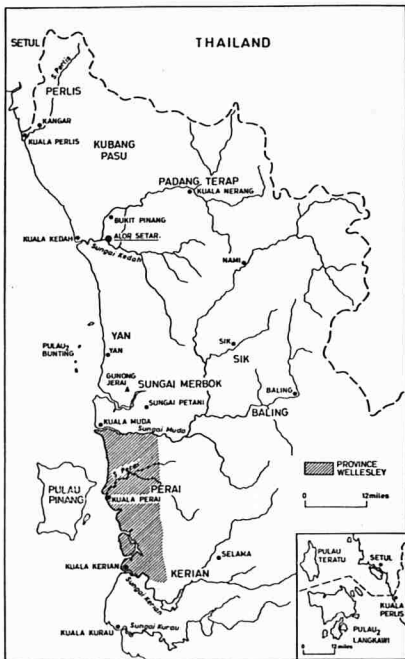


EAST ASIAN HISTORICAL MONOGRAPHS

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KEDAH: 1771-1821



KEDAH

KEDAH 1771-1821

*The Search for Security
and Independence*

R. BONNEY



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PREFACE

LYING on the north-western frontier of present-day Malaysia, the ancient state of Kedah has assumed a most significant place in the annals of Malaysian history. Pitted as she was in a most strategic and gate-way position, hers was the role of adjusting to the operation of the traditional balance of power in mainland South-East Asia and to the expansionist aims of the Siamese empire. Faced externally by these pressures which were complicated by inherent internal weaknesses and the relative political disunity in the Malay Peninsula, Kedah was obliged to bear the brunt of the historical forces operating in the strategic Isthmus of Kra, the Malay Peninsula and the Straits of Melaka.

This study aims at providing a coherent narrative of the major themes in the 'diplomatic' history of Kedah between 1771 and 1821, complicated as they were by internal political disputes, within the limitations of locally available and accessible source materials. It has, in fact, arisen out of a long felt desire to provide a meaningful contribution, admittedly, a small one, of some basic data which future students of Malaysian history may find of some benefit. Needless to say, it is far from complete and there is room for additional data from untapped sources. Submitted originally as a M.A. thesis to the Department of History, University of Malaya in December, 1967, I have since then chosen to omit in the present text many footnote discussions which appear in the original thesis because those scholars who have also done research in this field (and whose works are cited) were probably oblivious to the existence of certain relevant materials in untapped sources.

Chapter I is mainly introductory in nature, setting in outline, notes on source-materials, some relevant geographical data, the main features of Kedah's feudal political structure and the Bunga Emas dan Perak. The historical background is also superficially entered into showing Kedah's reaction to the major gravitational

centres of power in South-East Asia between (and around) the rise of Melaka and the fall of Ayuthaya.

The year 1771 saw the outbreak of a militant succession dispute against Sultan Muhammed Jiwa which, in the chain of events, led to his lease of the port of Kuala Kedah to the English East India Company in 1772. This subject has received the attention of a number of writers and chapter II re-examines the circumstances surrounding this lease.¹ Contrary to accepted history, the so-called 'Bugis invasion' of Kedah in 1771 is found to be a misnomer; the Bugis 'threat' and the immediate danger of Siam are known to have been non-existent; Kedah is proved to have been under the Company's protection for a very brief period, and Sultan Muhammed is seen to have rather short-sightedly rescinded his Contract with the Company and to have rejected its new proposals almost purely because of its failure to sanction a written undertaking by its representative for limited offensive assistance.

Chapter III is built around Sultan Abdullah's (his son and successor) offer of the strategic island of Pulau Pinang to the English East India Company in 1785 in return for defensive assistance. The essential considerations behind this are found to have been the urgent need to isolate Kedah from its powerful Burmese and Siamese neighbours, their traditional wars and their claims to suzerainty by introducing a new element in the traditional balance of power operating in mainland South-East Asia. Francis Light's taking formal possession and occupation of the island in 1786 are shown to have been premature and illegal. No formal treaty or agreement for the occupation of the island was actually signed, contrary to what is currently held.

Chapter IV encompasses the period 1786-1791 when Sultan Abdullah is observed to have been hard-pressed by the fear of a Siamese invasion and the tributary demands exercised by Siam which considered Kedah a vassal state. This is seen to have operated within the context of the traditional Burman-Siamese wars and resulted in Sultan Abdullah's repeated appeals for ful-

¹Published in the *Journal of the Historical Society*, University of Malaya, Vol. VI (1967/8).

PREFACE

filment of the Company's assistance by virtue of its being in occupation of Pulau Pinang. His hopes in the faith of the Company, however, are seen to have been a grand illusion (barred as the Company was by Pitt's India Act of 1784), culminating in the sneak attack and rout of the forces that he had assembled at Perai to eject the Company from the island. Together with other evidence as discussed in the preceding chapter, the hitherto almost heroic image of Light is seen to be almost without foundation.

The death of Sultan Abdullah in 1798 precipitated a succession dispute which was to have far-reaching and fatal repercussions on the course of Kedah's history. Chapter V is a reconstruction of events in the years 1798-1813 which traces the rise to power of Sultan Ahmad Tajud-din with Siamese assistance, and his placing Kedah into a fuller tributary position in Siamese eyes, together with the problems that arose from the outbreak of hostilities between Burma and Siam. The dual policy of the simultaneous appeasement of Burma and Siam on the one hand and the appeals for Company protection on the other are the main characteristics of this period. The Treaty of Friendship and Alliance signed between Kedah and the Company in 1800 and ratified in 1802 is also seen to be suspect.

The tributary position that Sultan Ahmad had drawn himself into comes more fully into play in Chapter VI which deals with Kedah's conquest of Perak. The most outstanding causes of this unhappy conquest are shown to have been the urgent need to safeguard Kedah's own security and interests in the face of Siamese expansionist aims over Perak, and the necessity to testify Sultan Ahmad's loyalty to Siam as well. The pressure from Siam is seen to have necessitated the conquest and which was highlighted by Sultan Ahmad's attempts to seek the Company's defensive protection to isolate Kedah from Siam and thereby Perak.

Siam's aggrandizement over Perak may have been the prelude to the Siamese invasion of Kedah itself in 1821, the immediate causes of which are briefly examined in Chapter VII. The threat of a major Burmese invasion and Burmese plans to wrest the strategic Isthmus of Kra and Kedah are seen to have coalesced

PREFACE

with the growing ambitions of the Siamese Governor of Nakorn Si'thammarat, a worsening in relations between Sultan Ahmad and the Governor, Tunku Amboon's bid for power, the correct supposition of English non-interference and charges of Sultan Ahmad's collusion with the Burmese. These emerge as the major considerations behind the invasion rather than incidental factors. The invasion of Kedah and its incorporation as a province of Siam thus saw an abrupt end to its long search for security and independence.

It was only after about twenty years of resistance and the use of tactful diplomacy that ultimately resulted, in 1842, in the restoration of Sultan Ahmad Taj'u-d-din to the throne of Kedah.

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FOR practical reasons, I am forced to economize in my expression of thanks and in certain respects, gratitude, to those who have helped me in one way or another, and this, I hope, will not in any way detract the warmth and understanding that they have so spontaneously shown.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Bm.Add.MS.	British Museum, Additional Manuscripts.
JMBRAS	<i>Journal of the Malayan/Malaysian Branch Royal Asiatic Society.</i>
JSBRAS	<i>Journal of the Straits Branch, Royal Asiatic Society.</i>
BSOAS	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, London.</i>
JSEAH	<i>Journal of Southeast Asian History.</i>
FSGCP	Fort St. George Council Proceedings.
FWCP	Fort William Council Proceedings.
FCCP	Fort Cornwallis Council Proceedings.
IOL	Great Britain, India Office Library.
JIA	<i>Journal of the Indian Archipelago and Eastern Asia.</i>
JSS	<i>Journal of the Siam Society.</i>
MHJ	<i>Malayan Historical Journal.</i>
SFR	Sumatra Factory Records (Great Britain, India Office Library).
SSR	Straits Settlements Factory Records (Great Britain, India Office Library).
SNL	Straits Settlements Factory Records (Singapore, National Library).
BP	<i>The Burney Papers.</i>
EIC	English East India Company.
GNS	Governor of Nakorn Si'thammarat.
GG	Governor-General of India.
GP	Governor of Pulau Pinang or Penang.
RK	Raja of Kedah.
RP	Raja of Perak.
MS.	Manuscript.

WEIGHTS AND CURRENCIES

One pikul = 133.33 lb.

One bahara = 400 lb.

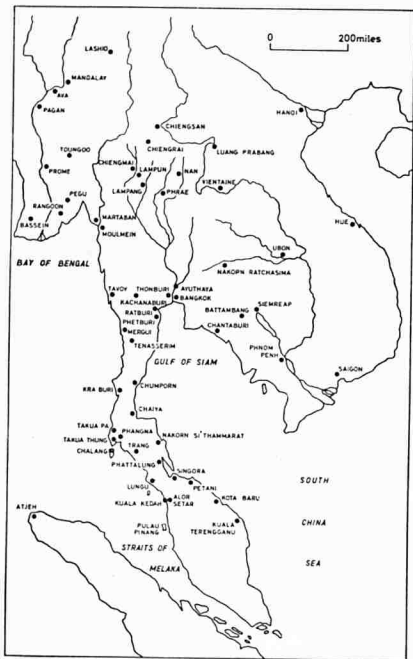
One koyan (40 pikul) = 5,333.33 lb.

Spanish Dollar

100 Spanish Dollars = 224½ Company Rupees
= £20 16s 8d (Intrinsic value)
= 208.325 florins



1. KEDAH and its NEIGHBOURS



2. KEDAH and MAINLAND SOUTH-EAST ASIA

I

INTRODUCTION

THE invasion of Kedah by Siamese forces in 1821 and the story of its stubborn resistance to Siamese occupation are among the well-known aspects of Malaysian history.¹ The background to these crucial and unhappy events, however, verges almost on the unknown and the literature that is available lacks cohesion. This study aims at providing a comprehensive and a more closely-knit fabric of the preceding fifty years.

The limited period of this study and its arrangement into chapters built around key events of the history of Kedah between 1771 and 1821 have been circumstanced by a few but by no means minor problems. The most formidable of these has been posed by the existing framework of Malaysian history which encompasses the period under study. This has necessitated a detailed discussion of various points, some divergence in style and the frequent use of footnotes in order to establish the validity of lesser-known but more relevant themes and their sustaining facts that have hitherto been neglected and sometimes overlooked.

Of no less magnitude has been the relative paucity of source-materials and their scattered nature, although their malleable content has fortunately, enabled satisfactory 'inversion'.

Sources

Kedah's misfortunes are perhaps the Malaysian historian's fortune for they saw the growth of a voluminous literature on the issues that were raised following the invasion of 1821. This has provided some compensation for the dearth of information on Kedah on the period before 1770, for which dependence has so far been placed

¹See Chapter VII.

on the records of the Dutch and English East India Companies² and on the reports of travellers and sea captains,³ which provide us with glimpses of matters of political and economic importance. The archives of both Companies, however, have yet to be fully utilized.

The historian is on firmer ground around 1770 and especially after 1786, when Kedah's connexions with the English East India Company were placed on a more formal basis, arising from the Company's establishment of a settlement in Kedah. The Straits Settlements Factory Records⁴ have thus come to provide the backbone of this study.⁵ The Siamese invasion and the East India Company's refusal to go to Kedah's assistance created a controversy among Company officials, hinging mainly on the negotiations that were held prior to the establishment of its settlement and on the claims of Siamese suzerainty over Kedah.

The Company and Kedah found their respective champions and critics among local Company officials whose efforts, experience and researches recorded in official correspondence and publications⁶ have proved highly invaluable to later scholars. The subject

²See R. Winstedt, 'Notes on the History of Kedah', *JMBRAS*, XIV, iii (1936), 157-80 and R. Winstedt, *A History of Malaya*, XIII, i (1935), 97-135.

³See A. Cortesao, *The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires, 1512-15*, London, 1944; T. Bowrey, *The Countries Around the Bay of Bengal, 1669-79*, London, 1905, ed. Sir R.C. Temple; and A. Hamilton, *A New Account of the East Indies*, II, London, 1930.

⁴See the Straits Settlements Factory Records (Great Britain, India Office Library), Volumes 1-126. These documents are hereafter abbreviated as SSR. Extracts of correspondence from later volumes are to be found in *The Burney Papers*, I-V, Bangkok, 1910-14. Valuable data on events in Kedah in 1771-2 is found in the Sumatra Factory Records (Great Britain, India Office Library), Vol. 15, hereafter abbreviated as SFR.

⁵There are two general histories of Kedah in Malay, viz. Mohd. Hassan's *Al-Tarikh Silsilah Negeri Kedah* and Wan Yahaya's *Salasilah atau Tawarikh Kerajaan Kedah*.

⁶See J. Anderson, *Political and Commercial Considerations Relative to the Malayan Peninsula and the British Settlements in the Straits of Malacca, Prince of Wales' Island, 1824*; *The Crawford Papers*, Bangkok, 1915; J. Low, 'An Account of the Origin and Progress of the British Colonies in the Straits of Malacca', *JIA*, III (1849), 559-617 and *JIA*, IV (1850), 11-26, 106-18 and 360-79; J. Low, 'A Translation of the Kedah Annals', *JIA*, III (1849), 1-23, 162-81, 250-70, 314-36 and 468-88; J. Low, 'On the Ancient Connections Between Kedah and Siam', *JIA*, V (1851), 498-527; H. Burney to Court of Directors, 24 July 1841, 'Manuscript Papers Relating to Kedah' (Great Britain, India Office Library), and T.J. Newbold, *A Political and Statistical Account of the British Settlements in the Straits Settlements*, Vol. II, London, 1839, 1-21. See also note 4.

was also taken up by contemporary personalities,⁷ and more recently, further contributions have been presented by historians and other interested writers.⁸

Kedah's location on the northern fringe of the Malay Peninsula and its strategic position at the south-western seaboard of the Isthmus of Kra brought it in contact with its giant neighbours, the empires of Burma and Siam.⁹ The course of Kedah's history and the policies pursued by its rulers were therefore influenced either by direct Siamese pressure or by pressures resulting from the outbreak of hostilities between Burma and Siam. An understanding of the history of these two powers and continental South-East Asia as a whole is therefore a prerequisite to this study. This has been more than adequately provided for by a number of studies.¹⁰

Geographical Notes

The territorial extent of present-day Kedah is the end-product of the historical forces that have operated in and around the geopolitics of this region. Two frontiers have to be taken into account, namely, the territorial and the ethnic. Blagden has stated that the

⁷ See P.J. Begbie, *The Malayan Peninsula...*, Madras, 1834; and J.H. Moor, *Notices of the Indian Archipelago and Adjacent Countries...*, Singapore, 1837.

⁸ See F.A. Swettenham, *British Malaya*, London, 1908; A. Wright and T.H. Reid, *The Malay Peninsula*, London, 1912; L.A. Mills, 'British Malaya, 1824-67', *JMBRAS*, XXXIII, iii (1960); C.M. Enriquez, *Malaya, An Account of its Peoples, Flora and Fauna*, London, 1927; R. Emerson, *Malaysia: A Study in Direct and Indirect Rule*, New York, 1937; R. Winstedt, 'Notes on the History of Kedah', XIV, iii (1936), 155-89; D.G.E. Hall, *A History of Southeast Asia*, London, 1964 and K.G. Tregonning, *The British in Malaya*, Tuscon, 1965.

⁹ The terms Burma and Siam are used in this study in place of Ava and Ayuthaya (Ayuthia) respectively. The use of Siam instead of Thailand has also been preferred. For details of the evolution of present-day Burma and Thailand, see note 10.

¹⁰ See J. Crawford, *Journal of an Embassy from the Governor-General of India to the Courts of Siam and Cochin-China*, London, 1828; Sir J. Bowring, *The Kingdom and Peoples of Siam*, London, 1857 (reprinted Kuala Lumpur, 1970); W.A.R. Wood, *A History of Siam*, Bangkok, 1924; Luang Phraison Salarak, 'A Translation of the Hmannan Yazawin Dawgyi', *JSS*, V (1959), 3-207 and VI (1959), 1-215, which also incorporates parts of Sir A. Phayre's *History of Burma*; D.G.E. Hall, *Southeast Asia*, D.G.E. Hall, *Burma*, London, 1956; Chula Chakrabongse, *Lords of Life*, London, 1960; M. Symes, *An Account of an Embassy to the Kingdom of Ava sent by the Governor-General of India in... 1795*, London, 1800; J.G. Scott, *Burma*, London, 1925 and W.F. Vella, *Siam Under Rama III, 1824-1851*, New York, 1957.

ethnic frontier (where the Malay-Muslim population predominated) began about seven degrees North latitude, slightly to its north in the west coast and close to its south on the east coast, but by the end of the sixteenth century it had shifted south, largely through Siamese migration.¹¹ In its territorial limits, all existing evidence points to a marked contraction in its size over the years to its present area of 3,800 square miles.¹²

The earliest reference to Kedah is Tome Pires' rather vague description of Kedah as 'bounded on the one side by Trang and on the other by the end of the kingdom of Malacca and Bruas'.¹³ The most reliable assessment based on a number of sources has Kedah stretching from the southern fringe of the Sungai Trang basin to the southern fringe of the Sungai Kerian basin, in a north-south direction, and from the sea-coast to the watershed formed by the Main Range, in an east-west direction.¹⁴ Pulau2 Telibon, Terutau, Langkawi, Bunting, and Pinang and the islets to its south were part of the territory of Kedah.¹⁵ There was also a brief period when Thalang was considered as belonging to Kedah.¹⁶

At this stage, the watershed between river basins rather than the rivers themselves was considered as 'boundary'. The demarcation of 'boundaries' by river courses is a concept that came to be applied to the Malay Peninsula, often with disrupting consequences. The Sungai Kerian is mentioned in most reports as the southern

¹¹ C.O. Blagden, 'Siam and the Malay Peninsula', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1906), 108-9; also Vella, *op.cit.* 59-60.

¹² *Handbook to British Malaya*, 1926.

¹³ Cortesao, *op.cit.* 106.

¹⁴ The Sungai Trang is wrongly given as Kedah's northern limit by Francis Light, John Anderson and other writers, (see F. Light to W. Hastings, 17 Jan. 1772, BM.Add.MS.29133, f.8 (copy by kind permission of Dr. D.K. Bassett) and Anderson, *op.cit.* 104). A more accurate reference is by Burney who placed the boundary at 'the small stream of Oopih [sic], lat. 7.5°, immediately above Telok Awas'. This was confirmed by various Siamese sources as well as the ruler of Kedah in 1825 (See *BP*, II, iii (1911), 182). This stream lies on the southern fringe of the Sungai Trang basin.

¹⁵ Pulau2 Telibon and Terutau were recognized as part of Siam by the Anglo-Siamese Treaty of 1909. Pulau Pinang, also known as Pulau ka-satu, Penagar and Tanjong, and later, as Prince of Wales Island and Penang, was occupied by the English East India Company from 1786. See chapter 3.

¹⁶ Thalang, also known as Ujong Salang and Junk Ceylon, was claimed by Kedah approximately between 1765 and 1770. (See Anderson, *op.cit.* Appendix lviii-lxix.)

boundary, but this arose largely from ignorance.¹⁷ From 1826 this was insisted upon by James Low and his fellow pro-Perak officials of the English East India Company, for political reasons since Low's treaty with Perak in 1826 mentioned the river as the boundary with Kedah. In 1848, the ruler of Kedah was forced to evacuate the southern half of the Sungai Kerian basin because of heavy and extremely unfair pressure applied by the Company.

Perhaps the strongest evidence is provided by J.R. Logan when he visited Kedah in 1850. He wrote, in inhibited tones,

... I do not offer any opinion on this subject. All the Malays whom I made enquiries were unanimous in declaring that the whole basin had immemorially formed part of Kedah and considered the matter as too notorious to admit to any question. Other strong facts, which I do not consider myself at liberty to mention here, confirm this ... Malay kingdoms are agglomerations of river settlements, and I doubt if a single instance can be found where a district is politically divided by a river.¹⁸

Much earlier, in fact, a further piece of evidence was provided by the Raja of Selangor, who after extending his dominion over Perak, wrote to the East India Company officials in 1806 that '... Perak from the River Korau [Kurau] to Berting Bras Basoh is my Country'.¹⁹ The Sungai Kurau was in Perak territory and Kedah's southern 'boundary' therefore was the watershed between the Sungai Kerian and Sungai Kurau basins.

Within the two extremities mentioned above were about thirty rivers and streams.²⁰ The following were the most important — the Sungai2 Lungu (or Lingow), Setul, Perlis, Kedah, Yan, Merbok, Muda, Perai and Kerian.²¹ The economic importance of

¹⁷ See Light's Remarks on Sultan Abdullah's conditions, SSR, 2, f.41 (FWCP, 2 March 1786); M. Topping, 'Some Account of Kedah', *JIA*, IV (1850), 42; Newbold, *Political and Statistical Account* . . . , Vol. II (1839), 2 and Moor, *op.cit.* 242.

¹⁸ J.R. Logan, 'Notes at Pinang, Kedah etc', *JIA* V (1851), 63.

¹⁹ Cited in Anderson, *op.cit.* 189. See also, Crawford, *op.cit.* 28 and chapter 6.

²⁰ See Anderson, *op.cit.* 126, and 141-74 for details.

²¹ *Ibid.*; and Topping, *op.cit.* 42-4. The Lungu and Setul river basins (districts) were lost to Siam by the Anglo-Siamese Treaty of 1909 while the Sungai Perlis basin (district) became an independent political unit after 1821. The southern half of the Sungai Kerian basin was lost to Perak in 1848 and a narrow strip of territory between the southern bank of the Sungai Muda and northern bank of the Sungai Kerian was transferred to the East India Company in 1800. See chapter 5.

these rivers lay primarily in their function as means of communication, thus providing the network around which traditional society was built, and also as a source of water for irrigation purposes, so essential to a rice-based economy such as Kedah's.

The cultivation of rice as a self-subsistence and export crop has long distinguished Kedah from the other parts of the Malay Peninsula, and her present claim to be the country's granary has its roots deep in the past. The extensive, fertile and well-watered Kedah plain provided ideal conditions for the extensive cultivation of rice, a fact that was recognized by Siam as well.

As early as 1512, Pires mentioned Kedah as having rice 'in quantities'.²² That it became an important item in Kedah's external trade in later times is borne out by other references.²³ Kedah's exports of rice in 1785 were computed as at 80,000 pikuls and by 1821, it had been exporting just short of that amount to the East India Company settlement at Pulau Pinang alone.²⁴ The main rice-producing area was to the north of Alor Setar which Topping (around 1791) described as '... an extensive Plain on which are many miles of Paddy Grounds During the rainy season, the Plain is overflowed [sic.] which greatly enriches it . . . [the area] produces great abundance of Grain . . .'.²⁵

The production of pepper also provided a major export before 1805.²⁶ Pires states that 400 bahara were exported annually to China,²⁷ while Bowrey later classified it as probably the principal district for pepper production in the peninsula. About 1,000 pikuls were produced each year, mainly at Pulau Langkawi.²⁸ Although Hamilton mentions it as one of the exports in 1722,²⁹ its importance as an economic export item gradually declined.

Tin has featured as an important commodity and a major source

²² See Cortesao, *op.cit.* 106, 107.

²³ See Winstedt, 'Notes on the History of Kedah', 157-76.

²⁴ See Anderson, *op.cit.* 151.

²⁵ Topping, *op.cit.* 43.

²⁶ See Horsburg's *East India Directory*, cited in Bowrey, *op.cit.* 277. See also W. Milburn, *Oriental Commerce*, II, London, 1813, 296-7.

²⁷ Cortesao, *op.cit.* 106.

²⁸ Bowrey, *op.cit.* 276-7. Pulau Langkawi were earlier known as Pulau Lada. Lada is Malay for pepper.

²⁹ Hamilton, *op.cit.* II, 40.

of revenue immemorially and the records are replete on this point.³⁰ Her own centres of production were the interior parts of the Muda, Perai and Kerian³¹ river basins, the Gunong Jerai³² area and Pulau Pinang.³³ Although by 1818 Kedah's production had proportionately declined compared to the exports of Perak and Selangor, she continued to control the tin exports from Petani, Kelian Intan and Keroh which had to pass down the Sungai Muda.³⁴

Kedah's position at the southern end of the Isthmus of Kra fronting the Bay of Bengal and the Straits of Melaka was further enhanced in her role as entrepôt, by the land routes to Nakorn Si' thammarat, Singora, Petani and Terengganu largely via the Sungai Perlis, Kedah and Muda.³⁵ Its own produce such as rice, tin, timber, rattan, elephants, ivory, wax, dammar, fish, tripang and birds' nests were fed into the network and Indian piece goods and opium were exchanged for some of these and also the products of Petani and northern Sumatra.³⁶ A coastal trade with the ports of peninsular Siam and China also existed.³⁷ With the growth of the East India Company settlement at Pulau Pinang, some of this

³⁰ See Cortesao, *op.cit.* 105, 106; Bowrey, *op.cit.* 259 and Winstedt, 'Notes on the History of Kedah', 157-75.

³¹ Topping reported that about 1,000 pikul originated from the headwaters of the Sungai Muda and that a much smaller quantity came down the Sungai Perai. The Sungai Kerian serviced the rich Selama district, but no figures are available. These rivers are mentioned as tin-producing areas by the Raja of Kedah in 1785. See Topping, *op.cit.* 44 and R.K. to G.G., 24 Shawal, 1199 A.H., SSR, 2, f.35 (FWCP, 2 March 1786).

³² See Anderson, *op.cit.* 166.

³³ See Light to G.G., 23 Jan. 1786, SSR, 1 (FWCP, 25 Jan. 1786).

³⁴ See Anderson, *op.cit.* 168, 169.

³⁵ *Ibid.* 144, 150, 169 and 170. See also A.W. Hamilton, 'The Old Kedah-Patani Trade-Route', *JSBRAS*, 86 (1922), 389-92. For notes on the economic and strategic importance of Kedah and the Isthmus of Kra, see *BP*, II, ii (1911), 42-51 and for information on the trans-Isthmian routes, see *BP*, III, i (1912), 8-47 and G.E. Gerini, 'Historical Retrospect of Junk Ceylon Island', *JSS*, IV (1959), 44-5, 64-72.

³⁶ See Light to Warren Hastings, 17 Jan. 1772, B.M.Add.MS. 29133, ff.8, 8v. This somewhat rosy picture was painted by Light of Kedah's entrepôt trade, but its pattern was undoubtedly true. For details, see *ibid.* and also *BP*, II, iii (1911), 182, 192-3.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

trade was lost, but it found a new market for its rice, cattle, poultry and hogs.³⁸

In 1785 Kedah's population was estimated at 100,000 persons, though this may have been exaggerated.³⁹ Subsequent estimates were in the region of 60,000 persons, mainly of Malay stock but also including Chulias, Chinese, Siamese and Sam-sams. Kangar, Kuala Kedah, Alor Setar and Kota Kuala Muda were the main towns and the Sungai Kedah basin was by far the most populous area.⁴⁰ With the exception of the first, which was served by Kuala Perlis, the others were the commercial and maritime centres, located on navigable rivers and controlling the rice and tin trade and the overland routes to the eastern coast of the Malay Peninsula. All four were seats of central authority at different stages of the period under study.⁴¹ The Setul and Lungu areas were well-known as boat-building centres.⁴²

Political Structure

The political structure of Kedah was typical of the Malay political system,⁴³ in which the largest unit was the *negeri* (state), or more accurately, *negeri dan jajahan2 ta'alok-nya* (state and its dependencies). The word *negeri* was the classificatory prefix used, hence *Negeri Kedah dan jajahan2 ta'alok-nya*. The *negeri* derived its name from the principal river and its territory comprised the river basins and their tributary basins and the adjacent islands.⁴⁴ In descending order of size, the next political unit was the *jajahan* (district/territory) which encompassed a number of *kampung* (villages), the smallest units in the structure. The whole structure

³⁸ See Light to G.G., 23 Jan. 1786, SSR, 2 (FWCP, 2 March 1786); Anderson, *op.cit.* 151 and Topping, *op.cit.* 42-4.

³⁹ See Light to G.G., 15 Feb. 1786, SSR, 2, f.53 (FWCP, 2 March 1786). Another estimate in 1786 by Captain James Scott recorded it as over 40,000 persons. See Anderson, *op.cit.* 51.

⁴⁰ See Anderson, *op.cit.* 144, 146, 148-50 and 168-71 and Topping, *op.cit.*

⁴¹ See below.

⁴² Topping, *op.cit.*

⁴³ For an excellent pioneering study on this important subject, see J.M. Gullick, *Indigenous Political Systems of Western Malaya*, London, 1958.

⁴⁴ See pp. 4-5.

was underlain by the dictates of geography and the use of rivers as the main lines of communication.⁴⁵

At the apex of the structure was the Yang di-Pertuan who bore the personal honorific prefix of Sultan, the personal honorific suffix of Shah and the designation of Raja — a unique combination of Malay, Arabic, Persian and Hindu terms.⁴⁶ According to Gullick's analysis, his functions as leader of a coalition of chiefs were 'to exercise the limited powers of central government, to conduct external relations, to provide leadership in foreign wars and embody and symbolise the unity and welfare of the state'.⁴⁷ He was supported, in theory, by the territorial or district-chiefs⁴⁸ whose functions in their districts were 'local administration, justice [local] defence, revenue collection and general leadership'.⁴⁹ Their authority was exercised at the kampung level by the penghuluz. The major chiefs (who were of royal lineage) were virtually independent rulers in their own districts, and their participation or consent

⁴⁵ See Gullick, *Indigenous Political Systems*. This is an over-simplification because detailed information on the subject is lacking at the moment. It is known, however, that a more intricate and dynamic system was in operation, based largely on Muslim 'ecclesiastical' divisions. Anderson states that prior to 1821, there were 128 mukim (parish) and, 'According to the Quedah Regulations [Undang-Undang Kedah], a mukim is a division of the people, which must consist of not less than fourty-four men who were qualified to perform the ceremonies of their Religion at a Mesjid or Mosque; but it may consist of several hundreds, or even thousands [sic.] If there is no Mosque, no assembly or division of the people can be termed a Mukim . . .'. See Anderson, *op.cit.* 147; also, Crawford *op.cit.* 28. The importance of religious leaders in the mukim cannot be ignored for they were key figures in the socio-political structure of a Muslim state, a fact further evidenced in the two major wars of resistance against Siamese occupation between 1822 and 1841 which were declared as *jihad* and developed in such manner. Furthermore, one also cannot ignore the probability of the adaptation of some features of Siam's administrative system.

⁴⁶ Although each of these terms denoted 'ruler' in their respective cultural contexts, they were used in combination with different functions. The terms Yang di-Pertuan denoted his position above the other chiefs, Sultan, the Muslim Arabic personal honorific prefix, Shah, the Persian personal honorific suffix and Raja, the generic designation of the negeri he ruled, respectively. This is to be seen, for example, in letters in the Straits Settlements Factory Records, addressed to, and received from, Yang di-Pertuan, Sultan Ahmad Tajud-din Halim Shah, Raja Negeri Kedah dan jajahan2 ta'alok-nya.

⁴⁷ Gullick, *Indigenous Political Systems*, 21, 44-51.

⁴⁸ These included the Dato' Penggawa of Telibon and the Orang Kaya of Pulauz Langkawi.

⁴⁹ Gullick, *Indigenous Political Systems*, 22.

was required by custom, for the election or acknowledgement of a new Yang di-Pertuan, the declaration of war and the signing of treaties.⁶⁰

The principal Malay offices of Bendahara, Laksamana, Temenggong and Shahbandar were deeply rooted in the system of government and their functions need no elaboration.⁶¹ More important, perhaps, was the operation of an elaborate and uniform code of laws⁶² that helped maintain the cohesion of the negeri in spite of the political ambitions of its chiefs.

The control of revenue was the key factor in the political structure. Territorial chiefs levied various taxes, a share going to the Raja who, however, derived the major portion of his income from trade farms; the import of opium and the extraction of tin and rattan, which were royal monopolies⁶³ and as farmer of the Bird's Nests Islands.⁶⁴ Around 1785, the collection of bird's nests and bêche de mer from the islands between Pulau Langkawi and Mergui, required the use of about 1,000 perahu and 4,500 men and netted around \$15,000 Spanish annually, excluding the \$5,000 paid as rent to the King of Siam and the payment to the Raja's officials. In addition, he received duties on every perahu and from the sale of cattle and slaves.⁶⁵ A brief observation on some aspects of the feudal nature of Kedah society is provided by James Scott who wrote:

... both persons and property are at the command of the King [Raja] and of course at the command of his officers in succession from the lowest

⁶⁰ Ibid. 54 and subsequent chapters in this study.

⁶¹ Anderson, *op.cit.* 157; see also Bowrey, *op.cit.* 260-84 and F. Light to G.G., 12 Sept. 1786, SSR, 2, ff. 163-70 (FWCP, 13 Dec. 1786). The importance of Chinese and Chulia merchants as farmers, traders, advisers and officials in the general economic and political matrix of Kedah and in South-East Asia as a whole has to be taken into full consideration, but more intensive research remains to be done before a clear picture can be formed. That they played a key role in Kedah politics is to be seen, for example, in C.S. Wong, *A Gallery of Chinese Kapitans*, Singapore, 1963, 47-65; M.L. Wynne, *Triad and Tabut*, Part I, Singapore, 1941, 9-26 and subsequent chapters.

⁶² See R. Winstedt, 'The Kedah Laws', *JMBRAS*, VI, ii (1928), pp. 1-44.

⁶³ See F. Light's Remarks, SSR, 2, f. 38 (FWCP, 2 March 1786).

⁶⁴ See F. Light to G.G. and J. Scott to G.G., cited in Anderson, *op.cit.* Appendix lvii-lviii, lxii. See also, Appendix 5 (b).

⁶⁵ Light to G.G., 12 Sept. 1786, SSR, 2, f.162 (FWCP, 13 Dec. 1786).

to the highest; hence no man will rear what he cannot call his own. Certain months are allowed the many to plant and reap their paddy: and this when stored is sacred, and cannot be taken from their possession; with this exception, all the rest of their time, exertions or acquirements, may be taken by the King or his officers, if so inclined; and as every Governor [territorial chief] commands without restriction the population and produce of the country he governs, nothing restrains their being troublesome but a constant succession to their avarice⁵⁶

The Bunga Emas dan Perak

The *Bunga Emas dan Perak* were the tributary offerings submitted triennially by Kedah to Siam as an acknowledgement of the overlordship of the latter and symbolized a vassal-suzerain relationship.⁵⁷ Its submission also carried the obligation to provide men, money, arms and supplies when required by the suzerain state which, of course, was regulated by the needs of the suzerain state and its power to coerce and enforce its demands.⁵⁸ This was denied by the rulers of Kedah who held that the *Bunga Emas dan Perak* was *tanda sa'pakat dan bersahabat* or a token of friendship and

⁵⁶ See J. Scott to G.G., cited in S. Raffles, *Memoir of the Life and Public Services of Sir Thomas Stamford affies*, London, 1830, 51-2.

⁵⁷ For a good summary presentation of the controversy and the opposing interpretations on this subject, see Mills, op.cit. 43-8. The *Bunga Emas dan Perak* and its accompanying ornamental trappings were valued at between 800 to 1000 Spanish dollars in 1814. (See MacInnes to Clubley, 17 Jan. 1814, *SSR*, 44, f.97 (FCCP, 20 Jan. 1814.) It was generally raised in Kedah by a *havi repai* (poll-tax) which would have had the logical effect of keeping alive the population's awareness of Siamese overlordship. See W.W. Skeat and F.F. Laidlaw, 'The Cambridge University Expedition to the North-Eastern Malay States and to Upper Perak, 1899-1900', *JMBRAS*, XXVI, iv (1964), 132-7; F. Cooray, *The Thai—Our Neighbours*, Kuala Lumpur, 1941, 228-38 and other relevant articles and contemporary accounts for technical details and a fuller account of the practice in Kedah and the other North:ern Malay States. See also Gerini, op.cit. 12-15; and *BP*, II, iv (1911), 132-4, v (1912), 118-23 and note 59.

