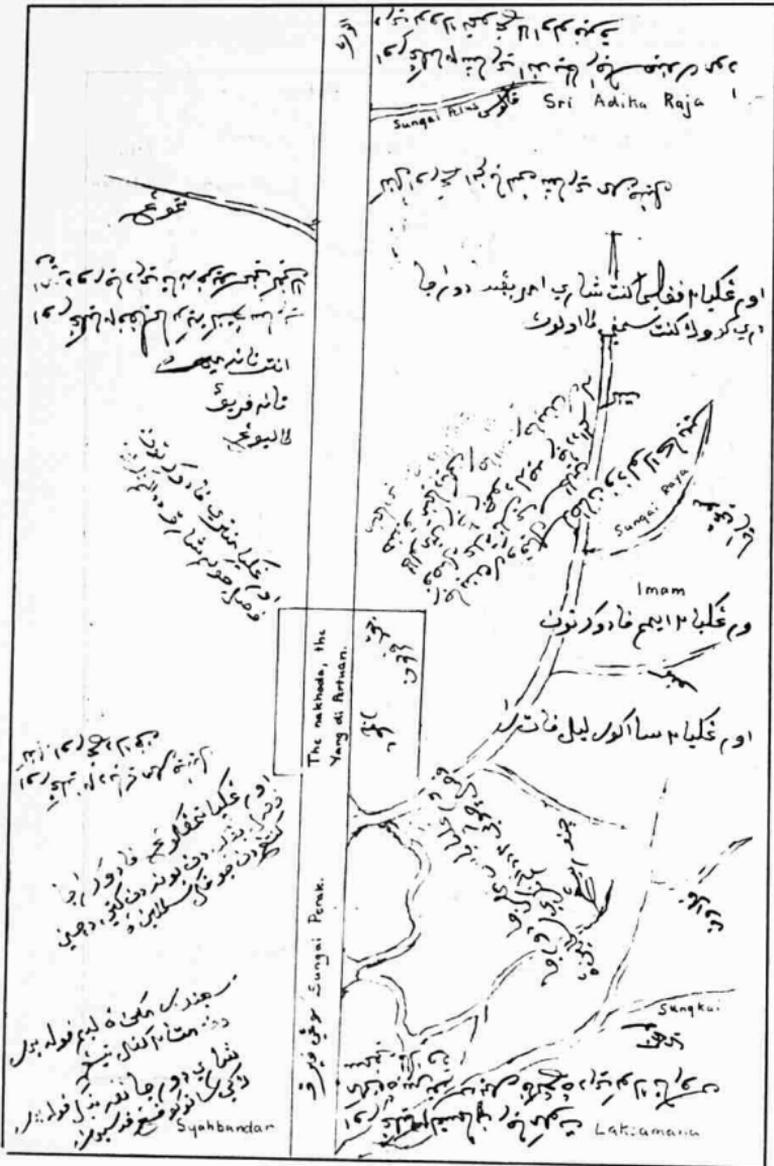
A reign, epoch



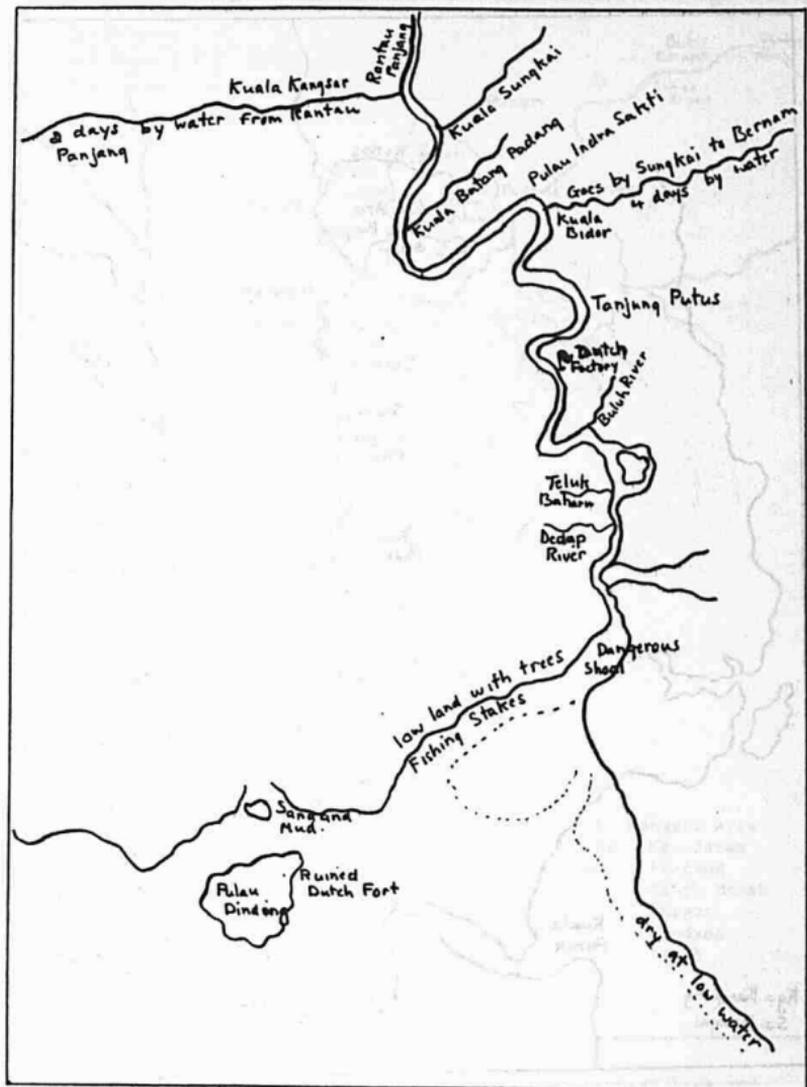
Map 1. Perak in the Malay World



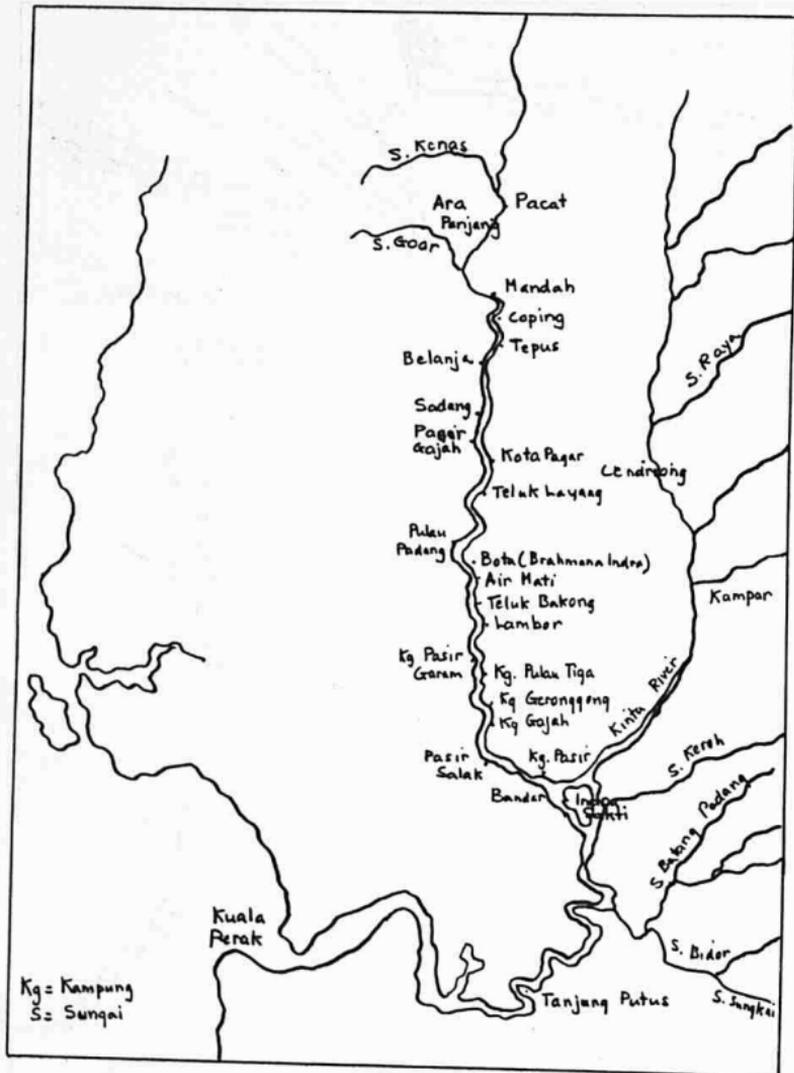
Map 2. Perak in the Eighteenth Century