⁵⁸ This was part of the traditional regional balance of power operating in mainland South-East Asia, held by Burma, Siam and Vietnam. In the period under study, Burma and Siam exercised control in the region to their south through the Governors of Tavoy and Nakorn Si'thammarat respectively. See Salarak, op.cit. 3-207 and VI (1959), 1-215; G.E. Gerini, 'Historical Retrospect of Junk Ceylon Island', *JSS*, IV (1959), 12-17; Hall, *Southeast Asia*; D.K. Wyatt, 'Siam and Laos, 1767-1827', *JSEAH*, IV, ii (1963), 13-32 and Vella, op.cit. 77-114; see also note 10 and below.

alliance, and thus a free-will and complimentary offering, which argument they reinforced by the Siamese practice of returning gifts of around equal value. It would thus seem impossible to believe that the entire practice, common to all the other smaller mainland states and principalities *vis-à-vis* their vassal-suzerain relationship with Siam or Burma, could have been viewed in different light by Siam with regard to Kedah.⁵⁹

The stand taken by Kedah on the origins of the Bunga Emas dan Perak is based on passages in the *Hikayat Mahrong Mahawangsa* or the 'Kedah Annals', which is an interesting indigenous, though by no means ingenious, interpretation on the subject. It is claimed that of the three sons of Kedah's original ruler, the eldest founded Ayuthaya; the second the kingdom of Perak while the youngest succeeded his father in Kedah. The custom is claimed to have originated on the birth of a son to the founder of Ayuthaya, when the Bunga Emas dan Perak was sent by the Kedah ruler as 'play-things' for the child and in return for the costly presents that accompanied the news of its birth. The Ayuthaya dynasty therefore came to be considered by the Kedah *élite* as a collateral branch of the Kedah ruling house, and even though this may seem far-fetched, it was actually cited on a particular occasion.

Historical Background

Kedah has a prominent place in early Malaysian history, having experienced either in full or in part, almost all the historical forces and cultural influences that affected the Malay Peninsula. Some of the earliest known Stone Age sites have been uncovered there⁶⁰ and it can boast of being the only area in the Peninsula with numerous physical and literary evidences of a marked process of

⁵⁹ (See chapter 6). See also A. J. Sturrock (ed.), 'Hikayat Mahrong Mahawangsa', *JSBRAS*, 72 (1916), 37-127 and J. Low, 'A Translation of the Kedah Annals', *JIA*, III (1849), 1-23, 162-81, 253-70, 314-36 and 468-88. See also J. Low, 'On the Ancient Connections Between Kedah and Siam', *JIA*, V (1851); R. Winstedt, 'History of Malay Literature', *JMBRAS*, XVII (1939), 110 and R. Winstedt, 'The Kedah Annals', *JMBRAS*, XVI, ii (1938), 31-5.

⁶⁰ M. Tweedie, *Prehistoric Malaya*, Singapore, 1955, 1-42.

'Indianization'⁶¹ to earn 'the rightful and unchallengeable claim to be the most ancient state' in the country.⁶² While archaeological research postulates the prevalence of Hindu cults, the *Hikayat Maharong Mahawangsa* or the Kedah Annals⁶³ also gives Buddhist titles for the earlier rulers of ancient Kedah. And besides being identified as the northern capital of the Seri Vijayan thalassocracy,⁶⁴ Kedah was also among the first centres in the Peninsula to embrace Islam.⁶⁵

Due to the paucity of source materials, the early history of Kedah and its relations with its neighbours is at present relatively vague and incoherent. On the basis of some archaeological and literary evidence, it has been assumed that early Kedah developed political, economic and cultural links with states in the Isthmus of Kra region and with Siam⁶⁶ and it seems only natural that this pattern was largely dictated by Kedah's geographical contiguity to these states.

Although further research remains to be done on the origin and nature of these links, the evidence suggests that Kedah by the end of the thirteenth century had recognized the overlordship of Siam.⁶⁷ Whether the recognition of Siamese overlordship was spontaneous or demanded, or whether it arose out of reasons of expediency or was the result of invasion is, at the moment, a matter of conjecture. Furthermore, what exactly this recognition of overlordship implied or signified, or what precisely it connoted in terms of sovereignty or dependency, has also been difficult to identify.

However two important developments — the conversion of the

⁶¹ See Q. Wales, 'Archaeological Researches of Ancient Indian Colonization in Malaya', *JMBRAS*, XVIII, ii (1940), 1-85; R. Braddell, 'Notes on Ancient Times in Malaya', *JMBRAS*, XXII, i (1949), 1-16; XXIII, i (1950), 1-36; XXIV, i (1951), 1-27; H.A. Lamb, 'The Temple on the River of Cut Stone', *Malaya in History*, IV, ii (1958), 2-9 and P. Wheatley, *The Golden Kheronesse*, Kuala Lumpur, 1961, xvi-xxxiii, 1-281.

⁶² R. Braddell, 'Most Ancient Kedah', *Malaya in History*, IV, ii (1958), 18.

⁶³ J. Low, 'A Translation of the Kedah Annals' (see note 59).

⁶⁴ Wheatley, *op.cit.* 280-1, 300.

⁶⁵ Winstedt, 'Notes on the History of Kedah', 156.

⁶⁶ See Low, 'Kedah Annals', 486-7; Wheatley, *op.cit.*; Gerini, *op.cit.* 9-21 and Vella, *op.cit.* 59.

⁶⁷ Wheatley, *op.cit.* 301 and Vella, *op.cit.* 59.

Malays to Islam and the rise of Melaka — seem to have altered this pattern. This conversion to Islam, although the exact date is uncertain,⁶⁸ was to have a marked influence on Kedah's relations with Siam, for it added a religious schism to an already existing ethnic distinction from the Siamese and must have tended to aggravate, if not create, among the rulers and rakyat, or people, of Kedah, a feeling of resentment towards the Siamese, whose ways and ceremonies were to a large extent un-Islamic. This drift, intensified by the already-existing differences in language, customs and culture and strengthened, perhaps, by the religious fervour that any conversion normally brings, must have been accentuated with the rise to paramountcy of Melaka in the fifteenth century.

A Raja of Kedah is recorded as having visited Melaka in the reign of Sultan Mahmud (1488-1511)⁶⁹ to obtain the honour of the *nobat*,⁷⁰ which he was accorded and whereby Kedah accepted the overlordship of Melaka.⁷¹ Coming in the wake of Melaka's overwhelming and almost incredible victories over the invading Siamese forces,⁷² it is obvious that by such a move, Kedah hoped to gain the protection of a fellow Malayo-Muslim power that had defeated the forces of the very power that claimed suzerainty over it and thereby freeing itself from these claims. Unfortunately for Kedah, all the hopes that were pinned on the acknowledgement of Melaka's overlordship were blighted by the fall of the latter empire to the Portuguese in 1511. It is clear that Kedah was consequently forced by circumstances to recognize Siamese overlord-

⁶⁸ For example, Winstedt, 'Notes on the History of Kedah', 156, has dated the conversion of the ruler of Kedah as 1474. For its impact see, for example, MacInnes to Clubleby, 17 Jan. 1814, SSR, 14, ff.95-104 (FCCP, 20 Jan. 1814) and J. Low, Journal of a Public Mission to the Raja of Ligor, 10 Aug. 1824, SSR, 98, Appendix 3 (FCCP, 14 Sept. 1824).

⁶⁹ R. Winstedt, 'Malay Rulers of Malacca', *Malaya in History*, VII, ii (July, 1962), 6.

⁷⁰ The *nobat* or the ceremonial royal band is the insignia of royalty and the mark of sovereignty of a Malayo-Muslim ruler. See Tunku Nong Jawa, 'The Kedah and Perak Nobat', *Malaya in History*, VII, ii (July, 1962), 7-11 and N.B. Denys, *A Descriptive Dictionary of British Malaya*, London, 1894, 254.

⁷¹ Winstedt, 'Notes on the History of Kedah', 156. See also R.J. Wilkinson, 'The Malacca Sultanate', *JMBRAS*, XIII, ii (1935), 22-67.

⁷² See G.E. Marrison, 'The Siamese Wars with Malacca during the Reign of Muza'ffar Shah', *JMBRAS*, XXII, i (1949), 61-6 and P.E. Josselyn de Jong and H.C.A. Van Wijk, 'The Malacca Sultanate', *JSEAH*, I, ii (1960), 23-7.

ship again, for Pires, writing just after the fall of Melaka, described it as being 'under the jurisdiction of the King of Siam'⁷³ and Barbosa, although admittedly obtaining his information from Portuguese sailors and sea-captains, wrote of it as 'a place of the Kingdom of Siam'.⁷⁴

In 1611, Kuala Kedah and Kuala Perlis were attacked and burnt by the Portuguese sea captain, Diogo de Medoca Furtado,⁷⁵ and Winstedt has suggested that the Portuguese captain did so on behalf of the King of Siam. 'A Portuguese fleet had just helped Tenasserim to defeat a fleet of the King of Ava, a service that so delighted Tenasserim's then overlord, the King of Siam, that he offered Furtado a title and allowance. Perhaps it was because Kedah was adopting tactics she was often to adopt later and intriguing with Burma against Siam that Furtado sacked her ports.'⁷⁶

Only a few years later, in 1619, Kedah faced another savage attack, this time from Atjeh.⁷⁷ Kedah folk-lore has a number of interesting and even romantic tales of the origins of the Atjehnese conquest and its tragic events. One such tale, corroborated by historical evidence, is the claim that, as Kedah's pepper trade was rivalling that of Atjeh, a full-scale devastation of Kedah's pepper vine took place and many of its inhabitants carried off to Atjeh where years of warfare had depopulated the country.⁷⁸ Sultan

⁷³ Cortesao, *op.cit.* 107.

⁷⁴ See Winstedt, 'Notes on the History of Kedah,' 156.

⁷⁵ *Loc.cit.* A.F. Steuart, *The Founders of Penang and Adelaide*, London, 1901, 11, f.n.1. mentions two attacks writing, 'In 1611 the town was attacked and plundered by Mendez Furtado, and in 1614, it was not only plundered but burnt by Diogo de Mendonca'. There is evidently some confusion in names between Winstedt and Steuart.

⁷⁶ Winstedt, 'Notes on the History of Kedah', 156; see also *BP*, II, iv, 1912, 128.

⁷⁷ The Atjehnese attack on Kedah was part of the imperial policy of Iskandar Muda of Atjeh that led to the conquest of Deli in 1612, the attacks on Johor in 1613 and 1615, his conquest of Pahang in 1618 and of Perak in 1620. For a good account of the rise of Atjehnese power, see Hall, *Southeast Asia*, 321-6. Burney is of the opinion that Siam's pre-occupation with revolts in Cambodia and Laos enhanced Atjeh's sallies into the Malay Peninsula. See *BP*, II, iv (1912), 128.

⁷⁸ These accounts are to be found in a number of papers read to the Kedah Historical Society and which are located in the Kedah Museum, Alor Setar. See also, G.M. Khan, *History of Kedah*, Penang, 1958, 46-8, 116-17 and K. Clark, 'Pinto and Lock in Kedah', *Malaya in History*, IV, ii (July, 1958), 45-7.

Suleiman Shah of Kedah, his children and his principal officers and an estimated 7,000 people were taken captive to Atjeh.⁷⁹

The most significant consequence of the invasion was the course that Kedah was forced to follow to secure herself from further Atjehnese depredations. The only power from whom she could seek assistance was Siam, and it was in this direction that she turned. Sultan Suleiman's successor was recorded as having appealed for Siamese protection, and by 1621 some 2,000 Siamese troops were mentioned as having been on their way to help defend Kedah from further attacks.⁸⁰ These developments are of unique interest in that they reveal that Kedah's inability to defend itself pushed it to the paradoxical position of seeking defensive assistance from the power it most resented because of the influence and pressure exerted over it, although it was realized that the price to be paid for this assistance would be the acknowledgement of Siam's overlordship. It seems quite certain that Kedah thereby moved closer into the Siamese orbit of influence, a move which would have entailed the sending of the Bunga Emas dan Perak to Ayuthia and Siam's insistence that Kedah was a tributary state of hers, subject to the loyalty and the requisitions deemed obligatory in a suzerain-vassal relationship.

Following disturbances and a succession dispute in Ayuthia between 1628 and 1630, out of which the P'ya Kalahom usurped the throne and assumed the title of King Prasat T'ong, the tributary states of Siam took the opportunity of exercising their indepen-

⁷⁹ BP II, iv (1912), 128. Burney quotes Commodore Beaulieu who visited Atjeh and Pulau Langkawi in 1621, writing, '... [Sultan Iskandar] has so ravaged and laid waste the country [Kedah] that the remaining inhabitants were reduced to eat the leaves of trees, and were so terrified that they fled to the mountains on the appearance of the smallest boat, imagining all who landed in their country to be either Achinese or their partisans ...'.

⁸⁰ BP, II, iv (1911), 128. It is apparent by Beaulieu's evidence that by 1621, whatever claims of dominance that Atjeh could make over Kedah, were over. Schouten's description of Kedah as being subject to Atjeh in 1663 is incorrect, for all the evidence in the *Dagh-Register* points to the contrary (See Winstedt, 'Notes on the History of Kedah', 162-9). Steuart, *op.cit.* 11, states that 'The Gold and Silver Trees were not sent by the Raja of Kedah until about 1737, after the decline of the Achinese power'. This is an error because the *Dagh-Register* has it that the Raja sent the Bunga Emas dan Perak in 1660 (see Winstedt, 'Notes on the History of Kedah', 166) and Bowrey mentions that it was sent around the time he was in Kedah (see Bowrey, *op.cit.* 275).

dence.⁸¹ In 1630 Petani, and later Singora and Nakorn Si'thammarat asserted their independence by refusing to send tributary gifts to the new King, but the latter were brought back to the fold by a punitive military expedition in 1632.⁸² Petani, however, successfully held out and inflicted severe defeats on Siamese troops sent from Ayuthia in 1632 and 1634.⁸³ Various references indicate that Kedah also took the opportunity to cut off its ties of dependence. Prior to attacking Petani, Prasat T'ong was recorded as having 'made peace with Queda [Kedah] and Sangora [Singora].'⁸⁴ In 1636, when extensive preparations for a third campaign against Petani were being made, the Raja of Kedah is reputed to have mediated between Siam and Petani, the outcome of which was the sending of Siamese ambassadors to Petani who told 'the Petanese that the war had been prevented by the King of Quedah [Kedah] and the [predictions of] Siamese priests'. Petani then agreed to send the Bunga Emas dan Perak to Ayuthia.⁸⁵

In March 1641 the Raja of Kedah was informed by the Dutch of their capture of Melaka from the Portuguese, and he was quick to welcome about 300 invalid Dutch soldiers to recuperate at Pulau Langkawi and Kedah and to grant permission for supplies to be sent to Melaka.⁸⁶ On 6 July, he received an embassy from the Dutch Governor-General at Batavia and entered into a trade agreement with the Dutch East India Company, promising to sell half of Kedah's tin to the Company and to admit only those traders who held Dutch passes.⁸⁷ Sultan Rijalu'd-din Muhammed Shah

⁸¹ See Wood, *op.cit.* 172-8.

⁸² *Ibid.* 178.

⁸³ *Ibid.* 179.

⁸⁴ F.H. Giles, 'A Critical Analysis of Van Vliet's "Historical Account of Siam in the 17th century"', *JSS*, VII (1959), 130. Winstedt, 'Notes on the History of Kedah', 162, wrongly writes that 'in 1634 the Siamese had sufficient control over the State [i.e. Kedah] to press its Malays into the forces which the Lord of the White Elephant was assembling to attack Patani'. There is no such evidence (see Giles, *op.cit.* and Wood, *op.cit.* 179).

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ MacHobian (trans.) 'The Siege and Capture of Malacca, 1640-1641', *JMBRAS*, XIV, i (1936), 50.

⁸⁷ Winstedt, 'Notes on the History of Kedah', 162-3.

who was acknowledged Raja in June 1642,⁸⁸ renewed the commercial agreements with the Dutch which at least on paper gave them a considerable hold over Kedah's exports of tin and her foreign trade.⁸⁹ These gestures by Sultan Rijalu'd-din and his predecessor towards the Dutch seem to have been motivated by a desire to be on friendly terms with them in order to be able to call on their assistance in the event of pressure from Siam,⁹⁰ especially as it came in the wake of their capture of Melaka, thus giving rise to a new element in the balance of power. The relative state of independence that Kedah maintained after 1630 is further evidenced in 1648 when Siam wanted the Dutch 'to cooperate with the Siamese forces to subdue first Singgora and then Kedah'.⁹¹ The policy of friendship with the Dutch, however, paid its dividends for they sent assistance only against Singora.⁹²

A distinct change in Kedah's external relations is indicated after the death of Sultan Rijalu'd-din in 1651. In 1652 his successor, Sultan Muhiyu'd-din Shah, appears to have reversed his predecessors' policy of friendship towards the Dutch, when he held some Dutchmen prisoner at Bukit Tinggi, his capital, and obtained florins 55,784.8.8 as ransom.⁹³ In 1658 nine members of the *Hoorn* were murdered by some Kedah Malays, and in May 1659 the Dutch attempted a blockade to obtain retribution. In what seemed an expedient move, Sultan Muhiyu'd-din sent the Bunga Emas dan Perak to Siam in September and in January 1661 rejected

⁸⁸ He is the earliest Malay Raja on record so far to have visited India and is credited as being responsible for the compilation of Kedah's port-laws (see *ibid.* 165, 157).

⁸⁹ The control that the Dutch sought to exert over Kedah's trade was by insisting that all foreign ships calling at Kedah should either possess a Dutch pass or be directed to Malacca first before being allowed to trade in Kedah. In practice, however, Arab, Indian and Kedah merchants successfully evaded these measures unless they were unfortunate enough to be confronted by Dutch patrols (see Winstedt, 'Notes on the History of Kedah', 163-75).

⁹⁰ It is of interest to note that Kedah is not referred to by the Dutch as a tributary state of Siam in 1641 (see MacHobian (trans.) 'The Siege and Capture of Malacca', and 'Commissary Justus Schouten's Report of his visit to Malacca', *JM-BRAS*, XIV, i (1936), 11-68, 69-166).

⁹¹ Winstedt, 'Notes on the History of Kedah', 165. Italics are mine. Singora had rebelled against Siamese authority in 1648 and it was only long after 1655 that the Siamese reasserted their hold. See Wood, *op.cit.* 183-4.

⁹² Wood, *op.cit.* 183-4. Winstedt, 'Notes on the History of Kedah', 165.

⁹³ *Ibid.* 166.

Dutch moves to reach a settlement.⁹⁴ That the sending of the Bunga Emas dan Perak seems to have been aimed at gaining the favour of Siam, motivated by the fear of increased pressure from the Dutch rather than as a result of Siamese demands, is evidenced by the Raja's failure to reply to Siam's demand for a mutual exchange of population.⁹⁵ In 1661, not only did Kedah begin to help Perak win her freedom from Achinese control⁹⁶ but it adopted a vigorous anti-Dutch policy that saw the harbouring of Malays who had burnt the Dutch factory at Thalang, the despatch of two vessels to Melaka to capture some of its citizens, though unsuccessful, and the seizure of two ships from Deli bound for Melaka.⁹⁷

Kedah's distance from Melaka, its proximity to the Coramandel Coast and the transporting of goods overland to smaller rivers where they were loaded onto vessels, enabled it to render the Dutch blockade relatively ineffective; Kedah tin, for example, was being sold at Melaka by Javanese merchants.⁹⁸ Failing in this the Dutch attempted to solve their problem by entering into treaty relationships with Siam in 1664 by which they obtained the right to trade with those Malay States under Siamese suzerainty; but as Hall puts it, Siamese overlordship 'meant little or nothing in practice, and all the Dutch efforts to coerce the little state failed'.⁹⁹

Yet another *volte-face* in Kedah's policy towards the Dutch took place in January 1665, when the Raja of Kedah sent two *wakil* to Melaka proposing a renewal of friendship.¹⁰⁰ This move was followed up in May 1668 by the despatch of Raja Setia Pahlawan, Timsoura Byera and Megat Kudus to Batavia reconcile their dif-

⁹⁴ *Loc.cit.*

⁹⁵ *Loc.cit.* The demand for a mutual exchange of peoples is an interesting point for it was a feature of Siam's expansionist policy of assimilating the Malays who were sent to Siam and increasing the size of the Siamese population in Kedah *vis-à-vis* the Malay population.

⁹⁶ Winstedt, 'Notes on the History of Kedah', 166.

⁹⁷ *Loc.cit.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.* 168; see also D.K. Bassett, 'The British Country Trader and Sea Captain in Southeast Asia in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries', *Journal of the Historical Society, University of Malaya*, I, ii (1961), 9-14; Bowrey, *op.cit.* 259-76 and Clark, *op.cit.* 45-7.

⁹⁹ Hall, *Southeast Asia*, 326.

¹⁰⁰ Winstedt, 'Notes on the History of Kedah', 167.

ferences and to restore their friendship.¹⁰¹ Although the Dutch authorities did not react favourably, realizing that even if peace were made it would always be necessary to maintain a blockade to effect a semi-monopoly of Kedah's tin-trade,¹⁰² these overtures were soon to prove invaluable to Kedah.

In all probability, this change in policy was caused by pressure from Siam. There are strong indications that the Raja was growing tired of increasing Siamese demands and decided to disregard them as well as to exercise his freedom. Between 1671 and 1673 he stopped the sending of the Bunga Emas dan Perak.¹⁰³ When Siam retaliated in January 1674 by sending twenty armed perahu on a punitive expedition as well as to force him to send the traditional gifts of dependence, the preparations that were made at Kuala Kedah to meet this threat obliged the Siamese force to withdraw.¹⁰⁴ Kedah's position in fact, was further strengthened by a show of assistance by the Dutch blockading force.¹⁰⁵

Kedah continued in this state of independence although in constant fear of a Siamese invasion. Rumours of a threatened full-scale invasion in 1677 caused the Raja to evacuate the capital and the other main centres, but the expected onslaught failed to materialize as Siam became involved in a war with Pegu.¹⁰⁶ It is likely that it was the extensive preparation being made by the Siamese for the war that sparked off these rumours, for it is known that the King of Siam actually made friendly overtures to the Raja, presumably to isolate Kedah from Pegu.¹⁰⁷ That Kedah was able to preserve this state of independence is corroborated by Bort's reference to it in 1678 as 'a rebellious vassal of Siam',¹⁰⁸ and Hamilton's description of it when he visited Kedah in 1694,¹⁰⁹ as having

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.* 168.

¹⁰² *Loc.cit.* For details of the Dutch blockade, see *ibid.* 169-75 and M.J. Bremner (trans.), 'Report of Governor Balthasar Bort on Malacca, 1678', *JMBRAS*, V, i (1927), 104-204.

¹⁰³ See Bowrey, *op.cit.* 266, note 3.

¹⁰⁴ *Loc.cit.*

¹⁰⁵ *Loc.cit.*

¹⁰⁶ *Loc.cit.*

¹⁰⁷ *Loc.cit.*

¹⁰⁸ See Bremner, *op.cit.* 132.

¹⁰⁹ See Bowrey, *op.cit.* 273, note 2.

thrown off Siamese tributary claims during Siam's involvement in the long war with Pegu.¹¹⁰

In 1681, we have what is, perhaps, the earliest reference to a disputed succession in Kedah. Following what evidently must have been an unsuccessful bid for the rulership, a younger brother of Sultan Zia' u'd-din Mukarram Shah,¹¹¹ with the title of Dato' Padang Seri Jana, began to make efforts, with the help of Bugis mercenaries from Selangor, to overthrow his brother. In 1681 he also managed to obtain Dutch permission for asylum in the Dindings.¹¹² In 1682, 'he went to the Dutch force blockading Perak and wanted permission to resort to Selangor' to recruit Bugis mercenaries 'declaring that with two ships and three to four hundred Bugis he could set himself up as the King [Raja] of Kedah, where he had many adherents'.¹¹³ Fortunately for Sultan Zia' u'd-din, little of his story was believed by the Dutch and he was refused permission to use the Dindings as his base.¹¹⁴ Although nothing more seems to have been heard of the Dato's plans,¹¹⁵ it is of interest as an instance of a power-struggle in Kedah and the disputant's planned resort to external mercenary help in his attempt to establish himself as Raja.

¹¹⁰ A. Hamilton, *A New Account of the East Indies*, Vol II, London, 1930, 39, ed. W. Forster. It is interesting to note that M. Chaumont, in 1685, and M. Choisy, in 1686, on the basis of Siamese claims, mention Kedah as being tributary to Siam, whereas M. Tachard in 1687 and M. Loubère in 1688 do not include Kedah in their lists of Siamese tributary states. See *BP*, II, iv (1912), 129-30.

¹¹¹ Ref. The Kedah Genealogical Trees; cited in J. Bastin, 'Problems of Personality in the Reinterpretation of Modern Malayan History', *Malayan and Indonesian Studies*, eds. J.S. Bastin and R. Roolvink, London, 1964, Appendix A. B and C.

¹¹² Winstedt, 'Notes on the History of Kedah', 176. See also W.E. Maxwell, 'The Dutch in Perak', *JSBRAS*, 10 (1882), 245-65 and 'Dutch Occupation of the Dindings', *JSBRAS*, II (1883), 169-70.

¹¹³ *Ibid.* At this juncture, it would be worth remembering that by the end of the seventeenth century, the Bugis had begun to establish enclaves in the Malay Peninsula. (See *ibid.*, Hall, *Southeast Asia*, 328-9; R. Winstedt, 'History of Johore', *JMBRAS*, X, iii (1932) 51-70; R. Winstedt and R. J. Wilkinson, 'History of Perak', *JMBRAS*, XII, i (1934), 61-5 and R. Winstedt, 'History of Selangor', *JMBRAS*, XII, iii (1934), 1-34 and R. Winstedt, 'A History of Malaya', *JMBRAS*, XIII, i (1935), 150-63. Judging from the Dato' Padang Seri Jana's plans to use their services against his brother, their fame as warriors and mercenaries must have been widespread in the Malay Peninsula.

¹¹⁴ Winstedt, 'Notes on the History of Kedah', 176.

¹¹⁵ *Loc.cit.*

The use of foreign mercenaries and the obtaining of external help to settle political claims, as the Dato' Padang Seri Jana had planned, is to be seen in another dispute over the Kedah succession on the death of Sultan Abdullah al-Mu'azzam Shah¹¹⁶ in 1723.¹¹⁷ In the ensuing contest between two of his sons, Muhammed Jiwa, the elder, prudently resorted to using Bugis mercenaries from Selangor — a move which tipped the balance in his favour and enabled him to secure the rulership, taking the title of Sultan Muhammed Jiwa Zainal Abidin Mu'azzam Shah. His position was immediately challenged by the younger brother who, however, found the odds against him and was forced to leave Kedah after a month's unsuccessful fighting. About a year later, after Sultan Muhammed had dispensed with the services of the Bugis mercenaries,¹¹⁸ the younger brother returned to Kedah in force with a strong body of Minangkabau and Bugis mercenaries and succeeded in securing a foothold.¹¹⁹ Sultan Muhammed once again resorted to the Bugis mercenaries from Selangor and successfully put an end to this bold threat after two years of fighting which caused grave inroads into Kedah's economy.¹²⁰

While Sultan Muhammed Jiwa was busy consolidating his position and restoring Kedah's economy to normalcy, events were taking place in Burma that were destined to have serious repercussions on Kedah. In 1739 the Governor of Pegu rebelled against

¹¹⁶ Ref. the Kedah Genealogical Trees in Bastin and Roolvink, *op.cit.* Appendix A, B and C.

¹¹⁷ Winstedt, 'Notes on the History of Kedah', 177.

¹¹⁸ Bugis sources relate that the mercenaries who fought for Muhammed Jiwa were led by the famous five brothers, Upu Daeng Parani, Upu Daeng Menambon, Upu Daeng Merewan, Upu Daeng Chelak and Upu Daeng Kemasi. They are said to have been promised fifteen *bahara* (a *bahara* is equivalent to 400 lbs.) of dollars as payment for their services, but of which Sultan Muhammed paid up only three, asking for time to settle the rest. (See Winstedt, 'Notes on the History of Kedah', 177 and Raja Ali Al-Haji Riau, *Tuhfat al-Nafis* (Singapore, 1965, romanized by Munir Ali). Surprisingly, despite the pro-Bugis bias of these sources (see chapter 2), it is admitted that the five brothers went to Kedah not on their own initiative or with imperial aims, but purely in their capacity as mercenaries. Hall, *Southeast Asia*, 329, in the course of tracing Bugis ascendancy in the Peninsula, has wrongly interpreted their participation in the dispute as leading to their domination over Kedah.

¹¹⁹ Winstedt, 'Notes on the History of Kedah', 177-8.

¹²⁰ *Loc.cit.*

the King of Burma but was subsequently murdered in 1740, while his successor, an appointee of the Burmese king, also shared the same fate.¹²¹ In 1742, a priest became King of an independent Pegu, with the title of Saming T'ok or Mintra and set in motion a chain of events that saw the brief rise of the supremacy of Pegu. He was succeeded by King P'ya Dala whose ambitions led to the capture of Ava and the Burmese King in 1752, and the latter's death in 1754 saw the end to the last line of the Pagan dynasty.¹²²

In 1753, a new Burmese hero in the person of Maung Aung Zeya, better known as Alaungpaya, re-took Ava and founded the dynasty that was to rule Burma till the deposition of King Thibaw by the British in 1885. Initially, the plans of the ambitious Alaungpaya led to the subordination of Pegu and to the extension of suzerainty over adjacent border states like Manipur, Nan and Chieng-sen and the Laotian principalities, leaving unconquered only Chieng-mai and Siam.¹²³ His goal, as was probably to be expected of the founder of a new dynasty, was the conquest and subordination of the traditional enemy, Siam. The opportunity to effect this came in 1759 when, on the pretext of capturing some rebels who had escaped to the then Siamese port of Mergui, the latter was occupied, thus sparking off a new series of wars that continued until the death of Hsinbysin in 1776.¹²⁴ The Burmese forces crossed the Isthmus of Kra, and after routing the Siamese forces sent in defence and capturing Nakorn Si'thammarat,¹²⁵ headed north for Ayuthaya. Alaungpaya laid siege to the Siamese capital but was very shortly forced to retreat on account of illness. The march back was accompanied by its apparent vicissitudes, culminating in the death of Alaungpaya in May 1760.¹²⁶

Manglok, his son and successor, was faced with rebellions, but by 1762 had regained control over the whole realm except for Tavoy. By the middle of 1763, he had even extended Burmese

¹²¹ See Salarak, *op.cit.* 185-6, 196-200.

¹²² *Ibid.* 200-4 and Scott, *op.cit.* 1-143.

¹²³ See Salarak, *op.cit.* 1-3, 14.

¹²⁴ For other contributory factors see *ibid.* 5, 14.

¹²⁵ See *BP*, III i (1912), 3.

¹²⁶ Wood, *op.cit.* 243 and Salarak, *op.cit.* 12-13, 15.

suzerainty over Chieng-mai and Luang Prabang. On his sudden death in December 1763 he was succeeded by his brother, Hsinbysin, an able and talented leader ingrained with ideas of Burmese superiority and possessing the experience derived from accompanying his father on the last invasion. By March 1764 he had decided that Alaungpaya's failure had to be avenged and Siam brought under Burmese hegemony.¹²⁷

Hsinbysin laid extremely well-calculated plans for the invasion and re-organized the internal administration so as to prevent any threat to his position when his armies were to be away.¹²⁸ The elaborate invasion plans entailed a northern army moving on Ayuthaya from its north via the Shan states and Chieng-mai and a southern army cutting across the Isthmus of Kra, one section via the Three Pagoda Pass and the other from Tavoy,¹²⁹ and then heading north to complete the pincer attack.¹³⁰

By the early part of 1765 both armies were *en route*, bringing the northern and peninsular states and principalities into subjection and strengthening their numbers by forced conscription in all occupied territory.¹³¹ Despite brave defensive measures by the Siamese to stall the invaders on both fronts, by the end of January 1766, the ably-led Burmese were before the walls of Ayuthaya. A determined siege was laid which saw the display of brilliant strategy and organization on both sides and which drew heavily on the will and courage of the inveterate foes. Burmese superiority in arms and logistics, however, carried the day and Ayuthaya fell on 17 April 1767.¹³² And with it came the humiliating end to its ancient royal house, the investment of its capital and the imposition of a puppet ruler — the fulfilment of Burma's historic destiny.

¹²⁷ See *ibid.* 19, 62.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.* 19.

¹²⁹ Earlier, the Governor of Tavoy, fearful of the Burmese threat, had sent an embassy to King Ekat'at at Siam offering tribute and seeking protection. Tavoy, however, fell to Burmese arms and the Governor fled to Mergui. On the Siamese refusing to surrender him, Mergui and Tennasserim were attacked and occupied. See Wood, *op.cit.* 243.

¹³⁰ Salarak, *op.cit.* 19-29, 63-4 and Wood, *op.cit.* 244.

¹³¹ See Salarak, *op.cit.* 19-55, 63-6, for full details of the invasion. See also, Wood, *op.cit.* 244-9.

¹³² For full details of the siege, see Salarak, *op.cit.* 32-55, 65-6.

With the fall of Ayuthaya, Kedah, as well as Petani, took the opportunity to exercise full independence from Siamese claims of suzerainty,¹³³ but on the other hand, the overwhelming Burmese victory now obliged Sultan Muhammed to recognize the overlordship of Burma and the Bunga Emas dan Perak was prudently sent to Ava.¹³⁴ The relative ease with which P'ya Taksin defeated the Burmese army of occupation and assumed the title of King of Siam¹³⁵ was to have serious forebodings for Kedah. Initially, P'ya Taksin was busy consolidating his position and re-unifying central and northern Siam, but by the end of 1768 he was leading a strong military expedition to reincorporate Nakorn Si'thammarat, whose Governor had immediately prior to the fall of Ayuthaya taken advantage of Siam's critical position to declare his independence.¹³⁶ This P'ya Taksin achieved with ease after which it is clear that Kedah and Petani were required to re-affirm Siamese overlordship.¹³⁷ Sultan Muhammed, fully conscious of P'ya Taksin's brilliant military leadership, backed by a formidable and highly-successful army, adopted the most expedient line. Reluctant as he must have been to accept Siamese overlordship once again, he considered giving in to P'ya Taksin's demand for tributary offerings 'as a measure of indispensable policy on his part to appease so powerful a neighbour at what appeared . . . a cheap rate, rather than by resistance, to involve himself and country in inevitable ruin'.¹³⁸ Thus, despite whatever views he held of the new Siamese leader,¹³⁹ he was forced to acquiesce in the demand and the Bunga Emas dan Perak was consequently sent to Siam.¹⁴⁰

The Burmese had been unable to check the rise of P'ya Taksin, for they found themselves on the defensive between 1766 and 1768

¹³³ Vella, *op.cit.* 59.

¹³⁴ See Light to G.G., 12 Sept. 1786, SSR, 2, f.172 (FWCP, 13 Dec. 1786). Light wrote that after the destruction of Siam the King of Ava demanded the Token of Homage from Queda [Kedah], and received the 'Gold and Silver Tree'.

¹³⁵ See Wood, *op.cit.* 251-3.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.* 254.

¹³⁷ Vella, *op.cit.* 59.

¹³⁸ MacInnes to Clubley, 17 Jan. 1814, SSR, 44, f. 98 (FCCP, 20 Jan. 1814).

¹³⁹ See chapter 6.

¹⁴⁰ MacInnes to Clubley, 17 Jan. 1814, SSR, 44, f.98 (FCCP, 20 Jan. 1814); also Light to G.G., 12 Sept. 1786, SSR, 2, f. 172 (FCCP, 13 Dec. 1786).

in the face of Chinese attempts to capture Ava, and it was only after the Chinese suffered a defeat in 1769 and sued for peace in 1770, that Hsinbyshin was free to focus his attention on Siam.¹⁴¹ The offensive against Siam was renewed and despite meeting relatively determined opposition from P'ya Taksin, it was only on Hsinbyshin's death in 1776 that the wars were called off.¹⁴² In the series of Burmese thrusts into Siamese territory and Siamese counter-attacks, Sultan Muhammed found Kedah's position as critical as it was to be in later years, and in the face of both Burmese and Siamese assertions of suzerainty and demands for tributary service, he, wisely we are told, 'kept peace with both. Paying homage sometimes to one and sometimes to the other and often to both.'¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ See Hall, *Southeast Asia*, 389-93; Hall, *Burma*, 91; Chakrabongse, *op.cit.* 71-6; Salarak, *op.cit.* 68-86, 87-102 and K. Sukabanij, 'Siamese Documents Concerning Francis Light', *Papers on Malayan History*, Singapore, 1962, 2-3, ed. K.G. Tregonning.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ Light to G.G., 12 Sept. 1786, SSR, 2, f. 172 (FWCP, 13 Dec. 1786).

II

THE LEASE OF KUALA KEDAH

ON 18 March 1771, Sultan Muhammed Jiwa Zainal Abidin Mu'azzam Shah addressed the Governor of Madras appealing for the assistance of the English East India Company to help suppress a rebellion then ensuing in Kedah.¹ Almost simultaneously, he despatched an emissary to some English merchants present at Atjeh with a force of sepoy to offer commercial concessions in Kedah in return for aid in quelling the insurrection.² The circumstances which led Sultan Muhammed to make these unprecedented moves as well as the consequent developments are of singular importance, and although among the more thoroughly studied episodes of Malaysian history, the problem is worth re-examining here.

Most writers on eighteenth-century Malaysian history have relied to quite a large extent on Malay chronicles as they are probably the only sources available that give an insight into the complex pattern of relations within and among the Malay States themselves. In reconstructing the history of Kedah, in particular, heavy reliance has been placed on the *Tuhfat al-Nafis*,³ and it is largely on this source that the background to, and the events of, 1771 have so far been built.

The *Tuhfat al-Nafis* relates that in 1770, Raja Haji, the famous Bugis warrior, persuaded his brother, Sultan Sala'u'd-din of Selangor, to demand from Kedah the payment of the debt of twelve

¹ See Du Pre to Monckton, 23 Feb. 1772, SFR, 15, f.2 (FSGCP, 9 Feb. 1772).

² See Light to Warren Hastings, 17 Jan. 1772, BM.Add.MS.29133, f.10.

³ Raja Ali Al-Haji Riau, *Tuhfat al-Nafis* (Singapura, 1965, romanized by Munir Ali). See also Raja Ali Haji, 'Tuhfat al-Nafis', *JMBRAS*, X, ii (1932), ed. R. Winstedt; and Raja Ali Haji, 'Silsilah Melaya dan Bugis dan Sakalian Raja-raja-nya', *JMBRAS*, IV, iii (1926), 339-81, trans. H. Overbeck.

bahara of dollars still outstanding for Bugis help rendered in 1724.⁴ The Raja of Kedah refused to meet the demand whereupon the Bugis forces invaded Kedah and brought it under their control.⁵ Strongly disagreeing with Raja Ali Haji's re-enactment of the 'invasion' of 1770⁶ and the conclusions of historians who have based their arguments on the *Tuhfat al-Nafis* are the testimonies of Francis Light, who was in Kedah in 1771 and 1772,⁷ and Edward Monckton, who was there in 1772.⁸ Light's account⁹ is far more reliable than that in the *Tuhfat al-Nafis* for he lacked any bias when he wrote a near eye-witness account only a short while after the events of 1771. On the other hand, Raja Ali Haji's account, written about ninety-four years after the event, was to a large extent aimed at glorifying the achievements of his ancestors.¹⁰

Since there were no children by his royal marriage, Sultan

⁴ See chapter 1.

⁵ Raja Ali Haji, *Tuhfat al-Nafis*, 170-5; also J.S. Bastin, 'Problems of Personality in the Reinterpretation of Malayan History' in *Malayan and Indonesian Studies*, eds. J. Bastin and R. Roolvink, London, 1964, 147-9.

⁶ Winstedt, 'A History of Malaya', 155-6; Winstedt, 'Notes on the History of Kedah', 178; R. Winstedt, *History of Malaya*, Singapore, 1962, 149; Hall, *Southeast Asia*, 331; B. Harrison, *Southeast Asia*, London, 1957, 153; K.G. Tregonning, *History of Malaya*, Singapore, 1964, 63; K.G. Tregonning, *The British in Malaya*, Tuscon, 1965, 15; and Bastin in *Malayan and Indonesian Studies*, 147, all wrongly state that the 'invasion' took place in 1770. The Bugis came to Kedah in 1771 (see Du Pre to Monckton, 23 Feb. 1772, SFR, 15, f.2 (FSGCP, 9 Feb. 1772).

⁷ See Light to Messrs. Jourdain, Sullivan and De Souza, 17 Aug. 1771 and 25 Nov. 1771; Light to Jourdain, 25 Nov. 1771 and Light to De Souza, 25 Nov. 1771, SFR, 15, unfolioed (FSGCP, 9 Feb. 1772), and BM.Add.MS.29133, ff.8-11v.

⁸ See Monckton to Du Pre, 22 April 1772, and 2 May 1772, SFR, 15, ff.17-101 (FSGCP, 25 June 1772) and Monckton to Du Pre, 13 Aug. 1772, SFR, 15, ff.145-8 (FSGCP, Oct. 1772).

⁹ BM.Add.MS.29133, ff.8-11v.

¹⁰ While not disregarding the value of the *Tuhfat al-Nafis* as a historical source, it is essential to bear a few points in mind. It was penned at Riau by Raja Ali Al-Haji Riau, a grandson of the famous Raja Haji himself, and as a member of the Bugis royal family, the author has tended to be very pro-Bugis in approach and has interpreted all events from their point of view. The exploits of the five brothers and of Raja Haji, for example, receive much colour and they themselves are highly glorified. Furthermore, the *Tuhfat al-Nafis* was written in 1865 and the compiler, at least in relation to Kedah, was expressing in words, events that had taken place between 94 and 154 years earlier, and even though he may have based his work on earlier Malay and Bugis sources, Raja Ali Haji must have resorted to oral traditions and to tales of heroes of old.

Muhammed Jiwa chose a son of his first cousin to succeed him to the throne.¹¹ Later, however, he had a son, Tunku Abdullah, born to him by one of his *gundek* and 'of whom he grew so fond' that he eventually put aside his original nominee for the succession and publicly declared that Abdullah be his heir and successor.¹² As Sultan Muhammed advanced in age,¹³ there grew up powerful factions who began to threaten his rule and there are strong indications that this was essentially due to his choice of Tunku Abdullah as the new heir.¹⁴ In 1770,¹⁵ finding himself too old to administer the affairs of the entire *negeri* alone and especially in the face of this opposition, Sultan Muhammed passed on to Tunku Abdullah the rulership of the whole of Kedah, south of and including the Sungai Kedah basin, while he retained the rest, comprising the districts of Setul, Perlis and Kubang Pasu.¹⁶ A very significant

¹¹ BM.Add.MS.29133, f.9.

¹² BM.Add.MS.29133, f.9, Tunku Abdullah's birth can be safely placed at 1750, for in 1772, Monckton described him as aged 22. (See Monckton to Du Pre, 22 April 1772, SFR, 15, f.83 (FSGCP, 25 June 1772.) Sultan Muhammed's plans for Tunku Abdullah's marriage to a Selangor princess miscarried, after which he had him married to the daughter of the Laksamana. (See BM.Add.MS.29133, f.9v). Winstedt, 'Notes on the History of Kedah', 178, states that the marriage to the Selangor princess did take place, in 1742. Both these facts are incorrect for Light says the marriage never took place, while Monckton confirms his marriage to the Laksamana's daughter. Furthermore, in 1742, Tunku Abdullah was yet to be born.

¹³ While various Kedah sources place Sultan Muhammed's decease wrongly at 1760, they are agreed on his accession which has been placed at around 1710. This would mean that Sultan Muhammed was about 72 at the time Light and Monckton were in Kedah. This tallies with their description of him being 'old', 'infirm', 'advanced in age' and 'cannot last many years'. See the Kedah Genealogical Tables (Appendix A, B and C) in Bastin (ed.), *Malayan and Indonesian Studies*. See also, Light to Warren Hastings, B.M.Add.M.S.29133 and Monckton to Du Pre, 22 April 1772, SFR, 15, ff.82, 83 (FSGCP, 22 June 1772).

¹⁴ BM.Add.MS.29133, f.9.

¹⁵ See Light to G.G., 12 Sept. 1786, SSR, 2, f.161 (FWCP, 13 Dec. 1786).

¹⁶ BM.Add.MS.29133, ff.9-9v. By this arrangement, Sultan Muhammed would continue in his capacity as Raja of Kedah, while Tunku Abdullah would have assumed the title of Yang-di-Pertuan Muda or Sultan Muda, maintaining authority over the delegated area. Under normal circumstances, the Raja Muda would become Raja on the ruler's decease. This instance of the appointment of the Raja Muda to the position of Yang di-Pertuan Muda was necessitated by force of circumstances. Sultan Muhammed had another son born by a second

point made by Light was that almost immediately after this delegation to Tunku Abdullah had been effected, many of the Sultan Muhammed's relatives, taking advantage of his old age and infirmities, decided to depose Tunku Abdullah, 'whom they all hated'.¹⁷ Thinking that they should oust Tunku Abdullah without any difficulty and place their nominee for the succession on the throne, these relations made secret arrangements and obtained the services of Bugis mercenaries from Selangor and Perak to fight for them, promising that 'as soon as they got possession of the King's person they should have the plunder of all the Chooliahs [Chulias] and Chinese. The Bugis came . . .'.¹⁸

This is Light's on the spot account of the reasons behind the troubles of 1771.¹⁹ Nowhere in their letters and accounts did Light or Monckton make any reference to the debt of twelve *ba-*

gundek. (See Light to G.G., 12 Sept. 1786, SSR, 2, f.161 (FWCP, 13 Dec 1786). This was Tunku Diya'u'd-din, born in 1754. (See Monckton to Du Pre, 22 April, 1772, SFR, 15, f.83 (FSGCP, 25 June 1772).) Fearing that rivalry for the Rajaship would develop between Abdullah and Diya'u'd-din on his death, Sultan Muhammed had worked out this arrangement, whereby Abdullah was appointed Yang di-Pertuan Muda and Diya'u'd-din, the Raja Muda. On Sultan Muhammed's decease, Abdullah would become Raja of Kedah while Diya'u'd-din would either continue as Raja Muda or assume the title of Yang di-Pertuan Muda, holding authority over Setul, Perlis and Kubang Pasu, a territorial division later referred to as Negeri Perlis. See Monckton to Du Pre, 22 April 1772, SFR, 15, f.83 (FSGCP, 25 June 1772) and BM.Add.MS.29133, ff.9-9v. For a further discussion of this, see chapter 5. The custom of the appointment of the Raja Muda to the position of Yang di-Pertuan Muda is indicated by Bowrey as being practised at the time he visited Kedah in 1665 (see Bowrey, *Geographical Account*, 260, 266).

¹⁷ Sultan Muhammed had two brothers, and several nephews (see Light to G.G., 12 Sept. 1786, SSR, 2, f.161 (FWCP, 13 Dec. 1786),) and to them Abdullah may have appeared a usurper as his mother was not of royal blood, and especially because Sultan Muhammed had put aside his original choice of a successor. In addition, they probably thought they had more right to the throne than Abdullah. Monckton described Abdullah as unpopular with the people, though we are not told why. (See Monckton to Du Pre, 22 April 1772, SFR, 15, f.83 (FSGCP, 25 June 1772).

¹⁸ BM.Add.MS. 29133, f.9v.

¹⁹ About fourteen years later, in 1786, Light was to re-enact the Kedah troubles of 1771 in a letter to Warren Hastings, and the most striking feature is the strong resemblance to what he had written in 1772. He was to write, 'The present King [Abdullah] is natural son to Mahomed Jiva [Muhammed Jiwa] who was king in Mr. Monckton's time. His mother was a slave girl . . . The old king [i.e. Sultan Muhammed] had no children by his lawful wife but he had two brothers and several nephews who thought themselves injured by the Election of this Bastard to the succession . . . They raised a rebellion and brought the people of

hara of dollars or in any way imply that the Bugis invaded Kedah for specific motives on their own. It is indeed hard to believe that the Bugis would have waited as long as forty-eight years for the debt to be paid up (if there was any debt at all), and to all intents and purposes, it seems to be nothing but an effort on the part of Raja Ali Haji to give a more grandiose explanation for the participation of the Bugis mercenaries in the Kedah rebellion of 1771, which historians, in turn, have seen as an invasion²⁰ and as part of the overall pattern of Bugis expansion and ascendancy in the Peninsula.²¹

Unknown to Sultan Muhammed and Abdullah, the arrival of the Bugis mercenaries at the mouth of the Sungai Kedah in the early part of March 1771 was the signal for the outbreak of the rebellion. Completely unsuspecting that his own relatives were plotting to oust Abdullah and were, in fact, the ones responsible for the Bugis presence, Sultan Muhammed sent them to make a defence. They, however, linked up with the Bugis as was planned and the fort at Kuala Kedah²² fell quite easily. The combined forces then moved up-river to Alor Setar, the royal capital, which was also taken without much difficulty.²³ Light wrote that Sultan Muhammed '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 stupefied without being able to speak for several days'.²⁴

Selangor and Perak to their assistance.' See Light to G.G., 12 Sept. 1786, SSR, 2. ff. 161-2, (FWCP, 13 Dec. 1786).

²⁰ Winstedt, 'A History of Malaya', 156; Winstedt, 'Notes on the History of Kedah', 178; Bastin in *Malayan and Indonesian Studies*, 147; Harrison, *South-East Asia*, 153 and Tregonning, *History*, 63, all maintain that the Bugis 'invaded' Kedah in retribution for a non-payment of debts.

²¹ See *ibid.*

²² Kuala Kedah was then known as Kuala Bahang. See Monckton to Du Pre, 22 April, 1772, SFR, 15, f. 105 (FSGCP, 25 June 1772).

²³ BM.Add.MS.29133, f.9v. The outbreak of the rebellion, as the evidence suggests, took Sultan Muhammed and Abdullah completely by surprise, for no defensive preparations seem to have been made. In addition, neither did they suspect that their own relatives were plotting behind them nor did they anticipate such a drastic and well-concerted measure. The fact that the Kedah rebel force linked up with the Bugis and took the Raja by surprise, helps to explain their early success.

²⁴ BM.Add.MS.29133, f.9v.

Soon after his arrival at Kangar, Sultan Muhammed began to make a number of moves to quell the rebellion, presumably after having recovered from the shock that he had received.²⁵ Apart from the strong likelihood of his having taken various steps to counter rebel action, it is also likely that he may have thought in terms of obtaining help from Siam. While it can be safely presumed that he did consider appealing to Siam, there is, however, no clear-cut evidence that any such appeal was made or a response received. It is also doubtful whether he made any approaches to the Dutch for assistance²⁶

Sultan Muhammed, however, for reasons best known to himself, turned to the English.²⁷ Two avenues were open to him, the powerful English East India Company, whose military achievements in India were well-known, and an English trading agency at Atjeh operating on a 'trade in return for protection' basis.²⁸ As there were trading connexions between Atjeh and Kedah,²⁹ Sultan Muhammed must undoubtedly have heard from reports reaching Kedah of their presence there and their specific offer of military assistance to the Raja of Atjeh. He decided on approaching both.

Sultan Muhammed consequently wrote to the Governor of Madras on 18 March 1771 asking for 'the support and assistance

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Neither Light nor Monckton mention any appeal by the Raja to the Dutch. A Dutch source also makes no reference to approaches by Kedah, see B. Harrison, (trans.), 'Malacca in the eighteenth century; Two Dutch Governors' Reports', *JMBRAS*, XXVII, i (1954).

²⁷ A year later, when Sultan Muhammed came out with some proposals for the E.I.C., Light mentions three reasons why the Raja approached the English first, rather than the other European powers. Firstly, out of the conviction that they were strong enough to defend Kedah; secondly, that the English would not break any treaty they signed with him, and thirdly, he expected a positive response as he had always favoured English traders. See BM.Add.MS.29133, f.11.

²⁸ The Englishmen operating this agency were Gowan Harrop and Francis Light who had been sent in 1770 by the Madras Association of Merchants — Jourdain, Sullivan and De Souza — as joint agents. See Sullivan to Select Committee, SFR, 15; Clodd, *Malaya's First Pioneer: the Life of Francis Light*, London, 1948, 6 and D.K. Bassett, 'British Commercial and Strategic Interest in the Malay Peninsula' in *Malayan and Indonesian Studies*, 123-4.

²⁹ See BM.Add.MS.29133, ff.8, 8v.

of the Company to reinstate him in the possession of his Country and to enable him to drive out these Invaders [the Bugis mercenaries].³⁰ To the English merchants at Atjeh, however, he sent a woman as his personal emissary to convey his offer,³¹ obviously placing greater chances of success and a quicker solution to his problems on this quarter.³²

In the meantime, the rebels were not as successful as they had anticipated. It is quite clear that they had miscalculated public support for their move, and when none of the local populace or leaders supported them, they vented their spleen by burning Alor Setar.³³ Of this and of the rebel promises to the mercenaries, Light wrote, 'the Buggesses [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. *The relations of the King were obliged to retire with the Buggesses*'.³⁴

³⁰ Du Pre to Monckton, 23 Feb. 1772, SFR, 15 (FSGCP, 9 Feb. 1772). This is perhaps the strongest piece of evidence to show that the outbreak was around March, 1771 and not 1770 as stated by most writers on the subject (see p. 28, note 6). Clodd, *op.cit.* 13, wrongly states that this letter was written before the troubles of 1771. Hall in *Southeast Asia*, 466 and in 'From Mergui to Singapore, 1686-1819', *JSS*, VIII (1959), 267 writes that Sultan Muhammed's letter was written at Light's suggestion. This is incorrect for Light was in Atjeh at this time and arrived in Kedah only on 24 April 1771. (See BM.Add.MS.29133, f. 10). Wright and Reid, *The Malay Peninsula*, 62 and D.K. Bassett, 'European Influence in the Malay Peninsula, 1511-1786', *JMBRAS*, XXXIII, iii (1960), 26, all state that this emissary was sent to Light only after the Madras government had turned down the Raja's application. This is an error because the emissary was sent in March 1771, before the receipt of the Madras government's reply which was dated 11th July 1771. (See Du Pre to Monckton, 23 Feb. 1772, SFR, 15, f. 2 (FSGCP, 9 Feb. 1772).)

³¹ BM.Add.MS.29133, ff.8, 8v. The appointment of a woman as the Raja's emissary has fascinated many writers who have linked it with an element of romance. See E. Trapaud, 'A Short Account of Prince of Wales Island or Pulo Peenang in the East-Indies, 1788'; ed. J. S. Bastin, *Papers on Southeast Asian History*, No. 6 Kuala Lumpur, 1962.

³² Wright and Reid, *op.cit.* 56, wrongly state that Light was in Kedah when the emissary reached him.

³³ Light to Warren Hastings, 12 Sept. 1786, SSR, 2, f.161 (FWCP, 13 Dec. 1786). The lack of support for the rebels can perhaps be accounted for by the people's loyalty to Sultan Muhammed, who according to Monckton, was held in high respect. (See Monckton to Du Pre, 22nd April 1772, SFR, 15, f.82 (FSGCP, 25th June 1772).)

³⁴ BM.Add.MS.29133, f.9v. Italics are mine. See also Light to Warren Hastings,

Amongst the plunder carried away by the Bugis were the property and ships of the Chulia merchants³⁵ and 300 fine brass cannon taken from the fort at Kuala Kedah.³⁶

From Light's description of the events of 1771 and from Monckton's evidence which corresponds with that of Light, it is very clear that there was no Bugis 'invasion' of Kedah in the accepted sense of the term. As on an earlier occasion, one of the parties to a dispute had obtained the help of Bugis mercenaries³⁷ and on this occasion they had been promised the plunder of the Chulias and the Chinese as payment for their services. This they obtained, but in no way did their presence or actions in Kedah constitute an 'invasion' as part of their policy to gain ascendancy over the Peninsula. For that matter, even the rebellion that they fought for collapsed and there is not a shred of evidence to support the claim that as a result of this 'invasion' they established their influence over Kedah.

On 24th April 1771³⁸ the emissary sent to Atjeh returned to Kedah with Light, who brought along two armed vessels, powder, arms and thirty sepoy.³⁹ In an audience, Sultan Muhammed was

12 Sept. 1786, SSR, 2, ff.161-2. It is clear from Light's letters that the rebellion was short-lived and that it failed in securing its objectives. Tunku Abdullah, against whom it was aimed, came out unscathed and later became Raja. Furthermore, it is possible to see in the quick departure of the Bugis and the flight of the Raja's relatives and their followers, evidence that the loyalists, after recovering from the initial surprise and reversals, had regained control by the end of April 1771, the time Light arrived in Kedah. Light makes no reference at all to the presence of the Bugis or the prolongation of the rebellion in all his letters. Other circumstantial evidence also attests to the collapse of the rebellion before Light's arrival in Kedah. See Light to Jourdain, Sullivan and De Souza, 18 Aug. 1771 and 25 Nov. 1771; Light to Jourdain, 25 Nov. 1771; Light to De Souza, 25 Nov. 1771, SFR, 15 (FSGCP, 7 Feb. 1772), and BM.Add.MS.29133, ff. 8-11v.

³⁵ Monckton to Du Pre, 22 April 1772, SFR, 15, f.79 (FSGCP, 25 June 1772).

³⁶ Monckton to Du Pre, 2 May 1772, SFR, 15, f.96 (FSGCP, 25 June 1772).

³⁷ See chapter 1.

³⁸ BM.Add.MS.29133, f.10. Ref. G.S.P. Freeman-Grenville, *The Muslim and Christian Calendars*, London, 1963. Clodd, *Pioneer*, 27, has given the Muslim date wrongly as 1085, when it is actually 1185 as in the original.

³⁹ *Ibid.* Francis Light came to Kedah, therefore, not on his own initiative but at the request of Sultan Muhammed, an important fact, for many misconceptions have been otherwise built. Harrison, *South-East Asia*, 153; Bassett, 'European Influence in the Malay Peninsula', 261 and in *Malayan and Indonesian Studies*, 124; Wright and Reid, *op.cit.* 56; Tregonning, *The British*, 15; Winstedt, 'Notes on the History of Kedah', 179; Hall, *Southeast Asia*, 466; and R. Emerson, *Malay-*

presented with the details of the negotiations with Harrop and Light. Conditional to the Raja granting Francis Jourdain a 'Licence to trade' and the right to open an agency-house at Kuala Kedah, Light had promised 'to furnish him with 100 sepoy's to keep out any Enemy whatever'.⁴⁰ The Raja and Light's employers were to share equally between them two-thirds of the profits derived from the firm's trade in Kedah, while the remaining third would be given to Light to pay for the maintenance of the sepoy's and the agency-house.⁴¹ Sultan Muhammed accepted these terms and 'ordered Dato Padukar Serrewancer [the Dato' Paduka Seri Wangsa] and Dato Seree Maharajah Cancanan [the Dato' Seri Maharaja Kankanna] to write two of these agreements, one whereof the King [Raja] was to sign and give to Capt. Light, agent for Mr. Francis Jourdain, and the other Capt. Light [was] to sign and give to the King'.⁴²

The signing of this contract is of unique interest in that it was the first defensive agreement ever signed by any Malaysian state with the English. Furthermore, the general impression given by historians is that no such contract was signed.⁴³ It must be remembered

sia, A Study in Direct and Indirect Rule, New York, 1937, (reprinted Kuala Lumpur, 1965), 72, all wrongly state that Light visited Kedah on his own initiative or was sent by his firm in 1770-1 and that it was while he was already trading there that Sultan Muhammed approached him for help.

⁴⁰ BM.Add.MSS.29133, f.10.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.* Clodd, *op.cit.* 6-7 writes that '... by the exercise of resource and tact, he [Light] quickly attained an influential position with the Sultan and his ministers ... A contemporary writer recorded that the Sultan conferred a title of nobility — Dewa Raja — upon Light'. Clodd quotes Crawford as his source of this supposed 'title of nobility'. Crawford, however, wrote that Light received a title, not from Sultan Muhammed, but from P'ya Taksin of Siam (see Crawford, *Journal of an Embassy ... to the Courts of Siam and Cochinchina ...*, 22). The error on Clodd's part appears to be more than a misreading.

⁴³ Neither do general works on Malaysian history nor specific studies of this historical episode make any mention of this contract. That such an agreement was signed and came into force is attested by evidence in the records. For example, by November, the fort at Kuala Kedah had been handed over to Light (see Light to Jourdain, Sullivan and De Souza, 25 Nov. 1771, SFR, 15 (FSGCP, 9 Feb. 1772), who hoisted the English colours (see BM.Add.MS.29133, f.11). Light is also known to have kept the *Stratton* 'to see that all the Tin that came on the Coast was carried into Qualla [Kuala] Bahang', a move obviously in keeping with the terms of the contract (see Monckton to Du Pre, 22 April 1772, SFR, 15, f.87

that at the time Sultan Muhammed despatched his appeal to the East India Company and his emissary to Atjeh, he had sought assistance to put down the insurrection. The emissary's return with help was, in this context, belated, for the rebellion had collapsed and the Bugis mercenaries had withdrawn. Fear of a similar recurrence of events, however, must have occasioned the signing of this agreement with Light, which obliged the Madras firm to provide a hundred sepoy for the defence of Kuala Kedah and 'to keep out any enemy whatever'.⁴⁴

By the middle of August 1771, by which time conditions in Kedah must have returned to normal, a further motive could be observed in Sultan Muhammed's aims in entering into treaty relationships with the Madras firm. He now sought offensive military assistance from the Madras firm for an expedition to Selangor,⁴⁵ to recover the ships, guns and booty carried away by the Bugis.⁴⁶ He therefore forwarded fresh proposals through Light, offering the cession of Kuala Kedah and its fort to the Madras firm, in return for an undertaking on its part to defend the

(FSGCP, 25 June 1772.) On 21 April 1772, after the signing of a defensive agreement between Sultan Muhammed and Monckton (see pp. 44-5), the latter took over the fort, not from the Raja but from Light in whose charge it was (see Monckton to Du Pre, 22 April 1772, SFR, 15, f.81 (FSGCP, 25 June 1772).) Furthermore, Light remained in Kedah with his force and carried on trade for his firm until May 1772, after the East India Company took over his firm's trading rights in Kedah (see p. 48-9).

⁴⁴A lack of details at the moment precludes any discussion of the implications of this defensive arrangement in regard to Kedah's tributary relationships with Siam.

⁴⁵See Light to Jourdain, Sullivan and De Souza, 18 Aug. 1771, SFR, 15 (FSGCP, 9 Feb. 1772).

⁴⁶See Light to Jourdain, Sullivan and De Souza, 25 Nov. 1771, SFR, 15 (FSGCP, 9 Feb. 1772) and Monckton to Du Pre, 22 April 1772, SFR, 15, f.79 (FSGCP, 25 June 1772). It may be presumed that by this time, Sultan Muhammed had received the East India Company's reply to his appeal for assistance in March. It is to be wondered whether the Company's negative reply, dated 11 July 1771, which also expressed 'general terms of friendship and good-will' was instrumental in bringing about this extension with the Madras firm, that is, in that he had hoped that if the Company had given a positive reply, he could have used its assistance for his plans. (See Du Pre to Monckton, 23 Feb. 1772, SFR, 15, f.2 (FSGCP, 9 Feb. 1772).)

fort and to assist in the expedition.⁴⁷ He proposed that the costs of maintaining the defence of the fort and the assistance to be given to Kedah to go against Selangor, should be equally shared by the firm and himself, while all the rights of trade of Kuala Kedah would be in the firm's hands.⁴⁸ With no response to these proposals forthcoming from the Madras firm, Sultan Muhammed, towards the end of November 1771, sent a personal letter enquiring if the terms he had made in August were acceptable to them.⁴⁹ Of even greater interest was the added inducement he dangled before them — the cession of the whole stretch of coast from Kuala Kedah to Pulau Pinang.⁵⁰

This proposed cession of territory as well as the commercial proposals made in August were remarkably generous offers, explicable for a number of reasons. Essentially, Sultan Muhammed wanted to secure the permanence of the Madras firm's military assistance for the defence of Kedah. In addition, and in fact what seems to have been the immediate motivation behind these proposals, was his desire for military assistance for the expedition to Selangor. Quite clearly, the pillaging of Kuala Kedah and the

⁴⁷ Light to Jourdain, Sullivan and De Souza, 18 Aug. 1771, SFR, 15 (FSGCP, 9 Feb. 1772).

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ See Light to Jourdain, Sullivan and De Souza, 25 Nov. 1771, SFR, 15 (FSGCP, 9 Feb. 1772). Most historians who have dealt with this problem have failed to recognize that Sultan Muhammed was seeking *offensive* aid as early as August 1771. This is surprising because the evidence is quite explicit on this point. In his letter of 18 Aug. 1771, to Messrs. Jourdain, Sullivan and De Souza, Light used the words 'in consideration that you will promise to *assist him against* the People of Selangore'. (See Light to Jourdain, Sullivan and De Souza, 18 Aug. 1771, SFR, 15 (FSGCP, 9 Feb. 1772).) In his second letter to his firm, Light wrote that the Danes had offered 'to *assist him in recovering* the ships and Guns *carried away* by the Selangorians' in return for a factory in Kedah, but the Raja had turned it down as he had already approached the English. (See Light to Jourdain, Sullivan and De Souza, 25 Nov. 1771, SFR, 15 (FSGCP, 9 Feb. 1772).) In a letter to Mr. De Souza, Light again asked for 'Sepoys and a few Europeans with *leave to assist the King against* Selangore If the Gentlemen *think it venturing too far to assist the King of Queda, let it be done in the Nabob's name, to recover the property of his Subjects*' (See Light to De Souza, 25 Nov. 1771, SFR, 15 (FSGCP, 9 Feb. 1772).) Italics are mine.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* Light showed tremendous enthusiasm for these proposals which seems to have been motivated by his personal interests as a private trader. See R. Bonney, 'Francis Light and Penang', *JMBRAS*, XXXVIII, i (1965), 137-8.

villages along the Sungai Kedah, the looting and burning of Alor Setar, and the plundering of the ships and 300 fine brass cannon amidst the overall plunder and destruction must have been the bitter incentives for the expedition. Furthermore, Sultan Muhammed was bent on recovering the booty carried away by the Bugis, and of greater importance to him, on capturing his rebellious relatives who had fled to Selangor and obtained asylum.⁵¹

Light's statement that 'he [Sultan Muhammed] is too clever to be led with idle notions, he knows the English are capable of assisting him not only against Selangor but Siam . . .'⁵² is of interest for it strongly suggests that Sultan Muhammed, in seeking an alliance with the English, also had Siam in mind. In 1769, he had conceded to the Siamese demand for the Bunga Emas dan Perak in order to avert the invasion of Kedah by P'ya Taksin, then riding at the crest of his military victories.⁵³ It would therefore seem likely that Sultan Muhammed did think of the value that such a defensive arrangement with the English would have in securing Kedah's independence from Siamese claims to overlordship or in the face of Siamese threats of invasion.

About this time also, Light says the Raja received an offer of assistance from the Danes.⁵⁴ Two Danish vessels with 40 sepoy, guns, ammunition and other military equipment had arrived from Tranquebar (the headquarters of the Danish East India Company on the Coromandel coast of India), with a letter and present for the Raja. The Danish Governor of Tranquebar was said to have

⁵¹ Light to Jourdain, Sullivan and De Souza, 25 Nov. 1771 and Light to De Souza, 25 Nov. 1771, SFR, 15 (FSGCP, 9 Feb. 1772); also, Monckton to Du Pre, 22 April 1772, SFR, 15, f.79 (FSGCP, 25 June 1772). As Sultan Muhammed was to put it to Monckton in 1772, the aim of the expedition was 'to recover his Guns and the Vessels belonging to the Chouliers [Chulias] that were taken in his Ports which reflects great disgrace upon Him and retake those Relations that had used him to ill'. See Monckton to Du Pre, 22 April 1772, SFR, 15, f.79 (FSGCP, 25 June 1772).

⁵² Light to Jourdain, Sullivan and De Souza, 25 Nov. 1771, SFR, 15 (FSGCP, 25 June 1772).

⁵³ See chapter 1.

⁵⁴ See Light to Jourdain, Sullivan and De Souza, 25 Nov. 1771, SFR, 15 (FSGCP, 9 Feb. 1772).

offered to send an additional force of 300 sepoy⁵⁵ to help Sultan Muhammed in his expedition to Selangor on condition that they be allowed to set up a factory at Kuala Kedah. Sultan Muhammed supposedly turned down the offer as he had already approached the British and had promised them the fort, Kuala Kedah, and the coast stretching from there to Pulau Pinang. The Danes are then said to have approached and given presents to some of the Kedah officials to use their influence on him, but he remained adamant.⁵⁶

By the middle of January 1772, Sultan Muhammed learnt from Light that the Madras firm could not approve of the terms of the August and November proposals of 1771.⁵⁷ It seems quite clear that the offensive assistance required by Sultan Muhammed for the expedition to Selangor was the factor that led to the refusal by the Madras firm.⁵⁸ The failure of this approach made Sultan Muhammed, probably at Light's suggestion, decide on approaching the East India Company. He consequently despatched a personal letter to the Governor of Bengal, Warren Hastings, asking for the Company's assistance and sending, more out of custom than an inducement, two Siamese slaves as a present.⁵⁹ There is no evidence

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ The presence of the Danes in Kedah is corroborated by Danish archival material (Prof. Glamman in a personal letter to Prof. Bastin, copy by Dr. D.K. Bassett), but it is difficult to determine exactly the nature of Sultan Muhammed's discussions with them. Although Light may have genuinely feared the prospects of the Danish presence, it also seems quite clear that he may have exaggerated its implications in order to draw his employers in.

⁵⁷ See BM.Add.MS.29133, f.8.

⁵⁸ Clodd, *op.cit.* 12, writes, 'There was undoubtedly a fly in the ointment in the offer in the definite stipulation that in return for the concession the Sultan should receive military aid to enable him to *defend* his Kingdom from the enemies at his gate. An association of merchants clearly was debarred from the employment of any military force; it is probable, therefore, that this factor may have contributed to the lack of any response to the proposals'. Apart from leaving one wondering as to who 'the enemies at the gate' were, Clodd's argument does not hold water for two reasons. Firstly, in these proposals, Sultan Muhammed was seeking an *offensive* arrangement and not a defensive one as made out by Clodd. Secondly, the Madras firm was doing in Kedah and Atjeh, precisely what Clodd says it was debarred from doing — maintaining sepoy^s to protect the Raja (see p. 35 note 43).

⁵⁹ See BM.Add.MS.29133, f.11. Light himself wrote a letter to Hastings in which,

of any positive response.⁶⁰ It is probably because of this silence on the part of the Bengal Government that Sultan Muhammed wrote through an intermediary, Nockelly Farqueer, to the Chief of Cuddalore for permission to purchase guns and military stores, presumably planning to go it alone against Selangor.⁶¹

Affairs took a sudden turn when on 9 April 1772, Sultan Muhammed received a letter from one Edward Monckton, a representative of the Governor of Madras, who appeared at Kuala Kedah and sought an audience.⁶² The letter must have come as a surprise because Monckton professed to have come with a force in response to an alleged appeal by Sultan Muhammed to the Governor of Madras for assistance.⁶³ Letters were also received from the Laksamana and Light who wrote of Monckton's arrival.⁶⁴ As his arrival was unexpected and since he spoke in terms of assistance, Sultan Muhammed decided to consult the Laksamana and Light on the matter before replying to Monckton, and he therefore wrote to them.⁶⁵ Before an answer could be sent, however, Mon-

after greatly exaggerating Kedah's trade prospects and raising the bogey of the Dutch, advised the acceptance of the Raja's offer. When seen in relation to his later activities, these were the usual arguments he used to see the establishment of a British settlement from which he could carry out his mercantile activities under the protection of the Company. See ff.8-11v; also Bassett in *Malayan and Indonesian Studies*, 125-6, 129-30, and Bonney, *op.cit.* 138-9.

⁶⁰ In all probability the letter gathered dust as Hastings braced himself to face the problems that the Governorship of Bengal posed. There are no references to any mission being sent.

⁶¹ See Monckton to Du Pre, 22 April 1772, SFR, 15, f.79 (FSGCP, 25 June 1772). There are no clues as to who this intermediary was; he could have been a leading and influential Chulia in Kedah.

⁶² Monckton to Du Pre, 22 April 1772, SFR, 15, f.77 (FSGCP, 25 June 1772). Monckton had come to Kedah as head of a mission sent by the Madras Council of the East India Company to negotiate for commercial concessions and a grant of the fort at Kuala Kedah. The proceedings of these negotiations are contained in the Sumatra Factory Records, Vol. 15. For background studies of the mission, see Bassett in *Malayan and Indonesian Studies*, 122-30; Tregonning, *The British*, 9-25 and Clodd, *op.cit.* 1-23. See also Bassett, 'European Influence in the Malay Peninsula', 9-26; Hall, *Southeast Asia*, 459-66; Wright and Reid, *op.cit.* 28-66 and Tregonning, *History*, 69-73.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ Monckton to Du Pre, 22 April 1772, SFR, 15, f.77 (FSGCP, 25 June 1772).