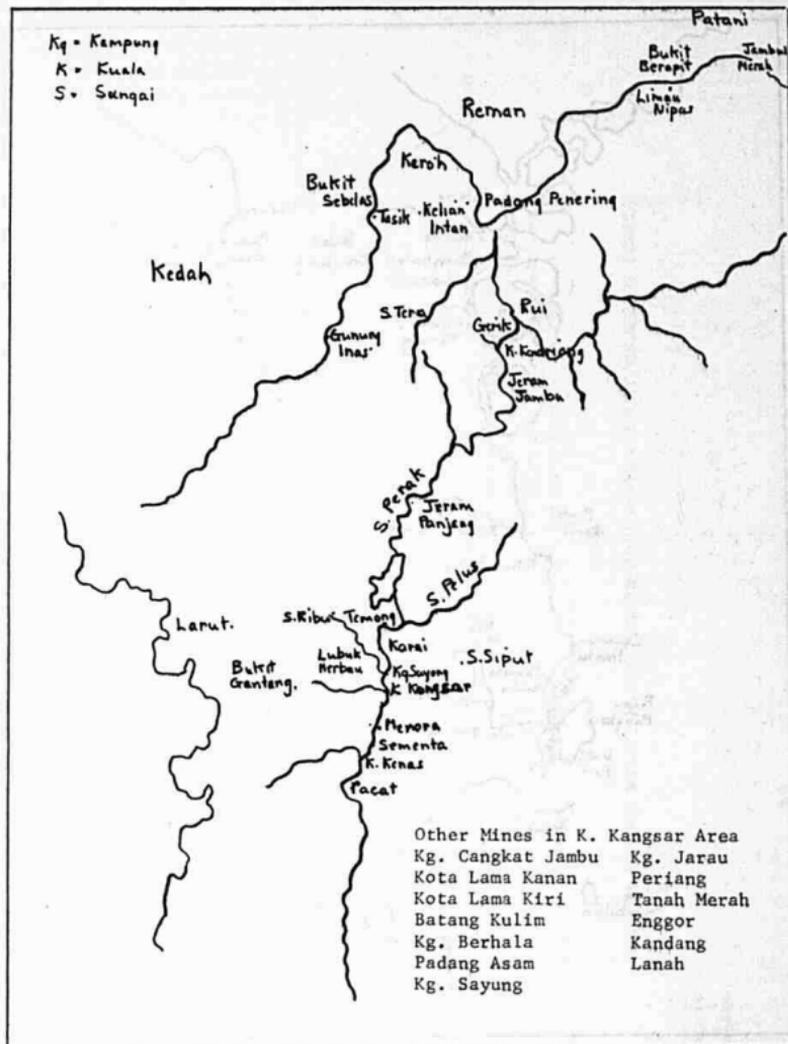
Map 3. A Malay Map of Perak, 1876



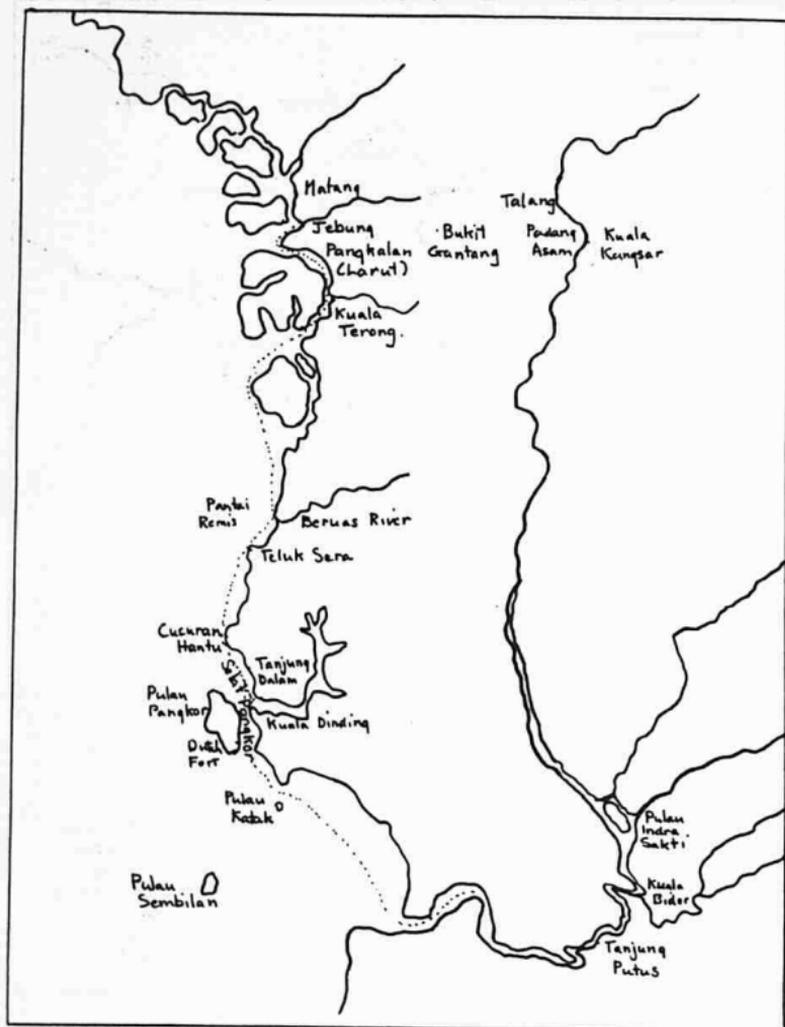
Map 4. Thomas Forrest's Map of Perak, 1792



Map 5. Principal Tin Mining Areas in Hilir Perak (From KA 3166 OB 1770, Werndly's Report, 17 Sept. 1768)