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

ckton appeared at Kangar on 13 April, with Light, an interpreter and a small force.⁶⁶ The Laksamana also, had arrived in Perlis slightly earlier, presumably on receipt of the Raja's letter.⁶⁷

The following morning Sultan Muhammed granted Monckton's request for a public audience. Apart from the presentation of the Governor's letter and present, little beyond an exchange of compliments seems to have taken place, save for Sultan Muhammed's question as to when Monckton would be ready to move against Selangor and whether the force he had with him was sufficient. Monckton, however, did not commit himself. Full discussions with Monckton began in a private audience the same evening where Sultan Muhammed had the Laksamana and four or five Chulias (probably his advisers) with him.⁶⁸

Sultan Muhammed and his council heard with great surprise Monckton's claim that he had been sent by the Governor of Madras in consequence of a request from the Raja for military assistance 'to defend his Kingdom against all Invaders and to quell any intestine troubles'.⁶⁹ In return for such defensive assistance

⁶⁶ Ibid. ff.77-8.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Monckton to Du Pre, 22 April 1772, SFR, 15, f.78 (FSGCP, 25 June 1772).

⁶⁹ Monckton to Du Pre, 22 April 1772, SFR, 15, f.78 (FSGCP, 25 June 1772). Here is to be seen the first positive indication that the Monckton mission had been sent by the Madras Council on a false premise, i.e. that the rebellion was still underway and that Sultan Muhammed wanted only a *defensive* alliance. The Madras Council had decided on sending a mission to Kedah after perusing Light's letters to his employers in which he depicted the glowing prospects of Kedah's trade. (See Fort St. George Proceedings and Du Pre to Monckton, 23 Feb. 1772, SFR, 15 (FSGCP, 9 Feb. 1772).) The Council based its willingness both to negotiate with the Raja and to enter into a defensive alliance, on the strength of the Raja's letter of 18 March 1771 (in which he had asked for aid only on defensive lines) (See pp. 32-3). The fault of the Madras Council, however, was that it overlooked the fact that in Light's letters which they consulted (and which were written *after* the Raja's letter of 18 March 1771), it was very clear that Sultan Muhammed wanted *offensive* assistance for the expedition to Selangor in addition to a basic defensive alliance. (See pp.36-8). Light's letter to Hastings, it is true, made no mention, absolutely, of the Raja's need for *offensive* assistance: but this letter did not reach the Madras Council, for Hastings had left Madras to become Governor of Bengal in early January, 1772 and the letter must have gone to him in Bengal. (See *Dictionary of National Biography*, IX (1950), 138.) In addition, this letter does not appear in the Madras Council Minutes, nor is any reference made to it. Furthermore, Monckton himself stated that he had been

which Monckton said the East India Company was willing to provide, the Company sought a number of concessions, namely, a grant of the fort at Kuala Kedah (the expenses for the maintenance of the sepoy's to be borne by the Raja) with an adjacent piece of land, and a contract by which the Company would provide the Raja with opium and blue cloth, in return for tin, elephant's teeth and pepper.⁷⁰ Also submitted for Sultan Muhammed's consideration was Monckton's proposal that the collection of duties at Kuala Kedah and Kuala Perlis be handled by the Company to pay for the cost of the troops. Any surplus of duties over expenses would be paid to the Raja, while on the other hand, he would have to make good any deficits.⁷¹

Sultan Muhammed was surprised by Monckton's assertion that he had been sent by the Governor of Madras in response to an appeal by Sultan Muhammed himself, because no such appeal had been made.⁷² He therefore disclaimed having written to the Governor of Madras or even having asked for assistance.⁷³ However Monckton's unexpected presence with a force seemed promising, and Sultan Muhammed consequently suggested that Monckton assist him in the expedition to Selangor.⁷⁴ But as to the proposed

sent in consequence of the Raja's letter dated 18 March 1771. (See BM.Add.MS. 29133, ff.8-11v; Fort St. George Proceedings, 9 Feb. 1772 and Monckton to Du Pre, 22 April 1772, SFR, 15, ff.78, 80 (FSGCP, 25 June 1772).) Hall, *South-east Asia*, 466; Bassett in *Malayan and Indonesian Studies*, 125-6; Bassett, 27, and Wright and Reid, *op.cit.* 60, all state that the Monckton mission was sent as a result of Light's letter to Hastings.

⁷⁰ Monckton to Du Pre, 22 April 1772, SFR, 15, f.79 (FSGCP, 25 June 1772).

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² It is true that the Raja had appealed to the Governor of Madras on 18 March 1771, but this appeal had been rejected in a reply dated 11 July 1771 (see p. 36, note 46) and the correspondence was naturally considered closed. Sultan Muhammed's later letters were to the Madras firm in November 1771, and to Warren Hastings, the Governor of Bengal, in January 1772. The evidence suggests that when Monckton arrived, the Raja was under the impression that he had been sent by Hastings, hence the question as to when Monckton would be ready to go against Selangor and if the force had with him was sufficient (see p. 41). Once Monckton had identified himself as having been sent by the Governor of Madras, the Raja, not having written to Madras for assistance, therefore denied Monckton's assertion.

⁷³ Monckton to Du Pre, 22 April 1772, SFR, 15, f.79 (FSGCP, 25 June, 1772).

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

trade agreement and the terms Monckton had suggested, Sultan Muhammed refused to sign any contract.⁷⁵

On Monckton's explanation that he could not deviate from his superiors' orders by assisting Kedah in the expedition to Selangor, Sultan Muhammed advised him to write to Madras for permission to do so. Sultan Muhammed then made his stand clear — he would not make any grant or contract unless *offensive* assistance was provided. Unperturbed by Monckton's subsequent attempt at coercion by impressing upon him the strength and popular image of the British East India Company, and his final threat to leave,⁷⁶ Sultan Muhammed, in reply, stated that he could not do anything about it, for inasmuch as Monckton rightfully could not to disobey his orders, neither could he disobey his as Raja, for the Emperor of Siam had forbidden him to allow Europeans to settle in Kedah.⁷⁷ However he plainly told Monckton that, as Siam was at war and could not assist him, he was willing to let any European nation that was prepared to help him settle in Kedah.⁷⁸ But with the Company's representative insisting that he could offer only a de-

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ To use Monckton's own words, 'I then gave him to understand how powerful the Company was [for they look upon the Dutch as the only powerful People] and how very improbable it was that they [i.e. the English] should send a force here had they not been invited [and that I would write to the Governor for the King's letter] for the English were Courted by most of the Powers in the Straits, especially by the Kings of Selangor, Rerio [Riau] and Jun Celon [Junk Ceylon], to settle in their Kingdoms and that the Governor had given up very advantageous Offers Merely on account of his letter and his constant good Disposition to the English. I therefore would now with his leave depart as I could not think of staying without the Company got an immediate Grant'. Monckton to Du Pre, 22 April 1772, SFR, 15, ff. 80-1 (FSGCP, 25 June 1772).

⁷⁷ *Ibid.* f. 81. This was the first intimation to Monckton on record of Siamese claims of suzerainty over Kedah and is an interesting point by itself.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* These two statements are of special significance in terms of Kedah's position *vis-à-vis* Siam. Firstly, since Siamese overlordship implied 'protection', Sultan Muhammed had tried to obtain Siamese assistance for the expedition to Selangor. This is interesting for it reveals that he was prepared to seek the aid of the very power he resented in his hour of need. Secondly, although Siam objected to the establishment of any European settlement in Kedah, Sultan Muhammed was prepared to go against these orders to obtain redress, for after all, by allowing such a settlement by the Company, he would obtain defensive assistance in return which would enable him to thwart any resultant pressure from Siam. For details of the Burman-Siamese wars between 1767 and 1771, see Salarak, 'A Translation of the Hmannan Yazawin Dawgyi', 75-80; also chapter 1.

fensive treaty, there ceased to be any further point in discussion.⁷⁹

The urgency and necessity of the expedition to Selangor, however, seems to have loomed so largely in Sultan Muhammed's mind that he accepted a compromise proposal put forward by Light which incorporated limited offensive assistance. On the 19 April 1772,⁸⁰ the Hakim Seri Maharaja Kankanna drafted a contract on the basis of Light's proposal which had also proved acceptable to Monckton. The contract, signed on 20 April⁸¹ was of great significance not only in terms of the obligations it comprehended, but also when seen in view of the number of misconceptions that have since arisen.

By the terms of the contract, Sultan Muhammed gave the English East India Company the port of Kuala Kedah and a small piece of adjacent territory⁸² with rights of full jurisdiction over it and granted the Company the monopoly of Kedah's exports of black pepper, elephant's teeth and tin.⁸³ Sultan Muhammed reserved the right to purchase an unlimited amount of opium from the Company at a fixed price of \$350 per Chest and at the same time protected the interests of Kedah's private merchants by stipulating that any other opium supplied by the Company to these private merchants should not be sold at more than \$400 per Chest.⁸⁴ Another clause stipulated that no other nation would be allowed to settle in Kedah.⁸⁵ In return for these concessions, the East India Company was obliged to keep warships to guard the coast of Kedah, the expenses of which were to be paid from duties collected on vessels entering Kuala Kedah and Kuala Perlis.⁸⁶ This clause

⁷⁹ Ibid. f. 81.

⁸⁰ Ibid. f. 103; Ref. Freeman-Grenville, *op.cit.*

⁸¹ Ibid. f. 81.

⁸² This piece of land given to the Company extended twelve miles north and south of the Sungai Kedah and seven miles inland. See Monckton to Du Pre, 22 April 1772, SFR, 15, f.89 (FSGCP, 25 June 1772).

⁸³ Enclosure in Monckton to Du Pre, 22 April 1772, SFR, 15, f. 103 (FSGCP, 25 June 1772). See Appendix 1 (a) for full text.

⁸⁴ Ibid. f.104.

⁸⁵ Ibid. f. 104.

⁸⁶ Ibid. The collection of these duties was left to the discretion of the Company's agent, but Sultan Muhammed also safeguarded Kedah's interests. The customs

thereby encompassed both Sultan Muhammed's underlying objective of obtaining, and the Company's willingness to provide, defensive assistance.

The compromise solution reached on the provision of *offensive* assistance did not form part of the contract proper, but formed a follow-up engagement signed by Monckton. It ran, 'Mr. Monckton engages [that] when the King [Raja] sends his Prows [perahu2] to Selangore [Selangor] to send a Vessel with them and to suffer no other Prows in the River of Selangore while they are there, and if any English ship is there to order them not to assist the People of Selangore.'⁸⁷ This undertaking by the Company's agent to escort the Kedah perahu2 to Selangor and to maintain a blockade of the Sungai Selangor, although falling far short of Sultan Muhammed's desire for offensive assistance by the Company on a larger scale was, nevertheless, the determining factor in his signing the contract.⁸⁸

Personal reasons also played a part in Sultan Muhammed's aim in securing an alliance, first with the Madras firm and later with the East India Company. Having recently experienced a rebellion initiated by his own brothers and relations, and being also advanced

duties of Kuala Kedah, the chief port, were to be levied on all *foreign* vessels entering the port, thereby exempting vessels owned by himself as well as the traders of Kedah. In the case of the lesser port, Kuala Perlis, however, import duties were to be collected on *all* vessels. As the contract stands, it is clear that *half* of the duties of Kuala Kedah and the *full* duties of Kuala Perlis were to be paid into the Kedah treasury; it would also appear, however, that should the other half of the duties collected at Kuala Kedah be insufficient to meet the cost incurred by the Company for defending Kedah, the deficiency would be met from the duties of *Kuala Perlis* (see Appendix A, 1). These terms were the furthest Sultan Muhammed was willing to go to compromise with Monckton's proposals (see p. 42.) Italics are mine.

⁸⁷ Enclosure in Monckton to Du Pre, 22 April 1772, SFR, 15, f.104 (FSGCP, 25 June 1772). See Appendix A, 1. Italics are mine. It is quite strange how *all* historians of this subject have overlooked such a vital point.

⁸⁸ Monckton, obviously having yet to recover from his initial failure, wrote that Sultan Muhammed 'being turned almost Childish I was obliged to make it appear as trifling as possible and get his Chop put to it [the contract] while he was in the humour . . . !' It is clear that Sultan Muhammed was obviously 'in the humour' as he had obtained Monckton's written promise for limited *offensive* assistance. Ignorance of this, perhaps, may explain why Bassett in *Malayan and Indonesian Studies*, 128-9, wrote that 'Monckton admitted that the concessions were obtained by persuading the "almost childish" Sultan that the document to which he set his seal was of a trivial nature'. Italics are mine.

in age, he realized that the only way to protect himself and his position (as well as that of Abdullah and Diya'u'd-din)⁸⁹ was to obtain military assistance from an external power which would not be involved in the internal politics of Kedah.⁹⁰ And by giving the English (or failing them, the Danes or Dutch) certain concessions, he would have a guarantor of his position and authority.

When seen in terms of Kedah's tributary relationships with Siam, the initialling of the contract was an extremely decisive step indeed. Although the evidence is not very explicit on the suggestion that Sultan Muhammed had Siam in mind when he sought an alliance with the English,⁹¹ it is clear that by signing this agreement at least, he was consciously flouting the orders of the King of Siam.⁹² The Company's obligation to provide defensive assistance, however, would permit him to blunt any consequent punitive action or pressure. Viewed from this angle, in the light of all its implications, Sultan Muhammed's decision to enter into defensive relationships with the East India Company was therefore of great significance, for it would not only enable him to break Siam's claim of suzerainty over Kedah, but would strengthen Kedah's overall position in the traditional balance of power of mainland South-East Asia as well.

⁸⁹ Light remarked that Sultan Muhammed 'puts no confidence in any one of his ministers, he had declared before them all that he will give his country to the English rather than the Buggesses shall have it. The King is sensible of his age and infirmities and is afraid of his son. For this reason he is desirous of the English settling here, knowing they are capable of protecting him and that once they engage they will not desert him. He begs you if you have any love for him as an old man beset with enemies to send him a ship with sepoy and a few Europeans . . . ' (See BM.Add.MS. 29133, ff. 10-11). It is to be doubted that Sultan Muhammed was 'afraid' of Abdullah or 'beset' with enemies. These two remarks strongly appear to have been made to draw the Company into Kedah. See Bonney, *op.cit.* pp. 138-9.

⁹⁰ See BM.Add.MS. 29133, f. 10. Unknown to Sultan Muhammed, Monckton was already toying with the idea of involving the Company in Kedah politics, writing ' . . . it will be impossible to keep the Country divided after the Old Man's Death. One will have it all, it will then be in the Company's power to make whatever terms they please, for they will be courted by both of the Sons, and with the Force of one hundred and fifty sepoy and sixteen or fourteen Artillery Men with a Company Sloop they would be able to keep the whole country in subjection . . . ' (See Monckton to Du Pre, 22 April 1772, SFR, 15, f. 83 (FSGCP, 25 June 1772).)

⁹¹ See p.38.

⁹² See p.44.

After the formalities of the signing of the contract were over, Sultan Muhammed addressed a highly complimentary letter to the Governor of Madras clearly bent on cementing the new alliance.⁹³ Of even greater interest is that with English protection for Kedah and limited offensive assistance for the expedition to Selangor secured, Sultan Muhammed put forward a fresh proposal to the East India Company, namely, to help reinstate Raja Ismail as Raja of Riau.⁹⁴ Sultan Muhammed has been described as being 'in strict alliance with the Kings of Trangana (Terengganu), Johor and several other powerful Monarchs'⁹⁵ and from the tenor of his letter we can gather that there was strong resentment in the Malay States over the intrigues of the Bugis. Just before his death in 1759, Sultan Muhammed (who belonged to the Johor royal line) of Siak, a dependency of Johor, had initiated the massacre of the Dutch garrison on Gunting island.⁹⁶ His son, Raja Ismail, succeeded him but in 1761 was forced to flee by a Dutch punitive expedition⁹⁷ to Terengganu where he married the Raja's daughter.⁹⁸ In 1761 also, as a result of a *coup* in Riau, Daeng Kemboja had become the Yam Tuan Muda of the Johor empire, placing an infant on the throne⁹⁹ and ruling as regent. Sultan Muhammed Jiwa suggested in his letter to Madras that the Company should not only help him recover his property from Selangor but retake Riau from the Bugis as well. He had informed Monckton of his intention to help Raja Ismail regain Riau and seemed assured

⁹³ Raja of Kedah to Governor of Madras, 20 April 1772, Enclosure in Monckton to Du Pre, 22 April 1772, SFR, 15, ff. 101-3 (FSGCP, 25 June 1772). Ref. G.S.P. Freeman-Grenville, *op.cit.* See Appendix A, 2, for full text. Clodd, *op.cit.* 21, besides mistaking the Raja's letter for the contract goes on to write that 'the preamble to the document affords an edifying example of the hyperbole employed in enumerating the alleged virtues of an Oriental potentate. His Highness, the writer averred, possessed a pure unspotted heart and excelled in the arts of governing; his wisdom and knowledge no words can express'. This appears a deliberate distortion for the Raja's *jurutulis* was referring not to the Raja as made out by Clodd but to the Governor of Madras.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* ff. 102-3.

⁹⁵ Monckton to Du Pre, 22 April 1772, SFR, 15, f. 82 (FSGCP, 25 June 1772).

⁹⁶ Hall, *Southeast Asia*, 330.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ Monckton to Du Pre, 22 April 1772, SFR, 15, f. 86 (FSGCP, 25 June 1772).

⁹⁹ Hall, *Southeast Asia*, 330.

of additional help from the Raja of Terengganu, Minangkabau and Indera Giri.¹⁰⁰ He requested the Company's help not only against the Bugis but possibly the Dutch as well, should the latter come out in support of the Bugis,¹⁰¹ with whom they had made peace in January 1758.¹⁰²

In accordance with the terms of the agreement reached, Sultan Muhammed abrogated the contract with the Madras firm.¹⁰³ On 22 April the fort at Kuala Kedah was handed to Monckton¹⁰⁴ and the overall defence of Kedah was now the responsibility of the East India Company. The task of the collection of customs duties at Kuala Kedah and Kuala Perlis to pay for Kedah's defence was passed over to Monckton,¹⁰⁵ and soon afterwards Sultan Muhammed issued orders to the Laksamana for preparations to be made for the expedition to Selangor.¹⁰⁶ These

¹⁰⁰ Monckton to Du Pre, 22 April 1772, SFR, 15, f. 86 (FSGCP, 25 June 1771). It is of interest to note that Monckton personally expressed strong support for these proposals to his superiors (see ff. 85-7).

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² Hall, *Southeast Asia*, 330.

¹⁰³ See Monckton to Du Pre, 13 Aug. 1772, SFR, 15, f. 148 (FSGCP, Oct. 1772) and Jourdain, Sullivan and De Souza to Du Pre, June 1772, SFR, 15 (FSGCP, July 1772).

¹⁰⁴ After the signing of the agreements, Monckton had left Kangar for Kuala Kedah, where he took over the fort from Light. On 26th April, he called on Abdullah in Alor Setar. (See Monckton to Du Pre, 2 May 1772, SFR, 15, f. 91 (FSGCP, 25 June 1772).

¹⁰⁵ See Monckton to Du Pre, 2 May 1772, SFR, 15, f. 94 (FSGCP, 25 June 1772).

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.* It is currently held that these agreements were never signed nor did they come into force. Apart from the facts cited above there is further evidence to prove the contrary. For example, Monckton surveyed the fort in preparation for repairing and strengthening it (*ibid.* f. 92) and asked the Madras Council for cannon for the fort and 50 barrels of gunpowder (Monckton to Du Pre, 22 April 1772, SFR, 15, ff. 89-90 (FSGCP, 25 June 1772).) He detained the *Assistant* for guarding the Kedah coast and began trade with the Raja and other merchants and made a start in opening up trade with Amoy. He also wrote to the Madras Council that 'it should be made known to the Merchants of Madras and Bengal that they are *prohibited* importing Opium on this Coast'. (See Monckton to Du Pre, 22 April 1772, SFR, 15, ff. 87-8, 83-5, 84 (FSGCP, 25 June 1772).) (*My italics.*) Furthermore, the Laksamana began collecting perahu for the expedition but was finding difficulty 'as his Revenues [had been] taken from Him'. Monckton also wrote to the Madras Council that he had taken off the duties on rice 'to encourage its Importation and to ingratiate Us to the Inhabitants'. He had not sent any one as yet to collect duties at Kuala Perlis but would soon send a Malay and two sepoys 'to avoid offence' and whose purpose would be 'to

were subsequently begun.¹⁰⁷ But then came disillusionment.

Towards the end of July 1772 Sultan Muhammed received Monckton in audience after the latter had received fresh instructions from his superiors.¹⁰⁸ It was here that Sultan Muhammed learnt of the Company's refusal to grant him any offensive assistance which Monckton now claimed, if granted, would force the Company '... to Act against People who had not only been continuously inviting the English to settle among them, but have also shown them particular Marks of Friendship . . .'.¹⁰⁹ If Sultan Muhammed were to insist on an offensive alliance, Monckton's orders were to withdraw. Seemingly unaffected by the Company's final stand and its complete turnabout from the engagement to which Monckton had affixed his signature, Sultan Muhammed told Monckton that when he had made the contract, 'he had hoped [though they had never promised] that it would have so cemented the Friendship between them that the Company would have avenged Him and insults he had received from His Enemies and with those Expectations he had given them the Grant . . .'.¹¹⁰ However, as things had proved otherwise, he saw no reason for the Company remaining in Kedah and considered the matter closed.¹¹¹ Monck-

prevent the Importation of Ophium and export of Tin'. (See Monckton to Du Pre, 2 May 1772, SFR, 15, ff. 94, 94-5 (FSGCP, 25 June 1772).) In addition, Monckton refers to the 'disgust' on the part of the Kedah 'nobility' having lost their customs duties, and as to his having re-built 'almost one face of the Fort'. (See Monckton to Du Pre, 13 Aug. 1772, SFR, 15 (FSGCP, Oct. 1772).)

¹⁰⁷ See Monckton to Du Pre, 2 May 1772, SFR, 15, f. 94 (FSGCP, 25 June 1772).

¹⁰⁸ On receipt of Monckton's despatch on his successful negotiations, the Madras Council realized that Monckton had actually gone against orders and committed the Company to an offensive alliance by signing the engagement with Sultan Muhammed, and fearing that this as well as Monckton's own plans to help Raja Ismail would seriously involve them in disputes with the other Malay States and the Dutch, they vetoed the agreements. And mainly fearing that Sultan Muhammed would therefore withdraw his grant, they issued instructions to Monckton to renew the contract under new terms and to offer only defensive help. And lest Sultan Muhammed refuse to sign a new agreement, the Council suggested that Monckton use the strategy of mildly chiding the Raja that if he turned the Company down, they would 'be gladly received on the like Terms at Rheo, Tranggana, Selangore and other Places'. See Du Pre to Monckton, 3 July, 1772, SFR, 15, ff. 105-6 (FSGCP, 10th July, 1772) and Du Pre to Monckton, 18 July, 1772, SFR, 15, ff. 133-5 (FSGCP, 18 July, 1772); also, Monckton to Du Pre, 13 Aug. 1772, SFR, 15 (FSGCP, Oct. 1772).

¹⁰⁹ Monckton to Du Pre, 13 Aug. 1772, SFR, 15, f. 146 (FSGCP, Oct. 1772).

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ Monckton to Du Pre, 13 Aug. 1772, SFR, 15 (FSGCP, Oct. 1772).

ton then became passive, and asked for further talks.¹¹² Nine days later, at another audience requested by Monckton, Sultan Muhammed reiterated the hopes he had placed on the Company for its assistance in the expedition, but as it had decided against such assistance, he had no alternative but to withdraw the contract.¹¹³ And despite Monckton's almost frantic protestations about the advantages that Kedah could derive from an alliance with the Company, Sultan Muhammed remained adamant. On 29 July he granted his final audience to Monckton.¹¹⁴

It has been suggested that Sultan Muhammed's rejection of the Company's application was partly due to pressure exerted on him by the Chulias and some members of the ruling *élite*.¹¹⁵ Both Light and Monckton accused the Chulias of being opposed to the idea of admitting the English into Kedah for fear of losing their trade. That such a fear would have invariably and justifiably existed (even in any merchant or trading community elsewhere) is obvious, but to attribute the rejection solely to this is, for a number of reasons, untenable. Firstly, the leading Chulias were present during the discussions with Monckton, the outcome of which was the contract and the engagement. Secondly, the contract protected the interests of the Chulias and the defensive alliance was also to their advantage. And thirdly, one of the main reasons for the expedition to Selangor was to recover their property plundered by the Bugis mercenaries. The Dato' Laksamana and the Dato' Bendahara who received a share of the duties of Kuala Kedah and certain members of the 'nobility' are recorded as objecting to the grant of concessions to the Company as they lost part of their income and power.¹¹⁶ Although it is probable that these

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ *Ibid.* f. 147.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.* f. 148.

¹¹⁵ See Clodd, *op.cit.* 20-1 and D.K. Bassett, 'The Historical Background' in *Malaysia: A Survey*, ed. Wang Gungwu (London, 1964), 122.

¹¹⁶ Monckton to Du Pre, 22 April, SFR, 15 (FSGCP, 25 June 1772). According to Monckton, the Laksamana went to the extent of writing to Sultan Muhammed that he would not procure *perahu* for the expedition as the revenues of Kuala Kedah had been handed to Monckton. (Monckton to Du Pre, 2 May 1772, SFR, 15, f. 94 (FSGCP, 25 June 1772).)

parties with vested interests would have brought their influence to bear on Sultan Muhammed, it is definite that this was not the deciding factor in the rejection of the Company's proposals, as Monckton claims it was.¹¹⁷ The overriding factor in the rejection was Sultan Muhammed's wish for an offensive alliance and he was prepared to grant commercial concessions despite internal opposition against the securing of such an alliance. Such an agreement, although limited in scale, had, in fact, been signed by Monckton but was vetoed by the Madras Council. Consequently when Sultan Muhammed was informed of this and of the Company's unwillingness to offer anything further than a defensive alliance, he rescinded the contract and rejected its new proposals, thus losing the opportunity for defensive assistance by the East India Company — an opportunity which was only to be renewed after 1909, under different circumstances.

¹¹⁷ Monckton to Du Pre, 13 Aug. 1772, SFR, 15 (FSGCP, Oct. 1772).

III

THE OFFER OF PULAU PINANG

THE acknowledgement of Sultan Abdullah Mukarram Shah as Raja of Kedah on the death of Sultan Muhammed Jiwa in 1778¹ was neither marked by incident nor marred by dispute. The relative stability that prevailed was in a large measure due to the arrangements formulated by Sultan Muhammed Jiwa for a peaceful succession.² To a great extent, the characteristic struggle for power that usually arose on the death of a Raja had, in this instance, been anteceded in the rebellion of 1770-1, when an attempt by rebellion was made to challenge Sultan Muhammed's appointment of Tunku Abdullah as Yang di-Pertuan Muda and Tunku Diya'u'd-din as Raja Muda.³ The outbreak of the rebellion, although not expected by Sultan Muhammed, had served to bring into the open the potential participants in the power struggle that would otherwise have been manifested on his death. Its utter collapse and the flight of the royal rebels had therefore seen the elimination of all likely opposition to Tunku Abdullah and Tunku Diya'u'd-din from the scene. Furthermore, their eight years as Yang di-Pertuan Muda and Raja Muda respectively during the lifetime of Sultan Muhammed would have helped them not only to consolidate their power but to prepare public acceptance of them as the eventual rulers of Kedah as well. Seen against this background, Sultan Abdullah's succession was a mere formality.

The period of Sultan Abdullah's rule (1778-1798) saw a number of important developments on both the local and international scenes. Perhaps the most significant of these centred around his

¹Light to G.G., 12th Sept. 1786, SSR, 2, f. 162 (FWCP, 13 Dec. 1786).

²See chapter II.

³Ibid.

decision to lease Pulau Pinang to the English East India Company after learning of the Company's interest in the island from Francis Light,⁴ and it is essentially this and its related proceedings that are discussed in this chapter.

Sultan Abdullah's willingness to lease Pulau Pinang in August 1785 is of interest, especially in view of the fact that Kedah had rejected an application for a similar concession by the Company in September 1784.⁵ This rejection was largely determined by the anticipated losses in trade and revenue that Kuala Kedah would suffer by the establishment of a rival trading settlement, and in all probability, by the fear of Siamese objections as well. It has been suggested that this rejection was caused by Forrest's apparent lack of personal influence amongst members of the Kedah *élite*,⁶ but if we accept Light's word, it was the Dato' Seri Raja, Sultan Abdullah's principal adviser and merchant, who opposed the application.⁷ If what Light wrote was true, then it is to be wondered why the Dato' Seri Raja did not make similar objections to Light's proposals for the lease of Pulau Pinang in 1785, coming only eleven months after he had refused to consider Forrest's proposals.

Light's explanation for this change in the Dato' Seri Raja's attitude was that whereas in 1784 'he had been in the zenith of his power', by 1785, he foresaw that 'he should not always be able to

⁴The EIC's interest in Pulau Pinang was part of its long drawn out search for a naval station cum trading centre in South East Asia. See N. Macalister, *Historical Memoir Relative to Prince of Wales Island*, London, 1802; G. Leith, *A Short Account of the Settlement, Produce and Commerce of Prince of Wales Island in the Streights of Malacca*, London, 1804; Home-Popham, *A Description of Prince of Wales Island in the Streights of Malacca*, London, 1805; 'A Memoir of Prince of Wales Island, Considered Politically and Commercially', SSR, 2, ff. 1-116; A. Aspinnall, *Cornwallis in Bengal*, Manchester, 1931, 188-205; Wright and Reid, *Malay Peninsula*, 67-87; Wright and Cartwright, *Impressions*, 13-19; Bassett, 'European Influence in the Malay Peninsula', 9-31; Bassett in *Malayan and Indonesian Studies*, 122-40; Clodd *Pioneer*, 1-70; Tregonning, *The British*, 1-40, 147-72; D.G.E. Hall, 'From Mergui to Singapore', *JSS*, VIII (1959), 253-70; Hall, *Southeast Asia*, 459-68; Bassett in *Malaysia*, 113-27 and Mills, 'British Malaya 1824-67', 1-48.

⁵The application was made by Thomas Forrest. See Clodd, *op.cit.* 45-7; D.K. Bassett, 'Thomas Forrest, An Eighteenth Century Mariner', *JMBRAS*, XXXIV, ii (1961), 119 and Bassett in *Malayan and Indonesian Studies*, 139.

⁶Bassett, 'Thomas Forrest', 119, and in *Malayan and Indonesian Studies*, 139.

⁷Light to G.G., 12 Sept. 1786, SSR, ff. 169 (FWCP, 13 Dec. 1786). Light described the Dato', a South Indian Muslim named Jamal (see M. Topping, 'Some Account of Kedah', as the most powerful of Sultan Abdullah's Mentriaz (see ff. 160-70).

continue in power and knowing the custom of the country [to be that] in case he died the king would seize his wealth', he saw in Pulau Pinang the means 'to secure a [place of] retreat for himself'.⁸ It is difficult to determine the exact role of the Dato' in Sultan Abdullah's decision to lease the island for nowhere in his letters does Light conclusively prove that the Dato' was instrumental in persuading Sultan Abdullah to agree to the lease of Pulau Pinang, and in fact the only officials he constantly referred to in later accounts of the lease were the Dato' Bendahara and the Dato' Laksamana. Moreover, after the Company's occupation of the island, there is no mention of the Dato' Seri Raja retreating to Pulau Pinang as Light predicted he would.

These observations are of interest for they offer a number of alternative explanations. Firstly, if it was the Dato' Seri Raja who persuaded Sultan Abdullah to lease the island, then it was not Light's 'influence and interest' that swayed Sultan Abdullah, as Light himself and most writers have claimed, but the fears and worries of the former.⁹ Secondly, in the absence of positive evidence of the Dato's decisive role in the lease of Pulau Pinang, and since the confiscation of the Dato's property by the Raja in case of the former's death would have applied in 1784 as much as in 1785, then there must have been other reasons for the Dato's qualms. Lastly, if, as seems to have been the case, the Dato' was not predominantly responsible for the lease of the island (though he was keenly interested in it), then there must have been other factors to account for Sultan Abdullah's decision.

⁸Ibid. f. 169. It is interesting to note that although all that Light wrote on this point was that the Dato' Seri Raja 'eagerly listened to the proposal' (f. 169), the Governor-General of India was under the firm impression that 'the grant of Pulau Pinang seems in fact to have been procured by the influence of one of the principal officers of the King of Queda [i.e. the Dato' Seri Raja] with a view to secure to himself as place of retreat against his numerous enemies . . .'. See Minute by G.G., 13 Dec. 1786, SSR, 2, f.221 (FCCP, 13 Dec. 1786).

⁹Light wrote, 'I made use of the influence and friendship I had with the King of Queda and his Minister to obtain a grant of the Island Pinang . . .'. See Light to G.G., 23 Jan. 1786, SSR, 2 (Calcutta, 25 Jan. 1786). See also, Light to G.G., 15 Feb. 1786, 2 (FWCP, 2 March 1786); Bassett, *JMBRAS*, XXXIV, ii (1961), 119; Bassett in *Malayan and Indonesian Studies*, 140; Mills, *JMBRAS*, III, ii (1925), 26; Clodd, *Pioneer*, 36; M. Stubbs Brown, 'A History of Penang, 1805-1819', unpublished M.A. dissertation, University of Malaya, 1963), 5; Harrison, *South-East Asia*, 153, and Stewart, *The Founders of Penang and Adelaide*, 9.

It has been suggested that 'the principal and almost only reason' why Sultan Abdullah offered to lease Pulau Pinang was to obtain the East India Company's protection from anyone in Kedah who became the enemy of either himself or the Dato' Seri Raja.¹⁰ Light based this opinion on the fifth of the six conditions required of the Company by Sultan Abdullah in return for the lease of the island which ran: 'Any man in this country, without exception be it our Son or Brother, who shall become an enemy to us shall then become an enemy to the Company, nor shall the Hon'ble Company's agent protect them without breach of this Treaty which is to remain while Sun and Moon endures'.¹¹ A careful study of this clause within the context of the agreement as a whole, however, shows that all that Sultan Abdullah seems to have wanted by it was that the East India Company should neither harbour, protect nor assist anyone who was guilty of crimes in Kedah. Light, on the other hand, interpreted this wrongly and felt that Sultan Abdullah sought to bind the Company by this particular clause to protect him and Dato' Seri Raja from their enemies, which he reported was the principal reason why Sultan Abdullah wanted the Company to occupy Pulau Pinang.¹²

While in India in the early part of 1786, Light gave another explanation of the motive behind Sultan Abdullah's offer, writing that when the Dutch launched their attacks on Riau and Selangor in 1784,¹³ they had asked Kedah for help but Sultan Abdullah had given an excuse for not complying with the Dutch request.¹⁴ 'This,' according to Light, '[accounted] for the King of Queda's

¹⁰ Light's remarks on Sultan Abdullah's conditions, SSR, 2, f. 39 (FWCP, 2 March 1786). See also Wright and Reid, *Malay Peninsula*, 76 and Clodd, *op.cit.* 37-8.

¹¹ R.K. to G.G., 26 Shawal 1199 A.H., SSR, 2, ff. 36-8 (FWCP, 2 March 1786). The Muslim date corresponds with 31st Aug. 1785. (Ref. Freeman-Grenville, *The Muslim and Christian Calendars*.) See Appendix 2 (a) for full text of letter.

¹² Light's reference to this clause as the principal reason may have been a naive supposition. When seen within the context of his activities, however, it appears to have been deliberately designed to mislead the Governor-General. See Bonney, 'Francis Light and Penang', 135-54.

¹³ The Dutch succeeded in attacking Selangor but were ejected shortly afterwards by Sultan Ibrahim. See Winstedt, 'A History of Selangor', 8-9 and Bassett, 'European Influence in the Malay Peninsula', 30.

¹⁴ Light wrote that Sultan Abdullah's excuse was Kedah's involvement in a war in Petani. See Light to G.G., 15 Feb. 1786, SSR, 2 (FWCP, 2 March 1786).

earnest desire to have the Hon'ble Company for his Protector.¹⁵ What is obvious, however, is that Light was either himself succumbing to the general fear of the expansion of Dutch influence in the Straits of Melaka, or trying to add to such fears in Calcutta in order to provoke the Company into leasing Pulau Pinang.¹⁶ As we shall see later, contrary to Light's assertion, Sultan Abdullah would have had every incentive to welcome any Dutch move towards Kedah, and as such, it is difficult to accept this fear of the Dutch as one of the reasons for the offer.

It has also been maintained by some historians that one of the major considerations underlying the offer was to secure protection from the threat posed to Kedah by the Bugis of Selangor.¹⁷ However there is no such evidence in the records nor any indication that might suggest it. What is evident, however, is that this supposed 'fear of the Bugis' in 1785-6 is largely a hang-over in the historian's mind of the misconceptions built around the events of 1771.¹⁸

To understand fully the reasons that prompted Sultan Abdullah to lease Pulau Pinang, we have to look at events further north, in Burma and Siam. The beginning of Sultan Abdullah's rule coincided approximately with the end of the series of traditional Burman-Siamese wars that had been revived by the ambitions of Alaungpaya in 1758.¹⁹ In 1776 came the last Burmese attack on Siam in the reign of King Taksin, and although the Burmese forces were led by Hsinbysin's foremost general, Maha Tihathura,²⁰ it suffered the same fate as all the Burmese incursions after 1767, because Siam succeeded in inflicting an almost

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ See Bonney, *op.cit.* 148.

¹⁷ See Emerson, *Malaysia*, 75; Mills, *op.cit.* 26; Clodd, *op.cit.* 38; Tregonning, *History*, 83 and Tregonning, *The British*, 75, 76.

¹⁸ See chapter II. For example, Clodd, *op.cit.* 38, writes that 'the political affairs of his [Sultan Abdullah's] little kingdom were in much the same critical position as in the days of his predecessor. Sultan Abdullah had managed to eject the Bugis of Selangor from his capital, but he was still the victim of periodical raids from these insurgent neighbours'. There is no such evidence. See also, Tregonning, *History*, 83; Tregonning, *The British*, 75 and Hall, *Southeast Asia*, 331.

¹⁹ See chapter I.

²⁰ Hall, *Southeast Asia*, 394.

crushing defeat on the Burmese forces.²¹ By the end of 1777, Siamese forces had regained Mergui and occupied Tavoy.²² Hsin-bysin's death in 1776 and the defeats suffered by Maha Tihahthura signalled the end to a series of invasions he had begun in 1770. Singu Min, his youthful son and successor, lacked his warlike inclinations, and, probably after considering the reverses recently experienced by the Burmese forces, decided to call off the wars.²³

In Siam, P'ya Taksin took full advantage of the end of the Burmese threat to strengthen his hold over the country²⁴ and to impose Siamese overlordship over the Laotian principalities of Luang Prabang and Vien-chang.²⁵ With this successfully completed by the end of 1780, he despatched the Chau Phaya Chakri in 1781 to restore Siamese hegemony over Cambodia after the Cochinese had replaced the Siamese nominee to the Cambodian throne with their own candidate.²⁶ It is therefore apparent that by 1781, Siam had completely recovered from the devastating blow dealt by Burma in 1767, and was, in fact, beginning to exert her pressure and influence further afield. Sultan Abdullah, like Sultan Muhammed, recognized this rapid recovery and avoided the fate of the Laotian principalities and of Cambodia by not challenging Siamese claims to suzerainty over Kedah and by sending the Bunga Emas dan Perak to Siam.²⁷

However two significant developments took place in Burma and Siam in 1782 that were to have grave forebodings for Kedah.

²¹ Sukhabanij, 'Siamese Documents concerning Captain Francis Light', 3; see also Salarak, 'A Translation of the Hmannan Yazawin Dawyi', 73-86, 99-102 for details.

²² E.H.S. Simmonds, 'The Thalang Letters, 1773-94, Political Aspects of the Trade in Arms', *BSOAS*, XXVI, iii (1963), 595 and Wood, *History of Siam*, 243.

²³ Hall, *Southeast Asia*, 354, describes Singu Min as 'an inefficient young man who was bored with palace routine and spent his time making pilgrimages to pagodas'. See also Salarak, *op.cit.* 106-7, 112-13.

²⁴ Wood, *op.cit.* 267-70; Chakrabongse, *Lords of Life*, 70-8 and Hall, *Southeast Asia*, 428-30.

²⁵ Hall, *Southeast Asia*, 394.

²⁶ *Ibid.* 395.

²⁷ See MacInnes to Clubley, 17 Jan. 1814, SSR, ff. 98-9 (FCCP, 20 Jan. 1814). A reference to Kedah in 1782 described it as a tributary state of Siam recognizing Siam's overlordship and rendering the Bunga Mas dan Perak. See H. Burney to Court of Directors, July 1841, *Manuscript Papers Relating to Kedah (IOL)*, 290-1.

In March, a court revolution in Ava saw Singu Min deposed and Bodawpaya, his uncle and 'the ablest of the sons of Alaungpaya',²⁸ brought to the throne. In Siam, a month later, Taksin was deposed on grounds of insanity and after a short period of political instability, Chau Phaya Chakri returned from his Cambodian expedition and accepted the offer of the throne,²⁹ taking the title of Rama Ti'bodi or Rama I and thereby founding the Chakri dynasty, the present ruling house of Thailand. Thus, although nothing more than a coincidence, within a month of each other, two militant and ambitious men had come to power in their respective countries, and it was obvious that it was only a matter of time before the traditional wars between them were resumed.

The first two years of Bodawpaya's reign, however, saw him busily engaged in consolidating his position and in eliminating all other rival claimants to the throne.³⁰ Then towards the end of 1783 the Mons attacked Rangoon, and he was fully occupied in putting down the rebellion which he managed to quell by the end of 1784. Immediately after this, Bodawpaya launched his expansionist policy by sending four armies into Arakan which he successfully incorporated into his empire by February 1785.³¹ With his position at home secure, with the Mons under control, and encouraged perhaps by the success of his Arakan venture, Bodawpaya, almost inevitably, turned to Siam, thereby starting yet another series of Burman-Siamese wars which were to continue intermittently till 1802.³² Although Kedah was not directly involved in these struggles, Sultan Abdullah was to find that Kedah's fortunes were closely linked to them.

²⁸ Hall, *Southeast Asia*, 395.

²⁹ *Ibid.*; Wood, *op.cit.* 271-2 and Chakrabongse, *Lords of Life*, 78. K. Sukhabanij, *op.cit.* 5, describes Chau Phaya Chakri as Taksin's 'foremost general'. He led the Siamese forces against Maha Thihahthura in 1776-7 and against the Laotian principalities as well.

³⁰ Salarak, *op.cit.* 118-20, 139-40 and Hall, *Burma*, 93.

³¹ Salarak, *op.cit.* 121-3, 141-4 and Hall, *Burma*, 93.

³² Chakrabongse, *op.cit.* 96. Phayre wrote that 'The conquest of Arakan had been achieved so easily that Bodoaphra [Bodawpaya], ambitious of military glory, determined himself to lead an army to subdue Siam. The pretended cause of the war was to exact tribute asserted to be due, and to avenge the defeats inflicted by the valiant Phaya Tak'. (Salarak, *op.cit.* 144.)

It was at this juncture, as war-clouds gathered to the north of Kedah, that Sultan Abdullah learnt of the English East India Company's interest in Pulau Pinang. Sultan Abdullah was fully aware of the Burmese preparations in 1785 for the invasion of Siam²⁴ which must have served to warn him of the impending struggle between the two empires.²⁵ Not long before, Sultan Muhammed Jiwa had successfully manoeuvred in the Burman-Siamese wars of 1758-77 and brought Kedah out unscathed by giving his support either to Siam or Burma, depending on which was the more powerful, and sometimes simultaneously to both. On the strength of reports reaching Kedah indicating the magnitude of Burmese naval and military preparations, Sultan Abdullah anticipated an overwhelming Burmese victory.²⁶ Since Kedah was too weak to defend herself from the Burmese threat, it was obvious to him that, if the invasion of Kedah by Burmese forces was to be avoided, he would have to throw his support onto the side of Burma. Equally threatening was the fear that when hostilities did break out, Siam would demand men, arms, ammunition, boats and food supplies from Kedah, an act which would not only inflict a severe drain on Kedah's resources, but which would also prompt the Burmese to seek revenge. On the other hand, if Kedah were to help Burma, Siam would one day seek vengeance and mete out her usual punitive acts of destruction and racial extermination. The dilemma with which Sultan Abdullah was faced, however, was nothing unique in the history of Kedah, it was only more acute.

In the tenuous and potentially explosive situation in which Sultan Abdullah found himself, a solution to Kedah's problem was therefore seen to lie in leasing Pulau Pinang to the Company

²⁴ See Light to G.G., 12 Sept. 1786, SSR, 2, f. 172 (FCCP, 13 Dec. 1786).

²⁵ It is only too obvious that Light also knew of the Burmese preparations and hoped to exploit the situation to obtain the lease of Pulau Pinang (see Bonney, *op.cit.* 135-44), in the same manner as James Scott was trying to exploit similar fears in Thalang. See Simmonds, *op.cit.* 597.

²⁶ Light's Journal, SSR, 2, f. 265 (FWCP, 13 Dec. 1786). The point made by Light about the confiscation of the Dato' Seri Raja's property on his decease is not convincing as it would have applied in 1784 as well. It would appear more probable that if the Dato' was interested in the lease of Pulau Pinang, as suggested by Light, then the fears uppermost in his mind would have been that of a Burmese invasion or a protracted Burman-Siamese war.

and obtaining defensive assistance in return. Proof of this is to be clearly seen in the letter in which Sultan Abdullah addressed the Governor-General of India on 31 August 1785, offering to lease the island and the conditions he required from the Company in return.³⁷

The relevant conditions were:

Article 1st: That the Hon'ble Company shall be Guardian of the Seas and Whatever Enemy may come to attack the King shall be an Enemy of the Hon'ble Company and the expense shall be borne by the Hon'ble Company.

6th: If any enemy come to attack us by land and we require assistance from the Hon'ble Company of Men, Arms or ammunition, the Hon'ble Company will supply us at our expense.³⁸

These two articles show beyond doubt that in return for the lease of Pulau Pinang, Sultan Abdullah required naval and military assistance, and in the context of developments to Kedah's north, this was surely the fundamental consideration behind his decision to lease the island to the Company.

Perhaps of greater importance than the defensive assistance that Kedah would receive were the deeper implications which this assistance involved. The suzerainty of the Malay States, like that of the Isthmian and Laotian principalities, had always been a point

³⁷ R.K. to G.G., 26 Shawal, 1199 A.H., SSR, 2, ff. 33-6 (FWCP, 2 March 1786). See Appendix 2(a) for full text. It is important to note that there is a second version of this letter in J. Anderson, *Political and Commercial Considerations . . .*, which historians have failed to distinguish from the first. Anderson appears to have translated the original copy of the letter written in Jawi, obtained either from the Company or the Kedah records (see Appendix 2(b) for full text). Anderson's version of the text seems closer to the Malay original than Light's, the latter also bearing slight traces of being indirectly 'doctored'. Anderson, and Swettenham (in *British Malaya*), based their scathing attack on the Company's later attitude towards Kedah on the second version which in a sense was wrong because the Company had based its policy on the version which Light had given it.

³⁸ R.K. to G.G., 26 Shawal, 1199 A.H., SSR, 2, ff. 35,36 (FWCP, 2 March 1786). In the Anderson version of Sultan Abdullah's letter, these two conditions read ' . . . if any enemies of ours from the East or West should come to attack us, the Company would regard them as enemies also and fight them, and all the expenses of such Wars shall be borne by the Company . . . and when any enemies attack us from the interior, they also shall be considered as enemies of the Company. I request from the Company, Men and Powder, Shot, Arms large and small, also Money for the purposes of carrying on the war, and when the business is settled, I will repay the advances . . .' (Anderson, *op.cit.* 56-7).

of prestige to both Burma and Siam, although Kedah, like most of the other states, had never been willing to be drawn into their weary and interminable struggles, let alone the provision of tributary service to either or both of these powers. Due to her weakness and in order to escape complete subjugation or absorption into either of these empires, Kedah had, out of circumstance or expediency, been obliged to send the Bunga Emas dan Perak and to provide the other burdensome services required of a vassal state. It is clear that by negotiating for the establishment of a European settlement in Kedah, Sultan Abdullah would have been violating Siamese orders and would consequently have to face the likelihood of Siamese punitive action; yet he was prepared to take this calculated risk, for if the Company accepted his terms and provided the defensive assistance he sought, he would be able to thwart any subsequent threat from Siam.

Seen in this context, Sultan Abdullah's decision to lease Pulau Pinang was therefore crucial inasmuch as it was significant — for by obtaining defensive assistance, he was thereby not only strengthening Kedah's position, but altering the traditional balance of power in mainland South-East Asia by bringing in a new weight on to his side, the powerful English East India Company.³⁹ And with this assistance, Kedah would not only be relieved of all the political tensions and military threats emanating from her northern neighbours, but be freed from all the trappings of tributary status as well. The independence of Kedah, especially from Siamese claims of overlordship, would at last be secured. Recognition of this, very clearly, was the more basic and underlying reason for Sultan Abdullah's offer to lease the island.⁴⁰

³⁹ The military achievements of the Company in India and its naval supremacy were common knowledge in Kedah and in the preamble of his letter, for example, Sultan Abdullah referred to the Governor-General as 'renowned for wisdom and superior knowledge in the arts of war by Land and Sea'. (R.K. to G.G., 26 Shawal, 1199 A.H., SSR, 2, ff. 33-4).

⁴⁰ Significantly enough, Sultan Abdullah did not allude openly to the Burmese or the Siamese in his letter to the Governor-General. The evidence strongly suggests that Sultan Abdullah neither mentioned the expected Burmese invasion nor made any reference to Burmese and Siamese claims to suzerainty over Kedah on Light's advice. Light himself seems to have feared that such references would shy away the Company from accepting Pulau Pinang. (See Bonney, *op.cit.* 135-48.)

Perhaps the strongest evidence in support of this is to be seen in the letter in which Sultan Ahmad Taju'd-din Halim Shah⁴¹ addressed Lord Minto, the Governor-General of India, on 24 December 1810.⁴² He wrote:

In the year 1199 A.H., in the time of my late Father, Mr. Light bearing on the head of submission the commands of the King of England, and the orders of the Governor General, with various splendid presents appeared in the presence of my late Father, the Rajah, and requested in the name of the King of England, and of the Governor General, the Island of Pinang, for the purpose of repairing their ships of War, highly extolling the greatness, splendour, power, wisdom, and beneficence of his Majesty, the prosperity of the Honorable Company and all those connected in the ties of friendship with them; promising that the King and the Governor General would assist my Father in whatever might be required, and would prevent the Enemies of Quedah engaging in proceedings detrimental to the Country. Moreover, that they should pay rent for the Island 30,000 Dollars per Annum, and entered into sundry other engagements. My Father consulting with the Ministers, considering that the neighbouring Burmah and Siamese Nations were more powerful than Quedah, and having reflected that the King of Europe (i.e. England) was greater and more powerful than either of these nations, and that by means of the friendship of the English Company, these powers would be prevented from violence or molestation, perceived that it would be very desirable to enter into Alliance with the Company, because the Europeans were just and regular in conducting all their affairs, and should the Burmah or Siamese Powers unjustly attempt violence, the powerful aid and protection of the Company, would enable my Father to repel the aggression. My Father was therefore extremely desirous of obtaining the friendship of the Company, under whose powerful shelter and protection, the Country might be transmitted to his descendants increased in strength. For this Country being small, and deficient in strength, would depend on the power of the Company to repel the attacks of the Siamese and Burmahs. My Father accordingly impressed with a sincere desire to obtain the friendship of the Company, granted the Island of Pinang according to the request of Mr. Light, the Agent for the Governor General, and a written engagement, containing

⁴¹ Sultan Ahmad Taju'd-din, the eldest son of Sultan Abdullah, was acknowledged Raja of Kedah in 1803. See chapter V.

⁴² Anderson, *op.cit.* 75. See Appendix 2(c) for full text.

my Father's demands from the Company, was given to Mr. Light, for the purpose of being forwarded to the Governor General.⁴³

This statement by Sultan Ahmad Taju'd-din is a frank and open admission to the highest authority in India of his father's motives in leasing Pulau Pinang, and although written in 1810, one finds after comparison with the records of the East India Company and other sources, that almost all points mentioned by him are authentic. Furthermore, having been written only twenty-five years after the decision to lease the island, it is to be doubted if he had any reasons to mislead Lord Minto about Sultan Abdullah's motives in leasing the island.⁴⁴ A few days earlier, in fact, on 19 December 1810, Sultan Ahmad Taju'd-din had written to the Governor of Pulau Pinang that

... my Father was induced to make the cession [sic] of Pulau Pinang from his dependence on the Power and greatness of the Company, which would be transmitted to his descendants for the Neighbouring Powers of Siam and Ava (Burma) being far more powerful than Kedah, should any improper proceedings be attempted he might derive protection and aid from the Company and this consideration induced my Father to cede [sic] the island⁴⁵

It is therefore conclusive that the main reasons behind the decision to lease Pulau Pinang to the Company were to obtain military and naval assistance, firstly, for the defence of Kedah from the imminent threats arising from the expected Burmese invasion of Siam, and secondly, to secure and insure its permanent independence.⁴⁶

In his discussions with Light, it is self-evident that Sultan Abdullah was given assurance of the Company's willingness to fulfil

⁴³ Anderson, *op.cit.* 75-7.

⁴⁴ Light's later letters to India also show that defensive assistance to stave off the threats posed by the anticipated Burman-Siamese war and for the securing of Kedah's independence motivated Sultan Abdullah's crucial decision. See Light to G.G., 12 Sept. 1786, SSR, 2, f. 172 (FWCP, 13 Dec. 1786); also Minute by G.G., 13 Dec. 1786, SSR, 2, ff. 221-2 (FWCP, 13 Dec. 1786) and SSR, 2-30. See also Anderson, *op.cit.*

⁴⁵ R.K. to G.P., 19 Dec. 1810, SSR, 30, f. 42 (FCCP, 31 Jan. 1811).

⁴⁶ For some partially incorrect misconceptions, see Tregonning, *The British*, 76; Tregonning, *History*, 83; Clodd, *op.cit.* 38 and Hall, *Southeast Asia*, 472.

the defensive conditions he outlined.⁴⁷ It is logical that it was because of these assurances that Sultan Abdullah agreed to offer to lease the island. Seen in terms of the advantages of obtaining this protection in Kedah's circumstances at that time, it was this, rather than Light's 'influence and interest', that were the determining factors in Sultan Abdullah's decision to lease Pulau Pinang. In contrast, the rejection of Forrest's application in 1784 may be explained by the absence of any fear of invasion and its attendant consequences, for Burma was concentrating on Arakan and Siam was involved in Cambodia, and also by Forrest's inability to assure protection. These, rather than any lack of 'influence' on Forrest's part, helps explain the rejection of his application.

The lease of the island itself, however, involved certain problems for Sultan Abdullah and he therefore sought, in addition to the defensive conditions, a number of specific stipulations from the Company which he embodied in his letter to the Governor-General, clearly stating that the lease of Pulau Pinang would be conditional on the acceptance of these stipulations.⁴⁸ The following were the conditions he required from the Company:

- 1st: That the Hon'ble Company shall be Guardian of the Seas and whatever Enemy may come to attack the King shall be an enemy of the Hon'ble Company and the expense shall be borne by the Hon'ble Company.
- 2nd: All vessels, junks, prows [perahu2], small and large, shall not be

⁴⁷ See also, Anderson, *op.cit.*

⁴⁸ R.K. to G.G., 26 Shawal, 1199 A.H., SSR, 2, f. 34 (FWCP, 2 March 1786). The sentence used was, 'Moreover we have made known to the said Captain [Light] all our desires which being come to the knowledge of our Friend and *accepted*, with all possible speed send people to take possession and remain on Pooloo Pinang . . .'. Then followed the list of conditions (i.e. 'all our desires'). In the Anderson version of the letter, this point appears more emphatically. It reads, 'should these propositions be considered proper and acceptable to the Governor General, he may send a confidential agent to Pulo Pinang to reside: but if the Governor General does not approve of the terms and conditions of this engagement, let him not be offended with me. Such are my wishes to be made known to the Company, and this treaty must be faithfully adhered to, till the most remote times'. This, I think, is a very important point because, although Sultan Abdullah regarded this letter as his terms for the lease, Light (when in India and for reasons of his own) and the Company (on Light's advice) treated it as a basis for negotiation (see Bonney, *op.cit.* 144-8), a dichotomy which was to give rise to a great deal of misunderstanding in later years.

stopped or hindered by the Hon'ble Company's agent but left to their own will either to buy and sell with us or with the Company at Pulo Pinang as they shall think proper.

- 3rd: The articles opium, tin and rattans being part of our revenue are prohibited and Kuala Muda, Prai [Perai] and Krian [Kerian], places where these articles are produced, being so near to Pinang that when the Hon'ble Company's Resident shall remain there, this prohibition will be constantly broke thro'. Therefore it should end and the Governor General allow us our profits on these articles, viz. 30,000 Spanish dollars every year.
- 4th: In case the Hon'ble Company's agent gives credit to any of the King's relations, Ministers, officers, or ra'ayat, the agent shall make no claims upon the King.
- 5th: Any man in this country without exception be it our son or brother, who shall become an enemy to us shall then become an enemy to the Hon'ble Company, nor shall the Hon'ble Company's agent protect them without breach of this Treaty which is to remain while sun and moon endures.
- 6th: If any enemy come to attack us by land and we require assistance from the Hon'ble Company of men, arms or ammunition the Hon'ble Company will supply us at our expense.⁴⁹

The first article, as we have seen, obliged the East India Company to defend Kedah from any attack by sea at its own expense. Sultan Abdullah must have had Burma uppermost in mind for the Burmese had been making intensive naval preparations to wrest Thalang and the Isthmian region from the Siamese, although being so generally worded, it meant the defence of Kedah from naval

⁴⁹ R.K. to G.G., 26 Shawal, 1199, SSR, 2, ff. 33-6 (FWCP, 2 March 1786). See Appendix 2 (a) for full text; also Appendix 2 (b) for Anderson's version. Clodd, *op.cit.*, seems not to have recognized the differences between the Light and Anderson versions of Sultan Abdullah's letter, using part of the Anderson version in the text of his discussion (p. 37) and the Light version in its entirety in his Appendix (p. 153-5). Even more surprisingly, Clodd has indulged in 'doctoring' the Anderson version, writing, 'Then followed the salient clause . . . 'Should anyone in this country become my enemy, even my own children, all such shall be considered as enemies of the Company, I request from the Company, Men and Powder, Shot, Arms, large and small, also money for the purposes of carrying on the war . . . ' (p. 37). Clodd had omitted the words 'the Company shall not alter their engagements of alliance, so long as the heavenly bodies continue to perform their revolutions; and when any enemies attack us from the interior, they also shall be considered as enemies of the Company', which lie between the two sentences he quotes. See Appendix 2 (b).

attack by any country or power.⁵⁰ In addition, by being 'Guardian of the Seas', the Company would also undertake the responsibility of checking piracy. These two points were, in fact, a recognition of English naval supremacy and Sultan Abdullah's plan to employ this supremacy to Kedah's advantage.

The second condition was purely to safeguard the commercial interests of Kuala Kedah. Probably fearing that the Company might adopt the Dutch practice of forcing ships to call at their ports or attempt to increase the trade of Pulau Pinang at the expense of Kuala Kedah, the article spelt out that the Company's agent should not stop or hinder shipping bound for Kuala Kedah. Contrawise, Sultan Abdullah undertook not to prevent any ships from trading with Pulau Pinang.

By the third condition, Sultan Abdullah sought to be compensated for the loss in revenue that he would personally incur by the establishment of a commercial settlement on the island. As the import of opium and the buying and selling of tin and rattan were royal monopolies, Sultan Abdullah foresaw a considerable loss by the establishment of Pulau Pinang.⁵¹ Tin and rattan were the produce of the Sungai Muda, Sungai Perai and Sungai Kerian basins and as these places were in close proximity to the island, the smuggling of these products would, in consequence, be encouraged, leading to a loss in revenue. He therefore decided to give up his monopoly rights but in return specified that \$30,000 Spanish (the equivalent of the revenue he claimed he earned from these monopolies) be given to him annually as compensation.⁵²

⁵⁰ Swettenham, *British Malaya*, 39, writes, 'In forwarding the proposals of the Sultan of Kedah, Mr. Light added his own remarks, and referring to the first condition, he wrote:—"This article comprehends the principal and only reason why the King wishes an alliance with the Hon'ble Company, and the treaty must be worded with caution, so as to distinguish between an enemy endeavouring or aiming at his destruction or the Kingdom's, and one who may simply fall into displeasure with either the King or his Ministers". This is one of Swettenham's stronger arguments in his criticism of the Company's later policy towards Kedah, but it is factually incorrect because this remark of Light's was made in reference to the fifth condition and not the first. See Light's Remarks, SSR, 2, f. 39 (FWCP, 2 March 1786). Seen in the full context of Swettenham's views, the error appears to me to be deliberate. My italics.

⁵¹ See Light's Remarks, SSR, 2, f. 38 (FWCP, 2 March 1786).

⁵² R.K. to G.G., 26 Shawal, 1199 A.H., SSR, 2, ff. 35-6 (FWCP, 2 March 1786).

Article Four was a legacy of the events of 1771-2 and Sultan Abdullah obviously thought it desirable to stress this point from his own and his father's experience. Before Monckton left Kedah in 1772 after his abortive mission, he had obliged Sultan Muhammed to settle the debts of those Kedah merchants who had not as yet paid for the goods they had bought on credit from Light's firm⁶³ and Sultan Muhammed had actually advanced \$12,000 Spanish to Monckton to cover the debts that these merchants had incurred in order to enable Monckton to leave.⁶⁴ It would appear that Sultan Muhammed never succeeded in fully recovering the money and that Sultan Abdullah did not wish to be held responsible for any similar occurrence.

The fifth condition suggests that Sultan Abdullah either feared a recurrence of events similar to the 1771 rebellion, or that he wished to secure his position and those of his successors from any attempted *coup* or rebellion. The presence of the English in Pulau Pinang would give the disputants or rebels a base from which they could carry out their plans or seek refuge, and Sultan Abdullah may even have feared that the English might themselves give their support to any party or rebel who sought their help.⁶⁵

The last condition, as we have also seen, provided that in the case of any landward attack on Kedah, if Sultan Abdullah were to seek assistance in the form of men, arms or ammunition, it would be obligatory on the Company to come to his aid, though the expense involved would be borne by Kedah. Undoubtedly, the power most liable to attack Kedah by land and which Sultan Abdullah must have had foremost in mind was Siam, but like the first article, it was worded in an all-embracing a manner so as to include, among others, any attack from Burma, Nakorn Si'thammarat, Singora, Petani and Perak—Kedah's closest neighbours.

There can be no doubt that Sultan Abdullah must have foreseen that the establishment of a trading settlement by the Company in

⁶³ Light's Remarks, SSR, 2, f. 39 (FWCP, 2 March 1786).

⁶⁴ Monckton to Du Pre, 13 Aug. 1772, SSR, 15, f. 148 (FSGCP, Oct. 1772).

⁶⁵ Anderson, *op.cit.* 58-9, argues that the fifth condition stipulated for assistance and protection in Arms and men . . . This is incorrect for Anderson appears to have linked the fifth and sixth conditions so as to present a stronger case in his attack on the Company's later attitude towards Kedah.

Pulau Pinang would adversely affect the trade of Kuala Kedah, although a small compensation would be derived from the export of food and other supplies to the proposed settlement. Yet it is clear that he was prepared to sacrifice the net loss in order to secure the defence, and the independence, of Kedah.⁵⁶

Sultan Abdullah's letter to the Governor-General and his terms for the lease were conveyed by Light, to whom he entrusted the responsibility of representation on his behalf.⁵⁷ Unknown to Sultan Abdullah, however, Light was playing a double-game and while in Calcutta, instead of presenting the terms as final, he actually worked against Kedah's interests⁵⁸ and for which Kedah was ultimately to pay the price.

The expected Burmese invasion of Siam materialized towards the end of 1785. In the earlier invasions only northern and central Siam had been the scene of operations, but in 1785, Bodawpaya modified the usual plan and employed the strategy of attacking Siam on all possible fronts, on the north, west and south.⁵⁹ Almost simultaneously, a four-pronged attack was launched which entered Siamese territory at nine different points.⁶⁰ A strong force invaded Siam from the north, aimed directly at Bangkok, while the main army led by Bodawpaya himself pushed from Martaban across the

⁵⁶ Anderson, *op.cit.* 152, estimated Sultan Abdullah's loss of revenue on this trade at \$20,000 Spanish a year.

⁵⁷ Sultan Abdullah referred to Light as his wakil, while Light himself, in one of his letters to the Governor-General, wrote that Sultan Abdullah had 'appointed me his agent in the business', i.e. the lease of Pulau Pinang. See R.K. to G.G., 24 Shawal, 1199, A.H., SSR, 2, f. 34 (FWCP, 2 March 1786) and Light to G.G., 23 Jan. 1786, SSR, 1 (Calcutta, 25 Jan. 1786). Swettenham, *op.cit.* 34; Emerson, *Malaysia*, 75; Clodd, *op.cit.* 36; L.A. Mills, *op.cit.* 50; and Tregonning, *The British*, 75-6, all wrongly place these discussions as having taken place and Sultan Abdullah's letter as having been written in 1786, instead of August 1785. Emerson, *op.cit.* 75, also wrongly identifies Sultan Abdullah as Sultan Muhammed Jiwa.

⁵⁸ See Bonney, *op.cit.* 144-8.

⁵⁹ G.E. Gerini, 'Historical Retrospect of Junk Ceylon Island', 61, points out that the reverses suffered by the Burmese in northern and central Siam in earlier wars accounted for the inclusion of an attack on Siam in the south. More important, it was also aimed at taking over Isthmian Siam and those Malay States under Siamese suzerainty.

⁶⁰ Chakrabongse, *op.cit.* 98, estimates the total Burmese strength as 100,000 men and that of the Siamese as 50,000.

Three Pagoda Pass to Kanchanaburi and Ratchburi. The third army launched its attack from Mergui to head across the Isthmus of Kra and to move down the east coast through Chumporn and Chaiya towards Nakorn Si'thammarat.⁶¹ A war flotilla which formed the fourth prong, sailed southwards from Mergui in December 1875 and successfully attacked Takua-pa and Takua-thung⁶² with the help of a land force that had pushed down the coast.⁶³ From here, the land force cut across the Isthmus towards Nakorn Si'thammarat and Singora,⁶⁴ while the flotilla sailed on to attack Thalang. Chalang, the capital, was attacked in late January 1786 and besieged, without much success, for a month.⁶⁵

It is clear from the evidence that Sultan Abdullah had to face various demands from the Siamese, in keeping with their claims of suzerainty, and from the Burmese, in exercise of the suzerainty they now claimed. It will be remembered that Sultan Abdullah had anticipated an overwhelming Burmese victory and was aware that the main Siamese armies were in northern and central Siam, leaving the Isthmian region virtually undefended;⁶⁶ furthermore, and even more vital to Kedah, there was still no news either from the East India Company or Light as to the Company's response to his offer. Pressed by these circumstances, Sultan Abdullah adopted the time-honoured policy that expediency deemed necessary to safeguard Kedah's interests and to save it from the ravage of war.

When a group of Burmese war-vessels appeared at Kuala Kedah in January 1786, at the time Thalang was being besieged, demanding a supply of arms and ammunition, and quite obviously, Kedah's recognition of Burmese overlordship as well, Sultan Abdullah

⁶¹ Simmonds, *op.cit.* 598.

⁶² Gerini, *op.cit.* 61.

⁶³ Salarak, *op.cit.* 135.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* 136.

⁶⁵ For details of the Burmese invasion of peninsular Siam and the siege of Thalang, see Simmonds, *op.cit.* 597-9, 601-4; Gerini, *op.cit.* 61-6; Sukhabanij in *Papers on Malayan History*, 5; Salarak, *op.cit.* 124-36, 164-7 and Chakrabongse, *op.cit.* 97-100.

⁶⁶ See Light's Journal, SSR, 2, ff.26-7 (FWCP, 13 Dec. 1786).

showed no hesitation in complying.⁶⁷ He was, however, far more politic than just that, for in addition to sending the supplies to the Burmese, he also sent along similar supplies to the Siamese forces then being besieged in Thalang, with letters addressed to both the besiegers and the besieged!⁶⁸ This was Kedah's only path to avoid invasion and its attendant destruction: Sultan Abdullah had to please both sides for Kedah's survival.

A Burmese source has a more interesting account relating to Kedah's assistance to the Burmese forces which reads, 'the Sawbaw of Malaka then came and tendered submission with presents of guns, firearms and various kinds of cloth'.⁶⁹ The account lends itself to a number of interpretations, but underlying all of them is Sultan Abdullah's desire to obviate any attack on Kedah by the Burmese.

The Burmese army which had moved across the Isthmus from Takua-pa successfully attacked and occupied Nakorn Si'thammarat and Singora by February 1786, thus allowing Kedah, Petani and Terengganu to relinquish the hold that Siam claimed over them. The main Burmese armies, however, found Siam as strong as she had been in 1777, and pitted against the able leadership of Rama I, suffered serious reverses and defeats, and by March 1786 the Burmese forces had been repulsed in the north and west. Rama I then sent the *Uparat* or 'second king' to recover the Isthmian provinces, which he successfully re-took by around May.⁷⁰ Sultan Abdullah must have been seriously alarmed by these rapid developments, especially so because the *Uparat* at the head of his victorious army would next turn his attention to the Malay States.

⁶⁷ Light to G.G., 12 Sept. 1786, SSR, 2, ff. 172-3 (FWCP, 13 Dec. 1786).

⁶⁸ Ibid. James Scott has a slightly varying account of this, viz. 'While these matters were passing, the empires of Ava and Siam were at war, and a fleet of vessels sent by the Emperor of Ava, to capture Tunsaling (Thalang) have been Friendly Received by the King of Kedah, his Lord Paramount, the King of Siam threatened to smash him the first occasion.' See J. Scott, 'The Settlement of Penang', *JMBRAS*, XXVIII, i (1955), 42.

⁶⁹ Salarak, *op.cit.* 135-6. The translator has identified the 'Sawbaw of Malaka' as the raja of Melaka. This is an obvious mistake of application of the title for all the circumstances indicate that the chronicler was referring to the Raja of Kedah.

⁷⁰ See Chakrabongse, *op.cit.* 99-100; Gerini, *op.cit.* 63; Salarak, *op.cit.* 136 and Simmonds, *op.cit.* 601-2.

Sultan Abdullah (in a situation almost identical to that of Sultan Muhammed Jiwa in 1769) found himself placed in a very delicate position in view of the assistance he had given the Burmese, his recognition of Burmese overlordship and his failure to resist the Burmese push across the Isthmus and their temporary occupation of Nakorn Si'thammarat and Singora. Furthermore, certain individuals, either out of jealousy or to gain favour or out of aspiration to the Rajaship, made their way to the *Uparat* at Singora and gave exaggerated accounts of the help Sultan Abdullah had rendered the Burmese.⁷¹ Largely out of a combination of the effects that these reports would have, the fear of reprisal and the threat of Siamese punitive action to impose a firmer grip on Kedah, Sultan Abdullah prepared for any possibility of invasion. He therefore despatched the Dato' Bendahara, the Dato' Laksamana and other officers with about 10,000 men to defend the mountain passes on the Kedah/Singora-Petani frontier.⁷²

These military measures were purely defensive in design but at the same time, Sultan Abdullah adopted other measures to forestall invasion. The first positive move in the tense situation appears to have been made by the *Uparat* when he sent for Sultan Abdullah, obviously to provide an explanation for the help Kedah had rendered the Burmese and to reaffirm his recognition of Siamese overlordship after the brief Burmese interregnum.⁷³ Fearing treachery and probably playing for time, Sultan Abdullah sent Tunku Chena,

⁷¹ Light to G.G., 12 Sept. 1786, SSR, 2, f. 173 (FWCP, 13 Dec. 1786). This is an interesting point in that it reveals an avenue resorted to by aspirants to power. By exploiting Sultan Abdullah's assistance to the Burmese and thereby discrediting his loyalty to Siam, they seemed to have hoped to win the favour of the *Uparat* and with Siamese military backing to replace Sultan Abdullah. When seen in perspective, such an avenue was one of the principal lines of action in the power structure of Kedah as well as of the other Malay States and if, in this instance, it had materialized, it would have borne some very interesting implications.