Map 6. Principal Tin Mining Areas in the Kuala Kangsar Area and Ulu Perak, Showing Borders with Patani (From KA 3166 OB 1770, Werndly's Report, 17 Sept. 1768)



Map 7. Route of Sultan Iskandar's Trip to Larut, 1761

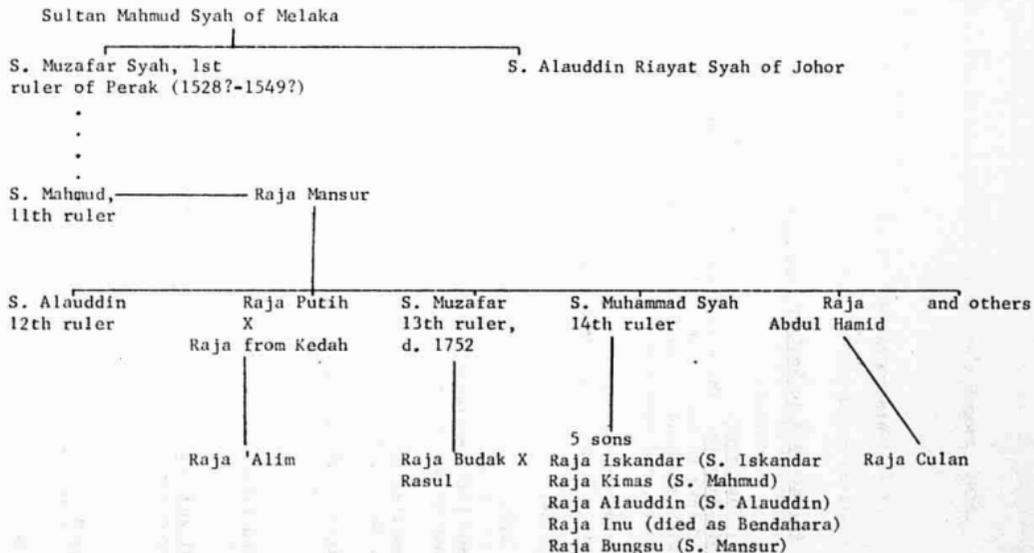


DIAGRAM TO SHOW RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY RULERS OF PERAK

X = married
S = Sultan

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