⁷² Light's Journal, SSR, 2, f. 263 (FWCP, 13 Dec. 1786). Sultan Abdullah even made an attempt to get Captain Gray and his marines to join in the defence of Kedah and 'to avail himself of the credit this Force would give him as a means to intimidate the Siamese'. Ibid. ff. 265-6.

⁷³ Light's Journal, SSR, 2, f. 263 (FWCP, 13 Dec. 1786).

his brother in law,⁷⁴ instead, armed with presents.⁷⁵ On learning of the *Uparat's* refusal to see Tunku Chena and the former's insistence that he should go in person, Sultan Abdullah again side-stepped the demand by sending his eldest son⁷⁶ with larger presents and with fully delegated powers.⁷⁷

From the evidence it is clear that at Singora, Sultan Abdullah's son reaffirmed Kedah's recognition of Siamese overlordship, and as proof of this, he acceded to the *Uparat's* demands that Kedah should join in an invasion of Burma and provide perahu2 to attack Mergui and Tavoy. In addition, Sultan Abdullah was required to send a hundred koyan of rice to Thalang,⁷⁸ and four brass cannon, four twelve pounders and a quantity of cloth to the *Uparat*. These were complied with and served to secure an easing of the tension, following which the Kedah forces were recalled from the frontier.⁷⁹ For yet another time, Kedah had avoided the storm and prevented a bitter conquest similar to that taking place in Petani,⁸⁰ by paying the cheaper price.

By a strange coincidence, on 1 or 2 July, immediately after the direct threat of invasion had been removed, but of which the fears

⁷⁴ Tunku Chena had married Tunku Rahimah, Sultan Abdullah's own sister. (See Light to G.G., 12 Sept. 1786, SSR, 2, f. 161 (FWCP, 13 Dec. 1786)). A former chief in the district of Chena in Petani, he had made an attempt to negotiate with the Siamese to replace his brother (presumably either as chief of the district or as Raja of Petani), but on being discovered, had sought refuge in Kedah. Although having no administrative authority in Kedah, by virtue of his being rich and by his marriage to Sultan Muhammed Jiwa's daughter, he is known to have had considerable influence in the Raja's *Bechara* or council (ibid. ff. 165-6). Chena, also known as Tana, Ch'hena or Sehena was on lat. 7° 25' (See. *BP.*, II, iv (1911), 143.

⁷⁵ Light's Journal, SSR, 2, f. 263 (FWCP 13 Dec. 1786).

⁷⁶ Ibid. f. 264. It is difficult to determine whether this was Tunku Pangeran who later became Raja of Kedah, taking the title of Sultan Ahmad Taju'd-din Halim Shah (see chapter 5).

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ This was to help ease the acute food shortages on the island, occasioned by the Burmese attack. See Simmonds, *op.cit.* 598-604.

⁷⁹ Light's Journal, SSR, 2, ff. 264-5 (FWCP, 13 Dec. 1786).

⁸⁰ See chapter 4.

and dangers constantly remained,⁸¹ Sultan Abdullah received a reply from the Acting Governor-General of India to his letter of August 1785 and the Company's 'Replies' to the conditions he had stipulated for the lease of Pulau Pinang.⁸² The following were the replies to the required conditions:

To the 1st Article: This Government will always keep an armed vessel stationed to guard the island of Pinang and the coast adjacent belonging to the King of Queda.⁸³

2nd: All vessels under every denomination bound to the port of Queda shall not be interrupted by the Hon'ble Company's Agent or any person acting for the Company or under their authority but left entirely to their own free will either to trade with the King of Queda or with the agents or subjects of the Hon'ble Company.

3rd: The Governor-General and Council on the part of the East India Company will take care that the King of Queda shall not be a sufferer by an English settlement being formed on the Island of Pinang.⁸⁴

4th: The Agent of the Hon'ble Company or any person residing on the island of Pinang under the Company's protection shall not make claims upon the King of Queda for debts incurred by the King's relations, Ministers, officers or Rayat [ra'ayat]. But the persons having demands upon any of the King's subjects shall have power to seize the

⁸¹ On reading Light's Journal, it is evident that by 30 June, Sultan Abdullah's son had returned from Singora and the *Uparat's* demands had been complied with. Two statements by Light, however, suggest that Sultan Abdullah was still not taking any chances. These were that 'the Malays (have been) recalled from the frontiers, but the people of Queda are not without their fears', and '... I added one hundred muskets which in their situation was of more consequence than all the rest [of the presents]'. See Light's Journal, SSR, 2, ff. 265, 266 (FWCP, 13 Dec. 1786). See also Light to G.G., 12 Sept. 1786, SSR, 2, ff. 132-3 (FWCP, 9 Oct. 1786).

⁸² *Ibid.* f. 266. See Appendix 2 (d) and 2 (c) for full texts.

⁸³ It is surprising how Tregonning, *The British*, 76, concludes that 'To the first condition, the Company replied that it would always keep an armed vessel stationed to guard the island coast of Penang'. Italics are mine.

⁸⁴ This reply was in reference to the condition requiring Spanish \$30,000 a year as compensation for Sultan Abdullah's loss of his royal monopolies (see p. 66). Clodd, *op.cit.* 38, writes 'When it is remembered that the former Sultan had admitted to Monckton only fifteen years earlier that he had 'never traded beyond \$10,000' it is obvious that Sultan Abdullah was now demanding an exorbitant figure for his hypothetical loss of trade. The Company seems, therefore, to have been fully justified in refraining from committing itself to a definite figure at this juncture'. What Clodd has failed to see is that Sultan Muhammed was referring to the value of his trade and not to the royal monopolies.

Persons and property of those indebted to them, according to the custom and usage of that country.

5th: All persons residing in the country belonging to the King of Queda who shall become his enemies or commit capital offences against the state shall not be protected by the English.⁸⁵

6th: This Article will be referred for the orders of the English East India Company together with such parts of the King of Queda's requests as cannot be complied with previous to their consent being obtained.⁸⁶

Duly unimpressed by the vagueness that shrouded the Governor-General's letter and his 'Replies', the lack of guarantees on the question of compensation and the provision of military assistance, the complete absence of any formal treaty and perturbed, perhaps, by the 'go-ahead' tone of the letter, on 3 July Sultan Abdullah summoned Light to Bukit Pinang⁸⁷ to clarify matters. The discussions particularly those held on 8 July,⁸⁸ during which Sultan Abdullah persuaded Light to sign a Malay translation of the Governor-General's letter,⁸⁹ were crucial because a number of extremely important statements were made. To use Light's own words, Sultan Abdullah

read the letter over again and remarked that the Governor-General had deferred entering into a Treaty with him, until an answer should arrive from Europe and as that was the case it was needless going to Pinang and incurring an Expense which perhaps might prove useless. To which

⁸⁵ This completely fulfilled Sultan Abdullah's requirement. Wright and Reid, *Malay Peninsula*, 77, having wrongly interpreted Light's remarks on the fifth condition, conclude that 'The Government adopting the hint given them by Light were cautious in their reply to the Sultan of Kedah'.

⁸⁶ SSR, 2, ff. 67-9 (FWCP, 2 March 1786).

⁸⁷ See Light's Journal, SSR, 2, f. 265 and J. Low, *JIA*, III (1849), 484-5.

⁸⁸ Wright and Cartwright, *op.cit.* 51, wrongly place these discussions as having taken place on 3rd July.

⁸⁹ Light's Journal, SSR, 2, f. 267. Clodd, *op.cit.* 49, writes that when Sultan Abdullah queried a point in the Governor-General's letter, 'in order to convince him to the contrary, two translations were made by different persons, and after a few more of those delays so dear to the heart of the oriental, the Sultan announced his readiness to sign the Treaty . . .'. This is false for it was Sultan Abdullah who asked for the three (not two) translations to be made, and not Light as implied by Clodd. Furthermore, Sultan Abdullah never signed anything, but requested Light to sign the G.G.'s letter which Clodd has called a Treaty. (See *ibid.* ff. 267-8.)

I answered the greater expense was already incurred by our coming there and it would make little difference whether I remained at Queda or went to Pinang. The Laxamana then desired to know if the Hon'ble Company would pay the King 30,000 Spanish Dollars per annum for the trade, and if not how much they would pay. I told him that I would not take upon me to declare what the Hon'ble Company would resolve to pay, but I was sure they would not allow the king to be a sufferer by their settling in his country without making him an adequate recompence He then desired to know if in case the Hon'ble Company's letter should not be agreeable to the king whether I would return to Bengal quietly and without enmity. To this I made no answer. . . . The King said he did not mean that he would be satisfied with no less a sum than 30,000 Spanish Dollars, he might perhaps accept of 20, or even 10,000, but that must be in his own option. He asked me if the prahus [perahu2] came with any tin if I would purchase it; I told him I not only should purchase it myself but that every person was at liberty to buy and sell as he pleased. That it was the custom of all English Governments to encourage commerce and not restrain it; however, to satisfy the king of our good intentions, I would allow him half of the profits upon the purchase and sale of tin, opium and rattans, which were the articles he claimed as his prerogative, but this was not to extend to any prahus or vessels that might be sent to or arrive from foreign ports. This was agreed to and a paper was drawn up for that purpose which is to remain in force until the letter arrives.⁹⁰

Some interesting points emerge from a study of these discussions. Firstly, Sultan Abdullah's remark that 'the Governor-General has deferred from entering into a treaty with him, until an answer should arrive from Europe and as that was the case it was needless going to Pinang and incurring an expense which perhaps might prove useless' shows very distinctly that he was not willing to allow the Company to occupy Pulau Pinang until such time as a formal treaty containing definite provisions for Kedah's defence was signed.⁹¹ And further evidence of this was the Laksamana's

⁹⁰ Light's Journal, SSR, 2, ff. 269-71.

⁹¹ This, I think, should prove conclusively that the fundamental motive behind the lease of Pulau Pinang was to obtain defensive assistance for Kedah. J. Low, *Burney Papers*, V, ii (1916), 84, wrote, 'Before the final arrangements took effect, the Rajah asked Capt. Light if, in the event of the decision of the Home Govern-

question that 'if in case the Hon'ble Company's letter should not be agreeable to the king [Raja] whether Light 'would return to Bengal quietly and without enmity'. Significantly enough, Light did not reply.⁹²

Secondly, by Sultan Abdullah's telling Light that 'it perhaps might prove useless' in going to Pulau Pinang, it is clear that should the Court of Directors not have agreed to the defensive requirements he had stipulated, Light would have to withdraw. This point is even clearer in the Laksamana's query that if in case the decision of the Court of Directors were unacceptable to Sultan Abdullah whether Light 'would return to Bengal quietly and without enmity'.

Thirdly, Light's reply that 'the greater expense was already incurred . . . and it would make little difference whether I remained at Kedah or went to Pinang' would have seemed to Sultan Abdullah to be either an acknowledgement by Light that his occupation of Pulau Pinang was tentative, until such time as a reply arrived from the Court of Directors which would confirm this occupation or oblige him to withdraw, depending on whether or not protection was to be given to Kedah, and/or that the asking for sanction from the Court of Directors to provide protection was only a routine matter and that the Court would give a favourable reply.⁹³

Fourthly, contrary to accepted history, Pulau Pinang was neither leased, granted nor ceded by any written treaty or agreement. Sultan Abdullah gave permission to Light for a temporary occupation of the island until such time as a definite reply was received from the Company. No written treaty, engagement or agreement, or for that matter, drafts of such, were ever drawn up or entered

ment proving unfavourable, he would return to Bengal . . . But the mere putting of the question shows that the Rajah did not expect that the British force would return whatever the result might be.' It is quite surprising how Low arrived at this conclusion, but when seen in the context of all his writings, it is nothing more than an attempt to justify his employers' retention of the island.

⁹² The tactful silence maintained by Light on this point fits into the pattern that is indicative of Light's personal interest in the establishment of a settlement in Pulau Pinang. See Bonney, *op.cit.* 150.

⁹³ On Light's part, the answer was evasive and designed to ensure prior occupation of the island. See Bonney, *op.cit.* 150-1.

into regarding any territorial transfer, nor is there any trace or reference to any such document in the records. Pulau Pinang was an integral part of Kedah as the East India Company itself acknowledged and by taking formal possession of the island on 11 August 1786,⁹⁴ in the name of King George III of England, Light not only committed, by European standards, a breach of international law but cheated Sultan Abdullah as well. He did so without any proper or final treaty or agreement, without a satisfactory reply to the conditions specified by Sultan Abdullah and with full knowledge that he had been allowed to occupy the island on a tentative basis subject to the Company's decision on the provision of protection, and on the understanding with Sultan Abdullah that if this protection was not granted, he would withdraw.⁹⁵ The declaration of Pulau Pinang as a British possession was therefore illegal for no such verbal or written permission was given, and the Company was, in effect, in illegal occupation of Kedah territory.

Lastly came the problem of compensation. In anticipation of the fact that he stood to lose by the lease of Pulau Pinang, Sultan Abdullah sought a provision whereby he would be compensated Spanish \$30,000 annually by the Company to cover the loss he would suffer by giving up his monopoly rights. The Company's reply to this was that 'the Governor-General and Council on the

⁹⁴ Winstedt, *Malaya and its History*, London, 1962, 54, wrongly states that Light took formal possession of the island on 17 July.

⁹⁵ Tregonning, *The British*, 43, wrongly states that Light 'handed over... the Company letter, which made reply to the Sultan's terms of cession. With this accepted... he sailed then south to Penang... taking formal possession of the Island...', W.E. Maxwell and W.S. Gibson, *Treaties and Engagements Affecting the Malay States and Borneo*, London, 1924, 95, and Clodd, *op.cit.* 153-5, like most historians, incorrectly refer to Sultan Abdullah's letter to the G.G. and the G.G.'s 'Replies' to him as an 'Agreement with the King of Queda for the cession of Prince of Wales Island in 1786'. Clodd, *op.cit.* 49-50, writes 'the Sultan announced his readiness to sign the Treaty, which in its final form had been worded so far as the vital clauses were concerned in guarded phraseology by the Company. With this document duly signed and sealed Light... sailed...'. This is completely erroneous. Wright and Reid, *op.cit.* 75, state that 'eventually, the Sultan signed the treaty on the understanding that the instrument was to be submitted for final approval.' There is no such evidence. Bassett, 'European Influence in the Malay Peninsula', 31, writes, '... having duly negotiated a final treaty with Sultan Abdullah, Light hoisted the British flag at Penang...'. This is again incorrect. My italics. For similar misconceptions see also Tregonning, *History*, 84; Hall, *Southeast Asia*, 468; Wright and Cartwright, *op.cit.* 51; and Tregonning, *The British*, 76

part of the East India Company will take care that the King of Kedah shall not be a sufferer by an English settlement being formed on the island of Pinang', and that the final decision had to be left to the Court of Directors. When the Laksamana questioned Light about whether the Company would pay \$30,000 per annum or if not how much they would pay, Light gave no definite answer, merely saying 'I could not take upon me to declare what the Hon'ble Company would resolve to pay, but I was sure that they would not allow the king to be a sufferer by their settling in his country without making him an adequate recompense'. The Laksamana, clearly recognizing that both the questions of protection and compensation were still unsettled, asked Light the crucial question whether he would quit Pulau Pinang should the reply from London not be agreeable to Sultan Abdullah. A little later, Sultan Abdullah clarified his position, declaring that it was his prerogative to decide on the amount as compensation, whether it be \$30,000 or \$10,000. However, until such time as news of the decision arrived from London, he obliged Light to sign a document whereby Light undertook to pay one-half of the profits on the purchase and sale of tin, opium and rattan at Pulau Pinang.⁹⁶ And it was clear to both parties that this agreement did not in any way imply Kedah's recognition of Light's occupation of the island as final; in fact it stands as further testimony that its occupation was only tentative.

⁹⁶ Light's Journal, SSR, 2, f.271. Additional evidence that Light did sign such a document was the letter he wrote to Andrew Ross, dated 1 Feb. 1787. He wrote, 'and when I arrived the Laxamana and officers raised so many difficulties that I could hardly obtain permission of the King to come to the island. In order to begin as peaceably as possible, I signed an agreement that I would give the King half the profits arising from the sales of tin, opium and rattans, until the letters from the Hon'ble Company should arrive.' See 'Formation of the Establishment on Pooio Pinang' *Miscellaneous Papers relating to Indo-China*, 1 (1886, First Series), 31, ed. by R. Rost.

IV

THE GRAND ILLUSION

AFTER Sultan Abdullah had granted Light permission to tentatively occupy Pulau Pinang, the situation in which he found Kedah placed was far from satisfactory. His immediate concern was the policy adopted by the *Uparat* towards the Malay States, which did not seem to be merely one of reassertion of suzerainty after the brief Burmese interlude, but coming in the wake of his successes against the Burmese and symbolic of the new Chakri policy of expansion,¹ it appeared to represent a move to increase Siamese dominance, especially over Petani.² By the beginning of August 1786 the fortress at Pujit had fallen,³ after which the *Uparat* began a systematic policy of extermination,⁴ warning Sultan Abdullah not to accept any refugees from Petani.⁵ Sultan Abdullah's main fears were the presence of this conquering army on the borders of Kedah, which might next be turned onto Kedah itself⁶ and the

¹Vella, *Siam under Rama III*, 59.

²The Petani rulers, however, did not welcome this extension of Siamese control and probably incensed by the brief period of independence that they had enjoyed, offered resistance to the *Uparat's* attempts to bring them more firmly under Siamese domination. War broke out, but the far stronger and better organized Siamese forces proved too overwhelming. See Light to G.G.; 12 Sept. 1786, SSR, 2, f. 132 (FWCP, 13 Dec. 1786) and Light to G.G., 25 Nov. 1786, SSR, 2, f. 410 (FWCP, 22 Jan. 1787). See also James Scott to G.G., 7 Sept. 1786, SSR, 2, f. 140 (FWCP, 9 Oct. 1786), who wrote, 'the Siamese have had such decisive success in the last campaign after driving back the Burmans as to attempt the conquest of Petani'. For details, see the 'Petani Chronicle (MS), which was located recently and is being edited by Dr. D.K. Wyatt.

³Light to G.G., 12 Sept. 1786, SSR, 2, f. 281 (FWCP, 13 Dec. 1786).

⁴Light wrote, 'The Siamese General is extirpating Pattany [Petani] all the men, children and old women, he orders to be tied and thrown upon the ground and then trampled to death by elephants'. Ibid.

⁵Light to G.G., 25 Nov. 1786, SSR, 2, f. 410 (FWCP, 22 Jan. 1787).

⁶See Light to G.G., 12 Sept. 1786, SSR, 2, ff. 133, 174 (FWCP, 13 Dec. 1786; also chapter III, note 81.

sheer impossibility of stopping the inflow of the Petani refugees.⁷

It was these dangerous circumstances that prompted Sultan Abdullah to turn to the East India Company for help. On 25 August 1786 he invited Light to come over for discussions, obviously in connexion with the provision of protection for Kedah, but Light sent Captain Glass instead.⁸ It is clear that Sultan Abdullah could not get a definite answer either from Glass, or later, from Light, whether or not the Company accepted all his terms for the lease of Pulau Pinang, for Light himself was awaiting instructions from the Bengal Government on the interim policy to be adopted, pending the decision of the Court of Directors.

Early in October, reports were received of Burmese plans to attack Siam in February 1787.⁹ Sultan Abdullah's immediate reaction was to ask Light to send a vessel to Mergui to obtain further information on the projected attack.¹⁰ Sultan Abdullah's attitude was understandable since Kedah was again placed in a situation similar to that of 1785-6.¹¹ Although he once again anticipated a Burmese victory, he must have been concerned at these developments, for if the Company had given a positive indication of defensive assistance, the problem, insofar as Kedah was concerned, would not have existed at all. He was, however, advised by Light to avoid involvement with either power and to take defensive measures.¹² In addition, and of far greater importance than this advice, was the assurance he was given by Light 'that while the English are here they will assist him if distressed'.¹³

Sultan Abdullah wrote another letter to Light soon afterwards in which he re-stated all the terms that he had laid down in 1785 for the lease of Pulau Pinang, and he also asked that he be informed immediately of the amount the Company was going to give him as compensation.¹⁴ It is not known how Light evaded the issue,

⁷ Light to G.G., 25 Nov. 1786, SSR, 2, f.408 (FWCP, 22 Jan. 1787).

⁸ Light's Journal, SSR, 2, ff.286-7 (FWCP, 13 Dec. 1786).

⁹ See Light to G.G., 5 Oct. 1786, SSR, 2, f. 188 (FWCP, 13 Dec. 1786); Salarak, JSS, VI (1959), 149-52 and Chakrabongse, *Lords of Life*, 100.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ See chapter III.

¹² Light to G.G., 5 Oct. 1786, SSR, 2, f. 188 (FWCP, 13 Dec. 1786).

¹³ *Ibid.* Light gave this assurance on his own authority.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* f. 210.

but judging from other evidence, it is apparent that Sultan Abdullah was requested to await the arrival of instructions from Calcutta. Between October and November, Sultan Abdullah repeatedly requested Light to come to Kedah for consultations about additional Siamese demands on Kedah and the possible acceptance of some of the Petani refugees as settlers on the island, but he repeatedly received only 'evasive and negative answers'.¹⁵ This is of interest for three reasons. Firstly, Sultan Abdullah's references to Light on various problems tend to reveal a conviction on his part that he was within his rights, under the terms for the lease of Pulau Pinang, in consulting the Company's agent on issues affecting Kedah. Secondly, the tenor and content of Light's replies and his repeated refusals to meet Sultan Abdullah seem to reflect a reluctance on his part to face the Raja because he tacitly recognized that his formal possession of Pulau Pinang was illegal and not in accordance with Sultan Abdullah's conditions.¹⁶ Thirdly, in his earnest wish to help the refugees, Sultan Abdullah felt that if they were in Pulau Pinang and thereby under the Company's protection, the Siamese would neither do him nor them any harm.¹⁷

The Siamese, having by the middle of November 1786 completely subjugated Petani, began to exert greater pressure on the other northern Malay States.¹⁸ The Raja of Terengganu, Sultan Mansur Riayat Shah, fearing a threat of invasion by the Siamese because of a refusal to give in to some of their demands, wrote to Captain Glass for assistance in November 1786, and later in February 1787, offering commercial concessions to the Company in return for protection.¹⁹ Siamese pressure on Kedah seems to

¹⁵ Light to G.G., 25 Nov. 1786, SSR, 2, f. 408 (FWCP, 22 Jan. 1787).

¹⁶ See Bonney, 'Francis Light and Penang' pp. 150-4.

¹⁷ Topping estimated that about 15,000 refugees from Petani settled in the Sungai Muda basin. See Topping, 'Some Account of Kedah', 40.

¹⁸ Light to G.G., 25 Nov. 1786, SSR, 2, f. 410 (FWCP, 22 Jan. 1787), and 'Petani Chronicle (MS)', *op.cit.*

¹⁹ Raja of Terengganu to Light, 24 Feb. 1787, SSR, 2 (FWCP, 1 April 1787). In July 1787, Sultan Mansur sent two representatives to Pulau Pinang with a letter of appeal for protection addressed to the G.G. He mentioned the Siamese demand that he do homage to the *Uparat* at Singora in 1786 which he refused, sending various presents instead. The Siamese threatened invasion, but the attack never came, probably because of the *Uparat's* recall to Bangkok. See Light to G.G., 2 Oct. 1787, SSR, 3 (FWCP, 25 Jan. 1788).

have been even greater, for on 24 November 1786 Sultan Abdullah sent the Dato' Shahbandar to Pulau Pinang to press for a categorical answer whether or not the Company would come to Kedah's aid in case of an invasion by Siam.²⁰ Barely had the Shahbandar left when news was received that Bodawpaya was on the point of invading Siam again²¹ and orders arrived from Rama I that Kedah was to help defend Thalang from an expected Burmese attack.²² Without any hesitation, the Laksamana was deputed to Pulau Pinang to ask Light to come to Kedah for discussions to 'consider what [was] best to be done for the safety of [the] country'.²³

There is no evidence of any response to this call nor is it known what Light counselled. What is most significant of all these references to Pulau Pinang is that they quite lucidly illustrate Sultan Abdullah's position. It was precisely because he had wanted to avoid involvement in the Burman-Siamese wars and the provision of tributary service that he was in favour of a Company settlement on the island. Now that Light was in occupation of the island, he deemed that the Company was obliged to help defend Kedah and that consultation was a natural corollary. Light never revealed what his answer to these enquiries were; strictly, he could not have guaranteed that the Company would help protect Kedah for he had still to receive the considered reply of the Governor-General.²⁴ On the other hand, Sultan Abdullah had earlier been given the promise that the Company would assist Kedah 'if distressed'. Although the assurance may have been renewed, it would

²⁰ Light to G.G., 25 Nov. 1786, SSR, 2, f. 410 (FWCP, 22 Jan. 1787).

²¹ *Ibid.* f. 412; see also Salarak *Hmannan Yazawin Dawgyi*, 151.

²² Light to G.G., 25 Nov. 1786, SSR, 2, f. 412 (FWCP, 22 Jan. 1787).

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ When the answer did arrive from Calcutta around February, 1787, it was that the Company was not willing to grant Kedah protection or provide any military assistance out of the fear that it might lead to dispute with Siam and 'do great injury to the English trade at Pegu'. [See G.G. to Light, 22 Jan. 1787, SSR, 2, ff. 440-1 (FWCP, 22 Jan. 1787).] Light, however, does not appear to have informed Sultan Abdullah of this decision (see p. 86), while he tried though unsuccessfully to persuade the Company to reverse its decision' R. Winstedt, *Malaya and its History*, London, 1956, 54; Winstedt, *History of Malaya*, 167 and Clodd, *Pioneer*, 62-3, wrongly state that the first instructions from Calcutta on this matter came in January 1788.

seem, however, that it did not benefit the Sultan in any way and that he actually submitted to the Siamese demands in order to preserve peace.

The other unsolved issue was that of compensation from the Company, for no word was received from Light as to the amount the Company would pay. Sultan Abdullah continued to press his claim and by May 1787, according to Light, he exerted such pressure as he could by stopping provisions from being exported to Pulau Pinang.²⁵ It will also be recollected that in addition to the fixed annual compensation specified by Sultan Abdullah, an agreement had also been signed in July 1786 whereby Sultan Abdullah was to receive one-half of the profits arising from the island's trade in tin, opium and rattan, until such time as instructions arrived from Calcutta as to the sum the Company was willing to offer as compensation.²⁶ However from all the available evidence, it is clear that Light did not keep the agreement. This may help to explain why in September 1787, Sultan Abdullah laid a duty of \$20 Spanish per koyan on all rice exported to the island.²⁷ Since the Company had not decided on the amount and Light had omitted to send half the profits as he had undertaken, Sultan Abdullah must have resorted to this impost to balance the loss that he was already incurring by the breach of his monopoly.

The major problems that bedevilled Sultan Abdullah, however, were connected with the continuing series of attacks and counter-attacks between Burma and Siam.²⁸ Towards the end of December 1787, he received further threatening news from Siam. Kedah was ordered to provide 200 perahu for a Siamese expedition to be launched against Burma.²⁹ The Siamese Governors of Nakorn Si'thammarat and Singora were to use Kedah as a staging point

²⁵ Light to G.G., 7 May 1787, SSR, 2 (FWCP, 13 June 1787). It is difficult to verify the truth of this because by the middle of June, Light was writing that 'the daily supply of rice from Kedah is more than sufficient'. See Light to G.G., 18 June 1787, SSR, 2 (FWCP, 29 July 1787).

²⁶ Light to G.G., 16 Nov. 1787, SSR, 2 (FWCP, 25 Jan. 1788); also chapter III.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ See Chakrabongse, *op.cit.* 100-2.

²⁹ Light to G.G., 6 Jan. 1788, SSR, 3 (FWCP, 6 Feb. 1788); also Light to G.G., 16 Nov. 1787, SSR, 3 (FWCP, 25 Jan. 1788).

for mounting the attack and Sultan Abdullah was required to furnish arms, ammunition and provisions for about 10,000 men!³⁰ Rather than face the consequences of not complying, which the Siamese warned would be invasion, and fearing the presence of Siamese forces in Kedah, Sultan Abdullah promised to provide 150 perahu and 5,000 men.³¹ In the meantime, he wrote to Light on 26 December, asking for advice on how to act with regard to these demands which were 'without precedent or example'.³²

By June 1788 Sultan Abdullah has received a fresh Siamese demand to supply arms and provisions for 20,000 men who were to be sent against Mergui and Tavoy, and a sum of \$30,000.³³ Probably out of exasperation at these continually increasing demands, Sultan Abdullah appears to have contemplated an attack on the bordering Siamese provinces of Nakorn Si'thammarat, Phthalung and Singora, taking advantage of the fact that Siam was engaged in a war with Burma on her northern frontiers.³⁴ He was confident of support from the predominantly Malay population of those provinces and he hoped to take advantage of their grievances against the Siamese and their general anti-Siamese feeling to break Siamese control over them.³⁵ Little did he bear in mind that Siam was far too powerful to allow these provinces to slip so easily from her grasp.

Shortly after the receipt of the Siamese order, Sultan Abdullah received a letter from the Governor-General of India as well as word from Light that the East India Company had decided on a

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid. It is not quite known how Sultan Abdullah explained to the Siamese, or rather, explained away, the presence of the Company's settlement in Kedah. The settlement must have continually remained a thorn in Kedah-Siam relations, for Siam is known to have specifically forbidden Kedah from allowing the establishment of any European settlement, and its allowance would have been regarded (quite rightly), as an attempt to flout Siam's suzerain hold. (See chapter 2).

³³ Light to G.G., 20 June 1788, SSR, 3 (FWCP, 25 Aug. 1788).

³⁴ Ibid. See also Salarak, *JSS*, VI (1959), 148-52 and Chakrabongse, *op.cit.*

³⁵ Ibid. Light himself acknowledged that the people of these areas had reason to revolt.

sum as compensation.³⁶ Sultan Abdullah sent the Laksamana to Pulau Pinang with a letter to Light asking him to come to Kedah to give his advice about the latest Siamese demand and his proposed plan to attack the southern provinces. The Laksamana, however, found Light unwilling to come and instead held discussions with him there.³⁷

The discussions between the Laksamana and Light are of considerable interest. Light, quite rightly, advised against an attack on the Siamese provinces because Siam was far too strong and would one day seek revenge. Furthermore, as Kedah would be the aggressor, 'it would put entirely out of the power of the Hon'ble Company to assist him [Sultan Abdullah], the Company having no excuse for making war against Siam',³⁸ a statement which had the false implication that the Company would come to Kedah's assistance in case of unprovoked Siamese aggression. Light also suggested that Sultan Abdullah write to Siam stating that he was executing the earlier Siamese order, but that the scarcity of grain and a decline in Kedah's trade prevented him from meeting the new demand; in the meantime, efforts should not be spared to secure Kedah's own defences.³⁹ On the question of compensation, Light made an offer of \$10,000 per annum for a limited period of eight years or an alternative of \$4,000 per annum 'for as long a period as the Hon'ble Company should continue in possession of [the] island'.⁴⁰

³⁶ That Sultan Abdullah expected the fulfilment of all his terms in this letter may be seen in the ceremony with which he received it. (See Light to G.G. 20 June 1788, SSR, 3 (FWCP, 21 Aug. 1788)). The letter and presents from the G.G., however, had been sent as a result of Light's reports to Calcutta that Sultan Abdullah had been pressing him for a settlement and had stopped provisions from reaching the island. It ran, 'I have heard of Your Majesty's friendship and Kindness by letters from Capt. Light and am anxious to testify how much happiness this information has occasioned me. With this, I have dispatched to Capt. Light presents . . . consisting of Europe articles, which tho' of no great value I hope your Majesty will receive as a token of regard to your Majesty . . .' See G.G. to R.K. 25 Jan. 1788, SSR, 3 (FWCP, 25 Jan. 1788).

³⁷ Light to G.G., 20 June 1788, SSR, 3 (FWCP, 25 Aug. 1788).

³⁸ Light to G.G., 20 June 1788, SSR, 3 (FWCP, 21 Aug. 1788).

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* See also, Light to Hay, 25 Jan. 1788, SSR, 3 (FWCP, 25 Jan. 1788). The

It appears that it was only after these discussions in June 1788 that Sultan Abdullah learnt for the first time of the Company's refusal to grant him military assistance.⁴¹ This refusal must have come as a severe disappointment because the provision of defensive assistance was the major consideration that underlay his decision to offer the lease of Pulau Pinang in 1785. Even more extraordinary was the fact that the Company was now blatantly repudiating Macpherson's original promise in 1786 to defend Kedah by sea.⁴² Furthermore, the sum to be paid as compensation was grossly below his specified figure of \$30,000 per annum and the proposal of \$10,000 for a limited number of years implied that at the expiration of this term, Pulau Pinang would become Com-

alternative proposal of \$4,000 per annum was apparently Light's own idea. Mention must also be made of a contradiction in Light's statements regarding the Laksamana. Light personally made a request to Sultan Abdullah that the Laksamana be sent for the discussions, indicating a sense of trust and friendship in the latter. In 1786/7, however, when Light found Sultan Abdullah pressing for the fulfilment of his terms, he accused the Laksamana of being the principal opponent of the lease of Pulau Pinang and the one who was putting the biggest impediments in Light's way (see chapter 3). In Nov. 1786, for example, he had written, '... the Laksamana from the beginning was much averse to our coming here and wishes to expel us...'. [Light to G.G., 25 Nov. 1786, SSR, (FWCP, 22 Jan. 1787)], while on 5 Oct., in appealing for extra sepoy, he had stated that Kedah would attack the settlement because the Laksamana was opposed to the lease of the island. See Light to G.G., 5 Oct. 1786, SSR, 2 (FWCP, 13 Dec. 1786); also Light to G.G., 25 Nov. 1786, SSR, 2 (FWCP, 22 Jan. 1787). This earlier attitude was to strengthen the Bengal government's view that he [Light] was on close terms with Sultan Abdullah.

⁴¹ Although Calcutta had sent instructions to Light in January 1787 that no military assistance was to be given to Kedah, there is no evidence that Light informed the Raja of this decision on his receipt of them. In all his despatches to Calcutta between February 1787 and February 1788, there is no reference to his having informed Sultan Abdullah of this decision. Furthermore, if he had conveyed Calcutta's decision to Sultan Abdullah, the latter would certainly have objected; yet again, there is no reference to such objections. In January 1788, Calcutta sent two letters to Light reiterating its strict instructions that no form of military assistance was to be afforded to Kedah, and once again there is no evidence of Light having informed Sultan Abdullah of the Company's stand. Even when Light wrote to Sultan Abdullah of the G.G.'s letter, he only mentioned 'Calcutta's intentions to come to a pecuniary settlement'. (See G.G. to Light, 25 January 1788, and Hay to Light, 25 Jan. 1788, SSR, 3 (FWCP, 25 Jan. 1788); see also, SSR, 2 and 3). For an explanation of Light's attitude, see Bonney, 'Francis Light and Penang.'

⁴² See Appendix 2(d) and 2(e). It is more than a matter of curiosity how all writers have overlooked this point.

pany territory outright.⁴³ While contemplating his future course of action, he was informed by Light 'that although the Company did not wish to make alliance which might occasion disputes with Powers they were at peace with, they had not positively forbid [his] assisting him if really distressed'.⁴⁴

After a period of silence, by the beginning of July 1789, at the very latest, Sultan Abdullah informed Light that the offer of \$10,000 per annum for eight years was unacceptable.⁴⁵ He then received feelers from Light whether he was prepared to sell the island, but very wisely, he indicated the negative, following which the figure of \$4,000 annually was once more suggested by Light.⁴⁶ Sultan Abdullah rejected this,⁴⁷ but simultaneously sent letters and messengers to Light to obtain a definite stipulation that the Company would assist Kedah with arms and men in case of a Siamese attack.⁴⁸ Once again, Sultan Abdullah received an evasive answer to the effect that

no treaty, which was likely to occasion a dispute between the Hon'ble Company and the Siamese, could be made without the approbation of the King of Great Britain; at present, as there was no reason for his entering into a war with the Siamese, he had nothing to fear; the Siamese and all other country powers would consider the English as his friends

⁴³ The G.G. had, in fact, instructed Light that after a payment for seven or ten years, Pulau Pinang would become Company territory outright and no payment be therefore made. See G.G. to Light, 25 Jan. 1788, SSR, 3 (FWCP, 25 Jan. 1788).

⁴⁴ Light to G.G., 20 June 1788, SSR, 3 (FWCP, 25 Aug. 1788). This was completely untrue and it is clear that Light deliberately attempted to mislead Sultan Abdullah so as to soften his reaction towards the Company's decisions [see G.G. to Light, 25 Jan. 1788 and Hay to Light, 25 Jan. 1788, SSR, 3 (FWCP 25 Jan. 1788)]. Sultan Abdullah, on his part, refused to be misled by yet another of Light's vague verbal assurances (see below). The G.G. as a matter of fact, later warned Light that this statement of his should not 'be construed into an assurance of aid in such an event' by Sultan Abdullah. See G.G. to Light, 25 Aug. 1788, SSR, 3 (FWCP 25 Aug. 1788).

⁴⁵ Light to G.G., 17 July 1789, SSR, 3 (FWCP 21 Aug. 1789).

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Light to G.G., 17 July 1789, SSR, 3 (FWCP, 21 Aug. 1789). In June 1789, a fleet, partly made up of Lanun perahu, under Syed Ali of Siantan had plundered Singora. Light suggested that the Siamese would hold Kedah and Terengganu responsible for the attack and indicated the strong possibilities of Siamese punitive action. There is also a reference to a Siamese attack on Burma and tributary demands on Kedah (*ibid.*) but which cannot be verified due to a lack of evidence in other sources.

and for that reason would not disturb him, unless provoked thereto by his bad policy.⁴⁹

According to Light, Sultan Abdullah, having become aware of the Company's refusal to defend and assist Kedah, made approaches to the Dutch in Melaka and Batavia offering them better terms if they would perform the role formerly expected of the English East India Company.⁵⁰ Light also claimed that in April 1789, Sultan Abdullah approached the French at Pondicherry on similar terms.⁵¹ As we have only Light's word on this, it is difficult to gauge the validity of these assertions, but even if it were true, Sultan Abdullah was only trying the alternative avenues because the Company had failed to live up to the conditions that he had laid down for its occupation of Pulau Pinang. In the face of increasing Siamese demands and in the perpetual shadow of the traditional Burman-Siamese wars, Sultan Abdullah naturally sought the aid of the Company. Since the Company refused to provide the expected assistance and yet maintained its illegal occupation of the island, Sultan Abdullah was fully justified in trying to secure de-

⁴⁹ Ibid. It is remarkable that Light told Sultan Abdullah that he had no reason to fear any invasion from the north because 'Siam and Burma would look upon him as friends of the English and not disturb him', whereas he had written to Calcutta of the grave possibilities of a Siamese invasion of Kedah, (ibid. and note 48 above). Apart from the Company's refusal to fulfil his stipulation of \$30,000 as compensation and Light's failure to send tentatively one-half of the island's trade in tin, opium and rattan, Sultan Abdullah's prime concern was to obtain defensive aid for Kedah as embodied in the 1785 conditions which the Company refused to provide. Probably ignorant of this, Wright and Reid, *The Malay Peninsula*, 80-1, state, 'Another factor which was working against the British was the hostility of the Laksamana and the Bendahara [sic]. . . . The former an "old fox". . . the other "a deep cunning villanous Chooliar". . . . One outcome of the holy combination was the pressing of the demand for the subsidy of \$30,000 a year In the communications that had passed at the outset this part of the communications outlined had been discreetly evaded. But now it was found a convenient handle by which to exert pressure. Light was too well acquainted with the environment of the Sultan's court to give the somewhat Royal *menage* a high-sounding description to be seriously alarmed at the claim.' It is interesting to note, apart from the error on the issue of compensation and the open bias, that Light had stigmatized Tunku Chena and the Dato' Seri Raja as an 'old fox' and 'a deep cunning villanous chooliar' respectively. The authors, however, have seen fit to transfer these epithets to the Laksamana and the Bendahara to suit their statements.

⁵⁰ Light to G.G., 17 July 1789, SSR, 3 (FWCP, 21 Aug. 1789).

⁵¹ Ibid.

fensive assistance from any other power, and if necessary, to obtain their help to expel the Company from Kedah territory. He was not bound to the Company by any moral or legal obligation which restricted his foreign policy, and his moves, to say the least, were an exercise of his sovereignty. Seen in this context, it is more than unfortunate that Light and some historians have painted Sultan Abdullah and the Kedah *élite* an evil black⁵² and denigrated his character and policies.⁵³

In the early part of February 1790, Sultan Abdullah learnt of the arrival of Commodore Cornwallis at Pulau Pinang and he lost no time in establishing contact with the latter.⁵⁴ Evidently distrustful of Light, he wrote to the Commodore of all the conditions that he had made known to Light in 1785 for the lease of Pulau Pinang and requesting, in all probability, that these conditions and his views on the subject be forwarded to Lord Cornwallis.⁵⁵ In the middle of February, he received a letter from Light asking him 'to determine and stipulate what he required from the Company, and not rashly make war [against the Company], which might in the end prove ruinous to himself'.⁵⁶ This letter was seen

⁵² See in particular, Light to G.G., 17 July 1789, SSR, 3 (FWCP, 21 Aug. 1789); Tregonning, *The British in Malaya*, 78-9; Wright and Reid, *op.cit.* 80-1; Clodd, *op.cit.* 64, 71 and Low, 'British Colonies in the Straits of Malacca', 600-11. For some highly partisan opinions.

⁵³ Light wrote to Cornwallis that he had entered on the character of Sultan Abdullah so as 'to prepare your Lordship for a scene of duplicity which he is endeavouring to effect'. *Ibid.* So successful was he that Cornwallis condemned Sultan Abdullah for '... the offers he had made to other European Powers of the grant of an Island, already *ceded* to the English', and for discrediting the Company 'by a Declaration, positively false, that although the Company engaged to pay him \$10,000 per annum for the possession of the Island yet now having obtained it, they refuse to give the value for which it was granted. . . .' See G.G. to Light, 21 Aug. 1789, SSR, 3 (FWCP, 21 Aug. 1789). Note the G.G.'s illusion that Pulau Pinang had been *ceded* to the Company, and the supposed 'Declaration' by Sultan Abdullah. The 'Declaration' would seem to be more of Light's invention than anything else, for Sultan Abdullah had always insisted on \$30,000 and not \$10,000. Italics are mine. For an explanation of Light's attitude, see Bonney, *op.cit.*

⁵⁴ Light to Commodore Cornwallis, 18 Feb. 1890, quoted in Clodd *op.cit.* 72. The Commodore was brother to Lord Cornwallis and commanded a Company fleet sent to Pulau Pinang in response to Light's letter to the Bengal government.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* In all likelihood, the Commodore also called at Kuala Kedah and it is possible that the letter may have been handed to him then.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* Light was aware of Sultan Abdullah's unhappiness over the way he had

as yet another evasion by Light for he had time and again spelt out all his terms for the occupation of the island. Sultan Abdullah made no attempt to conceal this in his reply, writing, 'I have received your letter requesting I would come to some determination. But I have wrote to the Commodore, brother to the General, what I first required when you came to ask the island in the name of the Governor-General, and to this day I have not changed my word'.⁵⁷

Matters drifted until December 1790, with no word apparently coming from the English about their willingness to accede to the conditions stipulated for their occupation of Pulau Pinang.⁵⁸ Sultan Abdullah's relationship with the Company, which had so far been friendly, underwent a definite change with the appearance of a fleet of Lanun perahu at Kuala Kurau in early December 1790.⁵⁹ These perahu were part of a fleet sent by the Raja of Sulu to the assistance of the Raja of Riau which enabled the latter to drive out the Dutch from his negeri in 1787.⁶⁰ After accomplishing this, most of the Lanuns joined Syed Ali of Siantan and plundered the port of Singora in June 1789.⁶¹ In November 1790, thirty-seven of these Lanun perahu and twenty-five from various other places sailed from Siak under Tunku Endut, the Yang di-Pertuan Muda of Siak, to the Malay Peninsula with two intentions — to attack the Dutch and for purely piratical motives. The attack on the Dutch fort at Tanjong Putus on the Sungai Perak had to be called off because the Dutch received reinforcements from Me-

been treated by the Company and was personally afraid that Kedah might force him to quit the island, an idea which must have been taboo to him (see Bonney, *op.cit.*). There is absolutely no evidence at this stage that Sultan Abdullah was making military preparations to retake the island, but Light, knowing that force was the ultimate alternative left, decided to warn him against such a move.

⁵⁷ Clodd, *op.cit.* 72.

⁵⁸ If what Light wrote were true, Sultan Abdullah has even gone to the extent of sending letters to Tipu Sultan of Mysore to obtain assistance [see Light to Nass, 6 Dec. 1790, SSR, 4 (FWCP, 5 Jan. 1791).] It is significant that Light mentioned this *only* and *immediately after* he had received news from India that war had broken out again between the Company and Tipu Sultan. Prior to this, he had only reported the Raja's alleged approaches to the French and Dutch.

⁵⁹ Clodd, *op.cit.* 75.

⁶⁰ N. Tarling, *Piracy and Politics in the Malay World*, Singapore, 1963, 10.

⁶¹ Light to G.G., 17 July 1789, SSR, 3 (FWCP, 21 Aug. 1789) and note 48 above.

laka.⁶² The Lanuns, however, in typical piratical fashion, burnt and destroyed the homes of the Malays at the river's mouth, and carried them off as slaves. The perahu² then moved northwards to Kuala Larut where they attacked a number of trading boats bound for Pulau Pinang, and after a stay of fifteen days, headed for Kuala Kurau.⁶³

There is evidence to show that the Lanuns had plans to attack shipping and ports to the north of Perak, including Pulau Pinang and ports in Kedah, as they had just done in Perak. Sultan Abdullah, clearly fearing such an attack on Kuala Kedah, staked the mouth of the Sungai Kedah and laid a chain across it, while Light took defensive measures in Pulau Pinang.⁶⁴ An attempt to launch a surprise attack on the island was made on the night of 25 November 1790, but it failed, so Light said, because of a difference of opinion among its leaders.⁶⁵ The reason, however, seems to have been deeper. The Lanun perahu² never had a chance to launch their attack since they found the *Dolphin*, *Royal Admiral*, *Greyhound*, *Princess Augusta* and two Long Boats defending the approaches to the harbour, Light having had fore-knowledge of their plans.⁶⁶ The Lanuns withdrew southwards and made a reappearance after the defending ships had returned to harbour, but moved off again when the cruisers came to meet them. Their plans having proved abortive, the Lanuns then moved northwards to Pulau Bunting.⁶⁷

The Lanun presence at Pulau Bunting appears, to have precipitated Sultan Abdullah's decision to regain Pulau Pinang from the Company by force.⁶⁸ Other contributory factors were the neces-

⁶² See Clodd, *op.cit.* 75 and E. Netscher, *De Nederlanders in Djohor en Siak*, 226.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ See Clodd, *op.cit.* 75.

⁶⁵ Light to G.G., 22 Dec. 1790, SSR, 4 (FWCP, 12 Jan. 1791). See *f.n.* 68.

⁶⁶ See Clodd, *op.cit.* 75.

⁶⁷ *Loc. cit.*

⁶⁸ As it is predominantly on Light's evidence that this reconstruction is based, it is relatively impossible to form an accurate picture of events. There are certain weaknesses and conflicts in Light's reports from time to time that lend consi-

sity to divert Lanun attention to Pulau Pinang rather than have them ravage the Kedah coast, and the fact that the Lanuns afforded a ready-made force, equipped with perahu2 that were essential for any attack across the channel. Sultan Abdullah consequently laid a tight economic blockade by stopping all Kedah perahu2 from trading with Pulau Pinang, thereby preventing vital provisions and export articles from reaching the island.⁶⁹ Military preparations were also begun — the Bendahara assembling his men and the Laksamana requisitioning and arming Kedah perahu2.⁷⁰ By this time it was common knowledge that Sultan Abdullah had openly declared his intention to attack the island with Lanun assistance.⁷¹ The Lanuns were said to have been promised

derable doubt as to their validity. In a letter to the G.G. on 22 Dec. 1790. Light suddenly accused Sultan Abdullah of being in collaboration with the Lanuns. He charged the latter of having sent one of his officers to the Lanuns when they were at Kuala Kurau, where an agreement was reached to attack the island and massacre or enslave the inhabitants, all for the payment of \$20,000. Light states that a difference of opinion among the leaders, which lasted till daybreak, forced the attack to be called off. If this were so, the attack could surely have been delivered the following night. For that matter, they could have taken offensive action anytime between 26 November 1790 and 3 January 1791, when Light was reinforced by Cornwallis' return. Light's only witness of the plot was one Ali Muhammed, from whom Light claimed he received 'authentic information'. The circumstances surrounding this claim are vague and a bit far-fetched; furthermore, (as intimidated) Ali Muhammed was sent to the G.G., with a warning by Light that 'his safety depends on his giving your Lordship a true account of the agreement between the King of Queda and the Lanoons'. (Light to G.G., 22 Dec. 1790, SSR, 4 (FWCP, 12 Jan. 1791).

⁶⁹ Light to G.G., 22 Dec. 1790, SSR, 4 (FWCP, 12 Jan. 1791) and Light to G.G., 6 Jan. 1791, SSR, 4 (FWCP, 9 Feb. 1791). By early January, Light was writing that the blockade was having such telling effects as to create a shortage of supplies and to affect the island's entrepôt trade. In fact, on 6 January, Light was seriously contemplating issuing an unilateral ultimatum to Sultan Abdullah that the blockade be lifted. He informed the G.G. that '... tomorrow I shall send a Cruiser to Queda to inform him that he must either permit supplies to be brought here as usual or a refusal will be considered as a Declaration of War!' By this stage also, Light was admitting that it would have been wiser if the Company had accepted Sulran Abdullah's terms earlier, but refused to do so now as it would be interpreted 'as an Act of Fear'. See Light to G.G., 6 Jan. 1791, SSR, 4 (FWCP, 9 Feb. 1791).

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ See Light to Commodore Cornwallis, quoted in Clodd, *op.cit.* 75; Light to G.G., 22 Dec. 1790, SSR, 4 (FWCP, 12 Jan. 1791) and Light to G.G., 6 Jan. 1791, SSR, 4 (FWCP, 9 Feb. 1791).

provisions, arms, ammunition and the plunder of the island, and agents were sent to secure the neutrality of the Asian population. Two forts were simultaneously being built at Perai,⁷² while on 20 January Sultan Abdullah applied to the Dutch authorities at Melaka for a supply of arms. This, understandably, was not given.⁷³

Still hoping to find a solution without recourse to hostilities, Sultan Abdullah did not spare any effort to reach a settlement.⁷⁴ In early February he despatched letters to Light again recapitulating the 1785 conditions and appealed for satisfaction.⁷⁵ He reiterated that the Company's occupation of the island be reciprocated by its military assistance which would be at his own expense.⁷⁶ In a final appeal, he offered, around 7 February, to reduce the sum he required as compensation from the \$30,000 he had claimed previously to \$10,000 per annum.⁷⁷ When no satisfactory reply was received from Light, Sultan Abdullah carried his plans a stage further. Towards the middle of March, he assigned Tunku Diya'u'd-din, Tunku Raden Muhammed and the Laksamana⁷⁸ as commanders of his forces, with instructions 'to do as they thought proper, either to negotiate or to proceed to hostilities'.⁷⁹

The newly-appointed leaders decided to try negotiation before resorting to force.⁸⁰ On 16 March, Tunku Raden Muhammed

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Netscher, *op.cit.* 227. Note that this application was made after Light's threat of war on 6 January and a possible further ultimatum on the 15 or 16 January. (See Light to G.C., 6 Jan. 1791, SSR, 4 (FWCP, 9 Feb. 1791), where Light wrote that he was 'determined to wait no longer than the 15th of this month.')

⁷⁴ See Light to Hay, 10 Feb. 1791, SSR, 4 (FWCP, 16 March 1791) and below. To a certain extent, it is conceivable that these overtures were made because of Cornwallis' presence. At the same time, Sultan Abdullah may have felt that hostilities might prove disadvantageous to Kedah and completely defeat his aims behind the offer of Pulau Pinang.

⁷⁵ See Light to May, 10 Feb 1791, SSR, 4 (FWCP, 16 March 1791).

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ Tunku Raden Muhammed was son-in-law, and the Laksamana, brother-in-law, to Sultan Abdullah. (See Light to G.G., 19 March 1791, SSP, 4 (FWCP, 20 April 1791).)

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Light to Hay, 19 March 1791, SSR 4 (FWCP, 20 April 1791).

wrote to Light requesting the deputation of an official to Kuala Muda so that a settlement could be reached by conference. Light, however, sent Mr. Pigou who had no positive proposals on the Company's side, but came to receive whatever terms Sultan Abdullah may have wanted to make!⁸¹ After discussions among themselves, the Kedah leaders indicated the terms for allowing the Company to remain in Pulau Pinang which they embodied in a letter to Light the next day. They renewed Sultan Abdullah's consistent stand on naval protection and military assistance, simultaneously repeating the offer to reduce the sum for compensation from \$30,000 to \$10,000 per annum and promising to supply provisions to the island.⁸² They declared these terms to be final and preferred that Commodore Cornwallis should sign an agreement comprehending these clauses, or else that he undertake that his brother could ratify Kedah's terms.⁸³

No satisfactory reply seems to have come from Light, but the Laksamana, still desirous of a peaceful solution, asked for Captain Scott and the Dato' Penggawa of Pulau Pinang to be sent to Kuala Muda.⁸⁴ On his arrival at Kuala Muda, Scott promised that Light would write to the Governor-General for his decision on the terms that the Kedah leaders had outlined, and that he would recommend that Sultan Abdullah receive \$10,000 annually in perpetuity instead of a limited period.⁸⁵ Scott also promised that \$10,000 would be given immediately and that the English would not resort to force in the prevailing crisis.⁸⁶ According to Light,

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid. Despite this financial concession, Light, writing to the Bengal Government, commented, 'On his [Sultan Abdullah's] part nothing was Offered but a Supply of Provision, for which we were to pay a good price'. Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid. This point very clearly reveals the Kedah leaders' refusal to be out-manoeuvred by the Company's not ratifying these terms, the bitter experience of the 1785 conditions being not only current in their minds, but also responsible for the existing situation.

⁸⁴ Light to Hay, 19 March 1791, SSR, 4 (FWCP, 20 April 1791).

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Low, 'British Colonies' 612, quite surprisingly, wrote that Sultan Abdullah 'by this new and suddenly intimidating policy . . . extorted from Captain Light an advance of 10,000 dollars'. See below note 91. My italics.

when Scott made this promise, Tunku Diyu'u'd-din agreed that the Lanuns would soon be dismissed.⁸⁷ The English, however, were reinforcing themselves and militarily strengthening their determination to occupy Pulau Pinang, for on 14 March, two full companies of sepoy had arrived from India.⁸⁸

Following the departure of Commodore Cornwallis on 15 March, the Kedah leaders intensified their preparation to seek fulfilment of the long-drawn out proceedings.⁸⁹ Twenty Lanun perahu arrived at Perai on the 19 March, and the next day, the Bendahara and the Laksamana brought an additional ninety perahu, while the Kedah forces worked hard to complete the forts.⁹⁰ On the 29 March, the Kedah commanders asked for the \$10,000 that Scott had promised, pointing out that the Lanuns would not disperse unless given the compensation they had been promised. Light, however, broke his word again, sending only \$5,000 and offering to pay the remainder only after the Lanuns had been dismissed.⁹¹

⁸⁷ Light to Hay, 19 March 1791, SSR, 4 (FWCP, 20 April 1791). Light made no mention at this point that the dismissal of the Lanuns was prior condition for the payment of the \$10,000. See note 91.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Light's attitude at this stage is significant. He wrote to Calcutta that he was anxious to settle the issue 'by War or Peace' for a number of reasons. Amongst these were the fear amongst the population, many of whom had left their plantations burning coconut and fruit trees; the departure of the principal Coast merchants; Malay opinion that Sultan Abdullah had been unjustly treated; the fear of free-booters and mercenaries joining the Kedah forces; the shortage of cattle and the exhaustion of specie: the weakening morale of the sepoys who had been on readiness for three months, and the loss of trade. He wrote, 'I earnestly request the Board will as soon as possible give me full powers to come to a final settlement with the King of Queda or to make war on him.' He then suggested the basis of a treaty with Kedah, in which for \$10,000 per annum for the possession of Pulau Pinang, Kedah in return, was not to enter into treaty relationships with other European powers and was to allow the building of a Company fort at Perai. Sultan Abdullah was also to enter into a bond for \$10,000, bearing interest of 8 per cent per annum, which the Company would pay him 'upon his good behaviour'. If Sultan Abdullah refused this, Light vindictively urged on the Company 'to give him nothing, but as he has stopped the provisions from coming here, stop the trade of his Coast, destroy his Prows [perahu], prevent the Chooliars from going there or exporting Elephants and plunder the Laddas [Pulau Langkawi], there [being] various ways of distressing him and bringing him to Obedience . . .' See Light to G.G., 19 March 1791, SSR, 4 (FWCP, 20 April 1791).

⁹⁰ Light to Hay, 19 April 1791, SSR, 4 (FWCP, 1 June 1791).

⁹¹ *Ibid.* Light claimed that their dismissal as a prior condition was according to the

The \$5,000 was sent to Sultan Abdullah with requests for further instructions.⁹² While awaiting the Raja's decision, contact was established with the Malays and Chinese in Pulau Pinang. The Chinese were promised safety if they remained neutral and a share in the plunder if they helped in the attack.⁹³ Sultan Abdullah's reply to the Kedah commanders arrived around 8 April, giving his consent to attack if the opportunity offered.⁹⁴ On receipt of this reply, two letters were brought to Pulau Pinang by the Dato Seri Ratu Pahlawan⁹⁵ and Che Kadar: one, an ultimatum to Light, and the other, an explanatory letter to the Dato Penggawa.⁹⁶

The letter sent to Light is of great importance for he interpreted it as equivalent to a declaration of war. This, however, is not the case, for when studied carefully and impartially, it was, at the very most, a plain ultimatum. It ran:

... the business of Poolo Pinang has long been at hand, how many letters have been sent and received and nothing yet determined agreeable to the desires of the King [Raja], our friend will not submit neither will we agree to the desires of our friend, therefore now we will cut the matter short. If that our friend will not send five thousand Dollars more and agree to pay 10,000 Dollars per annum for the years that are passed,

agreement reached by Scott, but he had never mentioned this in March; on the contrary, he had then written to Hay that 'that they [the Kedah commanders] might have the appearance of having gained their cause, \$10,000 was to be advanced immediately'. See Light to Hay, 19 March 1791, SSR, 4 (FWCP, 20 April 1791). Low, *Burney Papers*, V, ii, 96, stigmatized Sultan Abdullah as follows, '... Light advanced ten thousand dollars [!] to the Kedah Raja, which it will be seen, and as might have been expected, only served to convince the latter that his plan of intimidation was the one best calculated to gain his object. The future existence of the British in the Straits was to depend not on the boasted and long-lauded generosity of the Raja, which had been better expressed by the terms sorrid, miscalculating self-interest, but on sheer physical and political strength . . . ' Italics are mine.

⁹² Light to Hay, 19 April 1791, SSR, 4 (FWCP, 1 June 1791).

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* In the text of the letter, the first of the two plenipotentiaries is spelt as Dato Bunder Seralata Pallowan. The first, second and fourth words, clearly, should read Dato, Bandar and Pahlawan. The closest equivalent to the third is Seri Ratu defined as 'sebutan kerhormatan bagi Raja atau orang besar'. [See W. J. S. Poerwadarminta, *Kamus Umum Bahasa Indonesia*, Djakarta, 1961, 867].

⁹⁶ Light to Hay, 19 April 1791, SSR, 4 (FWCP, 1 June 1791).

... and if our friend will not come with us and do homage to the King, the King is not content that our friend should remain any longer on Poolo Pinang, therefore our friend will get away about his business quickly for Poolo Pinang is the property of the King of Queda from time immemorial. Moreover, if our friend attempts to stay by force God who knows all things will place the evil upon his head, we are free from blame⁹⁷

The Kedah leaders were, in effect, telling Light that all peaceful negotiations over the lease of Pulau Pinang having failed, they required him to leave or face the alternative of being driven out, because the terms and tacit understandings upon which Light was allowed to establish a settlement on the island had never been observed by the Company. Further evidence of this fact, of which Light was also aware, is to be seen in the letter to the Dato' Peggawa. The Kedah leaders wrote:

... the English who are at Pulo Pinang . . . begged the place from the King [Raja] . . . this place has belonged to the King from time immemorial as well as to the country of Queda . . . the English agreed to many things not one of which they have performed and many of the English do much evil to the King . . . How long we have been here and how many letters have passed to and fro wherein we have submitted to a great many things because we were desirous of peace but now the English will not submit to the King's demands, therefore we have written to these English to go away from Pulo Pinang in the name of peace, for when they first came it was with a good name⁹⁸

A closer examination of the documents throws additional light on other contributory factors that culminated in the ultimatum. Firstly, it appears that one Tunku Petrie had fled to Pulau Pinang on guilt of *derhaka* in Kedah⁹⁹ and Sultan Abdullah's requests for his extradition do not seem to have been met. It will be recollected

⁹⁷ Enclosure in Light to Hay, 19 April 1791, SSR, 4 (FWCP, 1 June 1791). See Appendix 3(a) for full text.

⁹⁸ Enclosure in Light to Hay, 19 April 1781, SSR, 4 (FWCP, 1 June 1791). See Appendix 3(b) for full text. Light's interpretation is explicable in terms of his anxiety to secure Pulau Pinang for the Company and the need to justify to the Bengal Government, the move that he had been seeking sanction for (see f.n.89 and Bonney, *op.cit.* 135-45). Note also the reference to the Company's settlement as being 'in the King's land'.

⁹⁹ See Appendix 3(a).

that in his list of conditions in 1785, Sultan Abdullah had stipulated that persons guilty of treason or rebellion in Kedah should not be given asylum by the Company. No actual treaty was signed but this point was accepted by Macpherson in his 'Replies'.¹⁰⁰ Although the 'Replies' were not expressly cited, the evidence suggests that Light's failure to hand over the Tunku had contributed to the strained relations and, in fact, the ultimatum specified the Tunku's extradition.¹⁰¹ Secondly, Sultan Abdullah required Light to pay \$10,000 per annum from the time he had established his settlement on the island, in addition to the \$5,000 that he had failed to pay as promised.¹⁰² Thirdly, the statement '... if our friend will not come with us and do homage to the King, the King is not content that our friend should remain any longer on Poolo Pinang' can be interpreted as being that Sultan Abdullah viewed Light's past conduct towards him as offensive, which could only be rectified by paying homage. If this interpretation is correct, then Light's failure to live up to the promises that he had made when he occupied the island, his repeated refusals to meet Sultan Abdullah, his failure to offer any concrete proposals for a settlement and his belligerent attitude, all substantiate this view.

While hoping that Light would either evacuate the island peacefully or agree to the Raja's terms, the Kedah leaders awaited Light's reply. Instead of a reply, however, an attack was made without warning on the Perai forts and the assembled perahuz in the early hours of 12 April.¹⁰³ The large Kedah force in the forts was caught

¹⁰⁰ See Appendix 2(d).

¹⁰¹ See Appendix 3(a). Associated with Tunku's extradition is the demand for the return of the *Tannoos*. The word *Tannoos* is relatively obscure, although Light describes it as a racial group of the Islamic faith (See Light's 'Description of the Island of Junk Ceylon' in Anderson, *Considerations*, liv, and Light to G.G., 7 May 1787, SSR, 2 (FWCP, 13 June 1787)). It would seem that a number of them were debt-slaves of Sultan Abdullah who had fled to Pulau Pinang and whose return had been long sought for.

¹⁰² Enclosure in Light to Hay, 19 April 1791, SSR, 4 (FWCP, 1 June 1791).

¹⁰³ Light to Hay, 19 April 1791, SSR, 4 (FWCP, 1 June 1791). Light's explanation for the attack was that he was convinced that the Kedah forces were bent on destroying the settlement (which, of course, the ultimatum had indicated!), *ibid.* By doing so, however, he broke his word that he would not resort to force

completely unawares and dispersed, after which the forts were burnt. On being attacked by the *Dolphin*, *Princess Augusta*, *Valiant* and four gun-boats, the perahu were forced to retreat up the Sungai Perai and when they attempted to re-group four days later, they were again attacked and dispersed with great loss.¹⁰⁴

Sultan Abdullah was now forced to re-assess his position, the attack on Perai having literally shattered his plans to regain Pulau Pinang.¹⁰⁵ He had lost the diplomatic initiative and a new policy was consequently obligatory. On 19 April, he sent a messenger with a letter to Light, 'blaming the bad conduct of his officers at Pry [Perai] and denying any intention of attacking the settlement'.¹⁰⁶ He proposed that the whole affair be forgotten, that \$10,000 per annum be the sum for compensation and that a settlement be reached on all matters in dispute.¹⁰⁷ Light offered to pay \$6,000 per annum for as long as the Company remained in possession of the island provided Sultan Abdullah agreed to certain stipulations on his part.¹⁰⁸ Light suggested that this could be the basis of an agreement, but if Sultan Abdullah wanted a larger sum as compensation, it would be necessary to await orders from the Governor-General.¹⁰⁹ Sultan Abdullah, however, preferred an immediate settlement and sent Tunku Raden Muhammed, Tunku Alang Ibrahim and the Dato' Penggawa Telibon with powers to negotiate for a settlement.¹¹⁰

An important feature of these negotiations was that the Kedah *wakil* reiterated the original terms that the East India Company should grant naval protection and lend assistance to Kedah in case of any landward attack.¹¹¹ This shows that despite the fact that

in the prevailing crisis. Sultan Abdullah is said to have declared after this episode 'that he was ashamed of having ever been the friend of people who fought in the night and without giving fair warning'. See *Dr. John Leyden: Poems and Ballads*, ed., R. White (Kelso, M.D. CCC. LVIII), p. 367.

¹⁰⁴ See below, note 122.

¹⁰⁵ R. Winstedt, *History of Malaya*, 161, mistakenly writes that the Lanun-Kedah perahu made 'an ineffectual landing on the coast of Penang'.

¹⁰⁶ Light to Hay, 19 April 1791, SSR, 4 (FWCP, 1 June 1791).

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ Light to Hay, 31 May 1791, SSR, 4 (FWCP, 14 Sept. 1791).

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ Light to Hay, 31 May 1791, SSR, 4 (FWCP, 14 Sept. 1791).

they were negotiating on a weaker basis, having just suffered a military defeat, they were still determined that Kedah should receive the Company's protection. This strong stand may have arisen both out of conviction (on the grounds of the 1785 conditions) and the practical necessity of saving Kedah from Siamese tributary demands or invasion. Light stated that, if the Company were to enter into any defensive arrangement, it would want the Sungai Muda, Sungai Perai and Sungai Kerian districts, at the very least, in return.¹¹³ The wakil2, having no powers to negotiate on the cession of further territory, dropped the question as Light had clearly intended they should. Light knew very well that the Bengal Government was firm in its decision not to grant protection to Kedah, and yet he pretended that protection would be given in return for the cession of these districts, having full knowledge, at the same time, of the limitations of the wakil2's powers.

These negotiations were concluded by the nine Articles of Peace and Friendship ratified by Sultan Abdullah on 1 May 1791.¹¹³ The first Article (and the most important), brought an end to the thorny question of compensation for Sultan Abdullah's loss in monopoly revenue. The rout of his forces at Perai obliged him to accept Light's offer of \$6,000 per annum, which was a far cry from his original claim for \$30,000 and the subsequently reduced figure of \$10,000 per annum.¹¹⁴ This article is also of special importance for it makes the only reference in the treaty to the legal status of Pulau Pinang. The phrase 'as long as the English shall continue in possession of Poolo Pinang' speaks for itself. It did not in any way imply that the island had been ceded in 1785-6, nor did it imply cession when the Treaty came into force — it merely recognized the Company's occupation of the island.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹³ Enclosure in Light to Hay, 31 May 1791, SSR, 4 (FWCP, 14 Sept. 1791). See Appendix 3(c) for full text.

¹¹⁴ The actual wording reads, 'The English Company will give His Highness Empetuan [Yang di-Pertuan] of Queda [Kedah] Six Thousand Spanish Dollars every year for as long as the English shall continue in possession of Poolo Pinang [Pulau Pinang].' *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ It would be wrong, therefore, as most historians have done, to conclude that

By Article Two, Sultan Abdullah was bound to see that no restrictions or duties were imposed on provisions required for Pulau Pinang and for English naval and Company ships which called in there. Articles Three, Four, Seven and Eight provided for the mutual extradition of slaves, debtors, murderers and forgers respectively, thus formalizing the 1785-6 proposals and counter-proposals on these points.¹¹⁶ The fifth Article was clearly inserted at Light's insistence, to prevent the possibility of any other European power being allowed to establish its influence or a trading settlement in Kedah. Article Six, on the other hand, which specified that persons guilty of 'high treason or rebellion' in Kedah would be *persona non grata* in Pulau Pinang, was evidently insisted upon by Sultan Abdullah, particularly with the precedent of Tun-ku Petrie.

To a large extent, the treaty reflects Light's dictation of terms from a position of strength. However, it is significant that, although no specific reference was made to Company protection or assistance for Kedah, the sentence 'Queda and Pinang shall be as one country' in the concluding paragraph of the Treaty was regarded by Kedah as embodying the provision of mutual help and assistance in time of need.¹¹⁷

Events soon took place which left Sultan Abdullah highly regretful of the defeat of his forces at Perai which had eliminated any likelihood of the extension of Company protection to Kedah. In June - July 1791, one Shaykh Abdul Kamal of Mecca arrived in Kedah seeking assistance to help 'revenge the sufferings of a Pattany [Petani] chief' who had been severely affected by the Siamese conquest of 1786-7.¹¹⁸ Sultan Abdullah, caught between

this Article (and the Treaty) confirmed the 'cession' of Pulau Pinang. (See for example Winstedt, *History of Malaya*, 168; Tregonning, *A History of Modern Malaya*, 84 and Wright and Reid. *op.cit.* 87.

¹¹⁶ See chapter III.

¹¹⁷ See chapter V for a discussion of this.

¹¹⁸ Light to G.G., 30 July 1792, SSR, 5 (FWCP, 24 Aug. 1797). Kamal had been in receipt of 'many pious gifts' from the Petani chief and the Siamese conquest deprived him of 'his accustomed receipts . . . Enraged at this diminution of revenue . . . [he was] . . . determined to revenge the sufferings of the faithful servants of the Prophet . . .' *Ibid.*

the web of Islamic brotherhood and blood ties on the one hand, and the fear of incurring the displeasure of the Siamese on the other, wisely gave him permission to recruit a few hundred Haji, and later provided a small supply of arms, but both, when given, were deemed insufficient to ensure success.¹¹⁹ The movement made initial headway but was eventually crushed by superior Siamese forces and Petani was laid waste.¹²⁰ Then in September 1792, news was received that the Siamese were about to attack Tavoy, and Kedah was required to provide perahu and supplies for the large army that had been assembled.¹²¹ Nothing is known of subsequent developments, but it would be impossible to imagine that Kedah did not comply.¹²²

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid. also 'Petani Chronicle (MS),' for information on the uprising and *BP*, II, iv (1911), 3.

¹²¹ Light to G.G., 20 Sept. 1792, SSR 5; Salarak, *JSS*, VI (1959), 156-68, 170-1 and Sukhabanj, *Papers on Malayan History*, 7-8. Clodd *op.cit.* 92, pens, 'Hostilities had broken out again between Burma and Siam, and on this occasion the Sultan of Kedah had deemed it advisable to placate his powerful northern neighbours by endeavouring to persuade Light to help Kedah with supplies that could be passed on to Siam. The request, of course, met with no success but "in order to soften the refusal" Light supplied a "small quantity of iron and nails" for which the Sultan's Ambassador had applied; payment for these materials was promised from the revenues of Junk Ceylon, which suggests that Kedah was very short of ready money.' This is clearly a deliberate misreading. There is no evidence of Sultan Abdullah applying for such aid and the so-called Sultan's Ambassador was actually the King of Siam's Ambassador. See *ibid.*

¹²² Perhaps the most fascinating aspect of this episode is the frame of mind of writers on the subject. Clodd *op.cit.* and Wright and Reid *op.cit.* have, for some reason or other, overlooked the discrepancy in Light's interpretation of the ultimatum. They have, furthermore, painted an almost heroic image of Light within the context of the situation (see Wright and Reid, *op.cit.* 80-2 and Clodd, *op.cit.*, 80-1). Clodd, *op.cit.* 71, titles his chapter dealing with this episode as 'The Sultan of Kedah Attacks Penang'! See also, Tregonning, *The British in Malaya*, 82.

V

THE PLEA FOR PROTECTION

ON 24 December 1810 Sultan Ahmad Taju'd-din Halim Shah addressed the Governor-General of India, Lord Minto, what was perhaps Kedah's most forthright appeal for protection.¹ After tracing the history of Kedah's relations with the English East India Company, the failure of the Company to honour the conditions stipulated for the lease of Pulau Pinang and the injustice of Siamese demands on Kedah, he went on to call for the ratification of the 1785 conditions.² This plea, which followed a series of similar appeals to the Governor of Pulau Pinang,³ reflected a number of deep-seated developments affecting Sultan Ahmad Taju'd-din and Kedah as a whole and in some respects had its background in the internal problems of Kedah itself, going back as far as 1798.

The last years of Sultan Abdullah were troubled by the disputes of his large family of nine sons, each of whom aimed at the succession.⁴ His death in 1798⁵ precipitated an open and unprecedented struggle for power which was sufficiently involved and prolonged as to have a marked bearing on the course of the history of Kedah. In this struggle, to some extent the result of Sultan Abdullah's prolificity, the principal participants, Tunku Pangeran, Tunku Ibrahim, Tunku Bisnu, Tunku Amboon and Tunku Sulci-man, some sons of Sultan Abdullah by different mothers, vied not only with each other, but with their uncle, Diya'u'd-din,⁶ Sultan

¹R.K. to G.G., 24 Dec. 1810 (see Appendix 2(c) for full text).

²Ibid. see also Chapters III and IV.

³See pp. 118-22.

⁴See H. Burney to Court of Directors, July 1841, Manuscript Papers Relating to Kedah (IOL), f.309 and Anderson, *Considerations*, 155-6. See Appendix 4(a), for family details.

⁵Ibid., also R.K. to G.G., 24 Dec. 1810 (Appendix 2(c)).

⁶See chapters 2 and 3.

Abdullah's own half-brother, as well.⁷ This is not to suggest that the other sons⁸ of Sultan Abdullah who were not considered 'principals' were not involved, for it is only obvious that they, as well as the various Menteriz and Dato'2 of Kedah and other members of the *élite*, were also implicated in one way or another in terms of giving support to the rival candidates and its proffered rewards.

The absence of detailed evidence at present precludes any study of the political hierarchy or an analysis of the distribution of power and its attendant power manipulations immediately prior to, and at the time of, Sultan Abdullah's death. Nothing concrete is known of Sultan Abdullah's views on the succession, or of any formula he may have had in mind. In the crisis that ensued, however, Diya'u'd-din succeeded in circumnavigating the claims of all the other contestants,⁹ and he won sufficient support from the Menteriz and Dato'2 to be recognized as Raja of Kedah.¹⁰ It would seem that much of the support that Sultan Diya'u'd-din was able

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ These were Tunku Kusoo, Tunku Petra, Tunku Daud and Tunku Muhammad, brothers to each other by different mothers. See Appendix 4 (a). It is to be wondered whether the size of his family was motivated by his desire to consolidate his position and that of his descendants, since he was more or less the founder of a new line. See chapters II and III.

⁹ Burney to Court, July 1841, *op.cit.* f.309. *BP*, II, v (1912), 127.

¹⁰ Ref. text of the Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Alliance of 1802 (See Appendix 4 (b): 4 (c), for full texts). This treaty, signed between Sultan Diya'u'd-din and the East India Company (see pp. 106-7), refers variously to Sultan Diya'u'd-din as "Raja Kedah", "Sultan Muda", "Raja Muda Perlis dan Kedah" and "Duli Yang MahaMulia", terms which collectively lend themselves to considerable speculation. Even more interesting are the constant references to "Negeri Perlis dan Kedah", which may throw more light on Sultan Muhammed Jiwa's arrangements of 1770-1 (see Chapter 2), and the inclusion of the insignia of the "Orang Besar" which bear out the fact that the signing of the Treaty required their participation or consent, and the term "dua buah negeri". Of greatest importance perhaps is the sentence "Chap Diya'u'd-din Sultan Muda ini ma'alom sah Raja Kedah" which (if not an error) indicates that Diya'u'd-din held the titular position of Sultan Muda (or Yang di-Pertuan Muda), in turn suggesting that he was the first among those to be considered for the succession (by Sultan Muhammed's arrangements — see Chapter II) and that one of Sultan Abdullah's sons was Raja Muda. (See Appendix 4(c), for the extracts cited above). It is also of particular interest to note that Sultan Diya'u'd-din, for reasons that will become obvious in the course of the chapter, is termed as 'Regent' or 'Heir-Apparent' in the Kedah Genealogical Trees. See Appendix A, B and C in Bastin and Roolvink, *Malayan and Indonesian Studies*.

to draw accrued from personal advantages of age, office and standing, which gave him the edge over his younger rivals, as well as the urgent need to find a quick solution and a successor in the prevailing circumstances.¹¹ The position in which Sultan Diya'u'd-din found himself, however, was far from enviable, for almost immediately after his recognition as Raja came disputes with his nephews over the distribution of the patrimonial property and the division of power and authority.¹²

The period of Sultan Diya'u'd-din Mukarram Shah's authority, although very brief (1798-1803), forms an important phase, especially when seen in terms of the 'Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Alliance' he concluded with the English East India Company in 1800.¹³ After ratification by the Court of Directors in 1802, this Treaty which was held by the Company to be the basis of its subsequent relations with Kedah was to prove to be the source of much misunderstanding, disillusionment and unhappiness in later years.¹⁴ Some discussion of the Treaty is therefore merited.

Towards the end of June 1800, Sultan Diya'u'd-din had been approached by Caunter, a representative of the newly-arrived Governor of Pulau Pinang, Sir George Leith, with proposals for the lease of a strip of territory on the main opposite Pulau Pinang, later christened 'Province Wellesley'.¹⁵ The outcome of these negotiations, the passage of which had been smoothed by presents and a promise of \$2,000 to the Menteriz and gundekz of Sultan Diya'u'd-din after certain 'difficulties' had impeded the

¹¹ See *ibid.* and Burney to Court, July 1841, *op.cit.* f.309.

¹² Burney to Court, July 1841, *op.cit.* 374 and Anderson, *op.cit.* 156.

¹³ Low, 'Origin and Progress of British Colonies', 12.

¹⁴ See chapters VI and VII.

¹⁵ Just prior to his death, Sultan Abdullah had envisaged and encouraged the growth of Kuala Perai as a rival port of Pulau Pinang to compensate for his economic and financial misfortunes occasioned by the offer of the island and its sequel. The Company's interest in 'Province Wellesley' was aimed primarily at preventing the growth of such a rival port, for by 1800, Kuala Perai had been growing so fast that it was felt imperative that the sole sovereignty of the harbour of Pulau Pinang be secured to control trade movements and enable the successful levy of excise duties. It would also provide food supplies for the island and secure the safety of its harbour. See Burney to Court, July 1841, *op.cit.* f.310 and W.E. Blundell, 'Notices on Penang', *JIA*, V (1851), pp. 98-9 and Low, 'Origin and Progress of British Colonies', 12.

talks,¹⁶ was the above-mentioned Treaty.¹⁷ The following were the more relevant parts:

Fasal yang pertama: Kampeni Inggeris mahu bayar pada tiap2 tahun Kapada Duli Raja Muda Perlis dan Kedah sapuluh ribu rial *sa-lama Inggeris ada pegang dan dudok* di-dalam Pulau Pinang dan Negeri yang di-seberang kemudian ada tersebut.

Article 1st: The English Company [i.e. the English East India Company] are to pay annually to His Majesty of Purlis and Quedah, Ten Thousand Dollars *as long as the English shall continue in possession* of Pulo Pinang and the country on the opposite Coast hereafter mentioned.

Fasal yang kedua: Duli Yang Maha Mulia janji kasi kapada Kampeni Inggeris *sa-lama2-nya* itu jajaran [jajahan] laut dari Kuala Kerian sampai sa-belah Kuala Muda dan ukoran-nya dari tepi laut ka-dalam darat enam puluh relong dan segala panjang dan lebar yang sudah tersebut ini. Kemudian mahu di-sukat dengan orang Duli Yang Maha Mulia perchaya bersama2 dengan orang perchaya Kampeni, dan *Kampeni Inggeris mahu pelihara jajaran laut ini* daripada *penchuri dan perumpak* yang datang menyerang dari laut baik dari sa-belah utara atau dari sa-belah selatan.

Article 2nd: His Majesty agrees to give to the English Company forever, all that part of the Sea Coast, that is between Kwala Krian [Kuala Kerian] and the River side of Kwala Mooda [Kuala Muda] and measuring inland from the seaside sixty Orlongs [relong], the whole length above mentioned to be measured by people appointed by His Majesty and the Company's people. *The English Company are to protect this coast from all enemies, robbers and pirates* that may attack it by sea from North or South.

Fasal tiga belas: Bagaimana lekas kemudian apabila sudah di-nyatakan dan di-terangkan perjanjian dan kahul ini segala sewa yang tinggal tiada habis wasihil atas perjanjian dan kahul yang dahulu kapada Duli

¹⁶ See Leith, *A Short Account*, 16.

¹⁷ At this stage, it is essential to clarify certain points regarding the Treaty. The originals were signed in 1800 [copies in Jawi and English (English translation by J. Swaine)], but which the author has been unable to locate. The existing English version of this treaty is one which has actually been 'revised from the original' by Anderson (see Appendix 4 (b)), while the existing Jawi version, preserved in Alor Setar is actually a translation (though a poor one at it) of Anderson's 'revised' version (see Appendix 4 (c) for a romanized version of this) and done by Anderson himself. Little is known when this revision was made [although presumably between 1817 and 1824 (see J. Bastin in his Introduction to a Facsimile Reprint of Anderson's *Considerations*, *JMBRAS*, XXXV, iv (1962), fn. 4, 1-2)], or the reasons behind it or for that matter, of the exact differences between the original and the 'revised' versions, with perhaps, one exception (see pp. 108-9).

Yang Maha Mulia di-Perlis dan Kedah mahu di-bayar habis.

Article 13: As soon as possible after the ratification of this Treaty, the arrears of gratuity now due, agreeable to the former Treaty and agreement, to His Majesty of Purlis and Quedah are to be paid off.

Fasal empat belas: Atas di-nyatakan ini kahul dan perjanjian segala perjanjian dan kahul yang dahulu yang sudah di-buat yang kedua pchak penghulu negeri ini jadi batal dan tiada boleh di-pakai lagi.

Article 14th: On the ratification of this Treaty all former Treaties and agreements between the two Governments to be null and void.

. . . *Negeri Perlis dan Kedah dan Pulau Pinang jadi satu negeri* dan barang siapa mungkir dan ubahkan barang suatu-nya janji dan Kahul ini Tuhan Allah boleh hukum dan rosakkan dia-nya dan tida boleh dapat baik didalam dunia.

. . . *the Countries of Purlis and Kedah and Pulau Pinang shall be as one Country*, and whoever shall depart or deviate from any part of this agreement the Almighty punish and destroy him, he shall not prosper.¹⁸

The other clauses spelt out a few safeguards, the free movement of trade without duty or impediment, the mutual return of slaves, debtors and criminals, and that no other Europeans would be allowed to settle in Kedah,¹⁹ most of which were also clauses in the treaty of 1791.²⁰

A close examination of parts of this Treaty reveals some very important points. In the first place, Article One did not in any final way cede Pulau Pinang to the Company but merely made reference to the Company's occupation of the island in relation to the specification of the payment of \$10,000 to Sultan Diya'u'd-din as rent for the island and 'Province Wellesley'.²¹ Even if interpreted as a territorial clause, all it did, in effect, was to recognize this occupation.

¹⁸ See Appendix 4 (b), 4 (c), for full texts. Note that in Article 2 of the Malay version, reference is made only to *penchuri dan perumpak* (robbers and pirates) whereas the same article in the English version includes enemies as well. Italics are mine.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ See chapter IV.

²¹ Moorhead, *History*, II, III, wrongly states that 'the Company asked the Sultan in 1800 to sign a second treaty wherein he ceded not only Penang but also a strip of territory on the mainland . . . to the Company in perpetuity'. Italics are mine.

Of special significance is the striking absence in the 'revised' version of the Treaty of any fixed provision for defensive assistance to Kedah by the Company. Seen in the context of Kedah's position *vis-à-vis* Siam and Burma, as discussed earlier, it is quite difficult to envisage that Sultan Diya'u'd-din and the Orang Besar would have signed away some territory and abrogated the earlier 'agreements' (by which, undoubtedly, was meant the 1785 conditions and the Governor-General's Replies to these conditions),²² without obtaining any promise for protection or assistance in return. Although one might tend to be carried away by Swettenham's rationalization that to the Malay mind the unhappy events that followed the offer of Pulau Pinang and its one-sided outcome did not repudiate Kedah's claims to protection,²³ there is firmer evidence in Burney's statement of a major discrepancy in the original Malay and English texts of the Treaty. Burney has pointed out that while Article Two of the English version reads '... the English Company are to protect this coast [i.e. "Province Wellesley"] from all enemies, robbers and pirates that may attack it by sea from North or South', the words 'this coast' do not appear in the Malay text.²⁴ Therefore, as far as Sultan Diya'u'd-din was concerned, he had secured for the first time in Kedah's history, a ratified treaty which provided at least for the naval defence of Kedah by the Company.²⁵ Unknown to him, however, was the fact that in the English version of the Treaty, the Company officials had chosen to specify only the defence of the coast of

²² See chapter III.

²³ Swettenham, *British Malaya*, 46-7.

²⁴ Burney to Court, July 1841, *op.cit.* f.312. The whole affair becomes more suspect because it is indeed incomprehensible that there was any need to specify the Company's defence of the coast of 'Province Wellesley', for the Company would have done so anyway. See fn. 18 also. Burney's evidence would seem all the more credible since he had developed a negative attitude towards Kedah after 1826 and this admission is indeed remarkable. Burney must have seen the originals either in Pulau Pinang or Calcutta (where he served in different capacities) or in London. His interest in the affairs of Kedah stemmed largely from the 'paper war' that developed after the conclusion of the Anglo-Siamese Treaty of 1826.

²⁵ Hall, *Southeast Asia*, 473; Harrison, *South East Asia*, 179; Swettenham, *British Malaya*, 46; Emerson, *Malaysia*, 75; Winstedt, *History of Malaya*, 179; Mills, 'British Malaya', 50, and Moorhead, *History*, II, III, all maintain that this treaty made no reference to any form of a defensive alliance.

'Province Wellesley'. In the absence of more precise evidence, 'double-dealing' might perhaps be too harsh a label.

Another interesting feature of the Treaty, even the 'revised' version, is the use of the idiom 'Negeri Perlis dan Kedah dan Pulau Pinang jadi satu negeri' ('the Countries of Purlis and Quedah and Pulau Pinang shall be as one Country'), an expression which to the Malay mind signified a commonness or alliance of mutual and identical interests, the sharing of one's problems by the other, and reciprocal aid and assistance in times of need, danger or difficulty.²⁶ As the Treaty stands (where it is termed a "Treaty of Friendship and Alliance"), it logically embodied, at least to Kedah, the above-outlined connotations.

Apart from obtaining provision for the naval protection of Kedah, two other reasons may be advanced why Sultan Diya'u'd-din was prepared to enter into this Treaty in the first place. Firstly, it would bring him recognition as Raja of Kedah by the East India Company and thereby boost his standing in his own country. Secondly, and of greater importance to him, this recognition would in consequence entitle him not only to the annual rent of \$10,000 for Pulau Pinang and 'Province Wellesley', but also the arrears of \$6,000 per annum owed by the Company since Sultan Abdullah's death in 1798.²⁷

When seen in perspective, there is another reason why the years

²⁶ This is borne out in a number of letters (within their own contexts) sent by Sultan Ahmad Taju'd-din to the Governor of Pulau Pinang. See R.K. to G.P., 22 July 1810, 30 Oct. 1810 and 14 Dec. 1810, SSR, 30, ff. 96-9, 106-110 and 40-4 (FCCP, 31 Jan. 1811); R.K. to G.P., 4 Oct. 1811, SSR, 32, ff. 1289-1291 (FCCP, 17 Oct. 1811); R.K. to G.P., 10 Jan. 1814, SSR, 44, ff. 50-5 (FCCP, 13 Jan. 1814); R.K. to G.P., 8 May 1815, SSR, 49, ff. 593-4 (FCCP, 12 May 1815); R.K. to G.P., 22 June 1815, SSR, 50, ff. 1384-88 (FCCP, 21 July 1815); R.K. to G.P., 14 Jan. 1816, SSR, 54 (FCCP, 3 Feb. 1816); R.K. to G.P., 25 April 1816, SSR, 55 (FCCP, 11 May 1816) and below. The Raja of Perak's correspondence also bears this out. For example, see R.P. to R.K., 12 Nov. 1814, SSR, 45, ff. 2917-21 (FCCP, 28 Nov. 1814), and R.P. to G.P., 17 Sept. 1816, SSR, 51 (FCCP, 7 Nov. 1816). See also Appendix 2 (c) and Swettenham, *op.cit.*

²⁷ Swettenham, *op.cit.* 46; Emerson, *op.cit.* 75; Mills, *op.cit.* 50; Winstedt, *History of Malaya*, 168 and Hall, *Southeast Asia*, 473, all wrongly identify Sultan Diya'u'd-din as Sultan Abdullah. Winstedt, *History of Malaya*, 168, quaintly and incorrectly writes, 'Perhaps because he had had his gruel [Light's attack on Perai], perhaps because he welcomed a barrier that must have seemed even to him a bulwark against aggression, perhaps because he was in need of money, in 1800 the Sultan ceded to the English Company a tract on the Kedah mainland'.

1798-1803 form a vital phase in the history of Kedah — the struggle for power was far from over and it helped crystalize the issue, at least as far as Tunku Pangeran was concerned. Tunku Pangeran, considering himself the rightful successor to Sultan Abdullah, proved most unwilling to accept the *status quo* or to give up his claim to the rulership.²⁸ To him, the recognition of Diya'u'd-din as Raja, both by the Menteriz and Dato'2 of Kedah as well as by the East India Company, had come as the biggest blow to his cause. His earlier attempts at securing the rulership having failed and with Sultan Diya'u'd-din quite firmly accepted as Raja, it would have been clear that further attempts were bound to prove futile, for the odds weighed heavily against him: there were too many foci of power and far too many rivals — factors which might involve heavy commitment to hostilities without bearing much in return. It appears, in fact, that he did unsuccessfully challenge Sultan Diya'u'd-din's position, and it would seem that only after being thus blunted did he resort to the only alternative course left to him — that of foreign assistance.²⁹ And it was in this fateful direction that he turned.

Although there is no definite evidence of any appeals for the assistance or support of the East India Company in 1798 by any of the parties involved in the succession dispute, including Tunku Pangeran, it seems quite inconceivable that no such approaches were made. It is not known whether Tunku Pangeran, in his recourse to foreign assistance, approached the Company, but it is known that in his bid to clinch the rulership, the foreign power he found most expedient to turn to was, most significantly, Siam.

Tunku Pangeran was well aware of the steps necessary in an attempt to solicit Siamese assistance. Some time in 1801-2 he headed for Singora, whose Governor he successfully persuaded to espouse

²⁸ By existing evidence, Tunku Pangeran clearly considered himself the most legitimate successor by virtue of his being the eldest son by Sultan Abdullah's two wives and quite obviously also with his father's blessing. Wan Meh, Sultan Abdullah's first wife, was childless, but by Wan Mas, the second wife, he had three sons, Tunku Pangeran being the eldest. The rest of Sultan Abdullah's sons were all issues by his three *gundek* (while by another he had only two daughters). See Appendix 4 (a).

²⁹ See Minute by Clubleby, 16 Sept. 1823, SSR, 92, f.112 (FCCP, 2 Oct. 1823).

his cause and to accompany him to Bangkok.³⁰ It was perhaps fortunate for Tunku Pangeran that the Siamese showed no hesitation at this opportunity to increase their influence over Kedah, and he did not find much difficulty in securing the necessary support. After a short residence at Bangkok, during which, the necessary lobbying was done and certain understandings reached, Tunku Pangeran obtained an audience with Rama I where, without doubt, he made obeisance to Rama I, acknowledged Siam's overlordship and pledged his loyalty to the Siamese throne.³¹ He is known to have entered into 'certain engagements',³² received a Siamese title,³³ been recognized as the ruler of Kedah and promised the necessary support. In September 1803 Tunku Pangeran returned to Kedah, backed by a force of about 5,000 Siamese and an order from Rama I to Sultan Diya'u'd-din to step down.³⁴ It is also apparent that certain Siamese officials, including probably the Governor of Singora, accompanied Tunku Pangeran on his return, and in whose presence and participation various arrangements were worked out with the Kedah *élite* regarding the distribution of authority, whereby he was enabled to be acknowledged Raja of Kedah, taking the titular name of Sultan Ahmad Taj'u'd-din Halim Shah.³⁵

³⁰ Burney to Court, July 1841, *op.cit.* 309 and *BP*, III, i, Bangkok, 1912, 175-6.

³¹ Burney to Court, July 1841, *op.cit.* 309. This point by Burney is corroborated in the 'Kedah Laws' where it is stated that '... Baginda [i.e. Tunku Pangeran] sampai sendiri mengadap Raja Maha Besar da-Benua Siam . . .' [See R. Winstedt, 'Kedah Laws', *JMBRAS*, VI, ii (1928), 37]. It would also seem that it was on this occasion, in the course of pressing his case, that Tunku Pangeran told Rama I of Sultan Diya'u'd-din's lease of 'Province Wellesley', a point which he knew Rama I would not be very pleased about [See R.K. to G.P., 28 July 1819, *SSR*, 72, f.838 (FCCP, 30 Sept. 1819)].

³² *Ibid.* It is not quite known what these 'engagements' were but they probably referred to agreements regarding the details of tributary relationships or other political and commercial matters. See also, *BP*, III, i (1912), 175-6.

³³ Presumably that of 'Phaya' which was the title usually given to the governors of the important provinces and to the Raja2 of the Malay states. See C. Skinner, 'A Kedah Letter of 1839', Bastin and Roolvink (eds) *Malayan and Indonesian Studies*, 156, note. 5.

³⁴ See Burney to Court, July 1841, *op.cit.* 309-10.

³⁵ Burney to Court, July 1841, *op.cit.* ff.310-12. It is extremely clear that Anderson was fully aware of these facts, but as they ran contrary to the main arguments in his pamphlet, chose to interpret them differently, writing: 'After some time, Sultan Tleaoodeen [Diya'u'd-din] getting old, became weary of conducting

As regards the other known details of the settlement reached, Diya'u'd-din was 'demoted' to his original area of authority—Perlis—while Tunku Ibrahim became Raja Muda, holding what he termed 'the executive authority of government'.³⁶

Seen in its fullest implications, Sultan Ahmad Taju'd-din's visit to Bangkok and the assistance he invoked formed perhaps the most significant development in Kedah's history and the most decisive step ever made in the sphere of Kedah's tributary relationships with Siam. He stands, at least on present evidence, as the first Raja of Kedah who not only made obeisance at the Siamese court but who actually owed his position as Raja to Siam, and to which he gave credence by increasing the value of the Bunga Emas dan Perak.³⁷ Even when seen in its barest connotations, Sultan Ahmad was, by the very logic of the situation, a true tributary ruler of Siam, subject to the expected loyalty and full obligations of any Siamese tributary state — a status which, ironically, was voluntary and in one respect sought for, rather than demanded by threat of invasion as in earlier times.³⁸

Sultan Ahmad Taju'd-din, however, was to find only too soon that his position was in no way dissimilar to that of Sultan Diya'u'd-din, and that affairs were not as stable as he could have wished for. It is clear that almost as soon as the Siamese force withdrew, probably towards the end of October,³⁹ the power struggle resumed and carried on unabated.⁴⁰ Petty quarrels developed over various issues, and matters were complicated by disputes with his brothers

the affairs of Government, and he transferred it to Tuanko Pangeran . . . This arrangement and resignation of the Sultan Tleaoodeen in favour of his Nephew was voluntary. Tuanko Pangeran had some time before he proceeded to Siam, where he remained some months, to pay his respects to the Emperor and to conciliate his good will. All the Chiefs and Nobles of the Country unanimously consented to receive Tuanko Pangeran as their King . . . (Anderson, *op.cit.* 155). Incidentally, Diya'u'd-din could not have been quite as old as made out by Anderson for he was only 49 being born in 1754 (see Chapter II) and died as late as 1823 (See Anderson, *op.cit.* 157).

³⁶ See Raja Muda of Kedah to G.P., 23 Oct. 1807, SSR, 135, ff. 192-4 (FCCP, 2 Oct. 1807) and Phillips to G.G., 31 Jan. 1811, SSR, 30, f.116 (FCCP, 31 Jan. 1811).

³⁷ See Winstedt, 'The Kedah Laws', 37. The value of the offerings was actually doubled. *Ibid.*

³⁸ See Chapters I and III.

³⁹ See Burney to Court, July 1841, *op.cit.*, f.310.

⁴⁰ See R.T. Farquhar to G.G., 18 Sept. 1805, SSR, 8 (unfolioed).

who wanted a share of the \$10,000 received from the Company for the lease of Pulau Pinang and 'Province Wellesley',⁴¹ not to mention their more deep-seated attempts to gain wider territorial authority and to assert their autonomy.⁴² In this respect, Sultan Ahmad found his main challengers in Tunku Ibrahim and Tunku Bisnu.

There is evidence of an attempt by Sultan Ahmad to restrict the authority of Tunku Ibrahim in his capacity as Raja Muda, a move resulting in hostilities.⁴³ So pressed was Sultan Ahmad in his attempt to contain this conflict that he even found it necessary to appeal to the Governor of Pulau Pinang to exert moral pressure on Tunku Ibrahim to cease resistance.⁴⁴ In addition, there are indications that Sultan Ahmad was also faced with a serious rebellion initiated by Tunku Bisnu, which took a heavy toll of life.⁴⁵ With his position thus jeopardized, it became almost obligatory on Sultan Ahmad to appeal to the Governor of Singora for assistance, an appeal, however, which was not at all unusual, for Tunku Ibrahim and Tunku Bisnu were already carrying on independent negotiations with the same Governor.⁴⁶ Thus all three were taking Kedah a step further into the Siamese fold.

It was definitely in response to these different manoeuvres that the Governor of Singora, supported by a large force, arrived in Kedah in January 1808 'in order to settle the Government'.⁴⁷ The distribution of authority arrived at on this occasion suggests that

⁴¹ Burney to Court, July 1841, *op.cit.* f.374.

⁴² See Farquhar to G.G., 18 Sept. 1805, SSR, 8. It is of great interest to note that in 1805, Sultan Ahmad made overtures to the Lieut-Governor of Pulau Pinang, R.T. Farquhar, relative to the 'protection' of Kedah by the Company. Although the details of these moves are not known, two points emerge. Firstly, that Sultan Ahmad was thinking in terms of the Company's assistance to control his brothers and to stabilize his position; secondly, it raises the possibility that he had made use of Siamese assistance *purely to establish himself as Raja*, and then to repudiate whatever claims Siam may have on him, by placing Kedah under the Company's protection.

⁴³ See Raja Muda to G.P., SSR, 135, ff. 192-4 (FCCP, 2 Oct. 1807).

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ See Burney to G.P., 29 May 1822, SSR, 86, f.987 (FCCP, 30 May 1822). 1822).

⁴⁶ See Scott to Raffles, cited in S. Raffles, *Memoir of the Life and Public Services of Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles* (London, MD CCCXXX), 51.

⁴⁷ R.K. to G.P., 19 Jan. 1808, SSR, 19 (FCCP, 19 Jan. 1808).

Tunku Ibrahim and Tunku Bisnu gained a slight edge over Sultan Ahmad, a reflection perhaps on the favour they had been able to win from the Governor of Singora through their respective manipulations. Although Sultan Ahmad continued as Raja, Tunku Ibrahim was confirmed as Raja Muda and obtained authority over the Sungai Muda basin,⁴⁸ while Tunku Bisnu gained for himself the Setul region.⁴⁹ The most interesting aspect of the entire episode is that Tunku Suleiman, alarmed by these growing references to Siam, apparently saw the writing on the wall, and consequently made arrangements to move to Kota, on the Sungai Perai, near the border with 'Province Wellesley'.⁵⁰

In the sphere of Kedah's tributary relationships with Siam, Sultan Ahmad, placed as he was in a peculiar position by having availed himself of Siamese assistance in 1801-3, found that the initial years of his rule posed no serious problems.⁵¹ The Bunga Emas dan Perak was sent to Bangkok, there are no references to demands on Kedah, and to use Sultan Ahmad's words, proceedings were just and consistent with former established custom and usage . . .',⁵² a statement which also suggests that he was having no regrets over his trip to Bangkok which in turn had taken Kedah into a more definite tributary position. This happy situation, however, was not to last long, for certain developments arose following reports of the illness of Rama I in June-July 1809.⁵³

Apart from local factors, it would appear that these reports of Rama I's failing health helped spark off a serious rebellion in Petani against Siamese authority,⁵⁴ an event which may be consi-

⁴⁸ Ref. R.K. to G.P., 4 Oct. 1811, SSR, 32, f.1291 (FCCP, 17 Oct. 1811).

⁴⁹ See S. Raffles, *Memoir*, 53.

⁵⁰ See Tunku Suleiman to G.P., 23 Nov. 1808, Tunku Diya'u'd-din to G.P., 23 Nov. 1808 and Tunku Ibrahim to G.P., 23 Nov. 1808, SSR, 20, ff.1480-1485 (FCCP, 17 Dec. 1808) and Anderson, *op.cit.* 173.

⁵¹ See Appendix 2 (c).

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Gerini, 'Junk Ceylon Island', 72.

⁵⁴ See Sultan Maulana MS. and MacInnes to Clubley, 17 Jan. 1814, SSR, 44, f.99 (FCCP, 20 Jan. 1814). This MS. which has only quite recently come to light is in the form of a sha'cr. It contains considerable details of various developments within Kedah, of Kedah's tributary services to Siam and a whole series of Malay and Siamese personalities as well as a wide range of place-names. A study of the text in its literary and historical contexts is in progress.

dered as Sultan Ahmad's first test. Faced with orders from Siam to provide men and other forms of assistance to help the Siamese forces put down the uprising, Sultan Ahmad found that its fulfilment spelt difficulty. There can be little doubt that he was torn by the contradiction of his obligations to Siam on the one hand and by ties of fraternity with Petani on the other. To worsen matters, he was also plagued by opposition from some of the Menteriz and Dato'2 who challenged the wisdom of providing such assistance, and it was only after considerable delay that his forces were ready.⁵⁵

Even more crucial to Sultan Ahmad was the effect of the news of Rama I's illness on the Burmese court — Bodawpaya deemed it a fitting occasion to renew his plans for the invasion of Siam, which he had shelved since 1802.⁵⁶ He immediately issued orders to the Governor of Tavoy, Meng-ha-le, to make a probe into Siamese territory. Towards the end of July, the latter sailed south for Thalang with sixty war-vessels and 3,000 men, and after a very brief siege, took Chalang on 15 August, after which he withdrew.⁵⁷ The Burmese attack had its repercussions on Kedah, for Sultan Ahmad, barely after he had given help to the Siamese in Petani, was now ordered to provide men, boats and provisions for the recovery of Thalang and the defence of the Isthmian region from further attack.⁵⁸ There can be no doubt that he was compelled by circumstances to supply these demands, for as he himself wrote, '... [the Siamese] being numerous and the Country of Queda being insufficient to oppose them by force, I fulfilled their requisitions'.⁵⁹

The ease with which Chalang had been taken appears to have provided the incentive for Bodawpaya's plans to wrest the Isthmian region and Kedah from Siamese control.⁶⁰ The opportunity

⁵⁵ Sultan Maulana MS.

⁵⁶ See Chapter III.

⁵⁷ See Gerini, *op.cit.* for details, see also *BP*, i (1910), 186.

⁵⁸ See Sultan Maulana MS.

⁵⁹ See R.K. to G.P., 22 July 1810, SSR, 30, f.96 (FCCP, 31 Jan. 1811).

⁶⁰ See Gerini, *op.cit.*, 75-81; R.K. to G.R.; 22 July 1810, SSR, 30, f.96 (FCCP, 31 Jan. 1811); Mai Maha Lela Looiak (sic) to G.P., undated, SSR, 30, ff.101-2 (FCCP, 31 Jan. 1811) and R.K. to G.P., 30 Oct. 1810, SSR, 30, f.108 (FCCP, 31 Jan. 1811).

to effect this came with the death of Rama I on 9 September 1809, and as soon as news of this reached Ava, Bodawpaya despatched one of his generals to Tavoy for the purpose of organizing operations.⁶¹ Full-scale preparations were completed by mid-October, after which a flotilla of war-vessels carrying 4,000 men was sent against Thalang and a similar flotilla with 3,000 men despatched to attack Ranong, Kra and Chumporn.⁶² Takua-pa fell to the Burmese on 17 October, followed soon after by the capture of Takua-thung. The Burmese forces then settled down to a siege of Chalang, and after the use of various strategem, stormed the town on 13 December,⁶³ remaining in occupation of the island till about early October 1811.⁶⁴

From the very start of the invasion and during the period of the Burmese presence in Chalang, it is clear that Sultan Ahmad found himself in a quandary far worse than that of Sultan Abdullah in 1785-6,⁶⁵ especially in view of the fact that, unlike his father, he was a tributary ruler of Siam in the full sense of the word. Worse still, the Burmese invasion in 1810-11 was far more successful than that of 1785-6. There are strong indications (though details are lacking) of Burmese moves towards Kedah and by inference it appears most likely that around the time of the siege of Chalang, or after its fall, Sultan Ahmad was faced with Burmese demands for supplies, and, it seems quite safe to conclude, the recognition of Burmese overlordship as well.⁶⁶ And once again, as in earlier times, Sultan Ahmad would have found that Kedah's weakness

⁶¹ Gerini, *op.cit.* 75.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ For details of the invasion, see Gerini, *op.cit.* 77-83.

⁶⁴ See R.K. to G.P., 30 Oct. 1810, SSR, 30, f.109 (FCCP, 31 Jan. 1811).

⁶⁵ See Chapter III.

⁶⁶ This is based on a number of references pertaining to the help Sultan Ahmad had rendered the Burmese. See R.K. to G.G., 22 July 1810, SSR, 30, f.96; Mai Maha Leha Looiak (sic) to G.P., SSR, 30, ff.101-2; R.K. to G.P., 30 Oct. 1810, SSR, 30, ff.108, 109 (FCCP, 31 Jan. 1816); R.K. to G.G., (see Appendix 2c); Burney to Clubleby, 29 May, 1832, SSR, 86, f.988 (FCCP, 30 May 1833); Raffles, *op.cit.* 51; Low, *JIA*, 4 (1850), 16 and Burney to Court, *op.cit.* f.310. In the first letter cited above, Sultan Ahmad, in fact, wrote: 'When the Burmans attacked Saloong [Thalang] it was rumoured abroad that I had engaged in the Service of Siam and I have thereby acquired the severe resentment of that Power a matter of evil con-

and the desire to prevent invasion dictated a conciliatory attitude, and that for survival, expediency rather than loyalty mattered most. The problem of answering to Siam had to come later.

To make matters even worse for Sultan Ahmad, Tunku Bisnu chose this moment to make a third bid for the Rajaship.⁶⁷ Securely established in Setul since 1808, he had steadily been building his power to facilitate his own ends.⁶⁸ To him, there could have been no finer an opportunity than this, for besides possessing strong financial resources to 'buy' his way to power, Sultan Ahmad's assistance to the Burmese would be his trump card in the Siamese court. Early in 1810, Tunku Bisnu, in a manner highly reminiscent of Tunku Pangeran in 1801-2, made his way to Singora and secured the backing of its Governor.⁶⁹ The pair then went to Bangkok, where Tunku Bisnu questioned Sultan Ahmad's loyalty to Siam on the grounds of consorting with Siam's traditional enemy.⁷⁰

From the records it can be deduced that in the course of the Burmese invasion and his policy of appeasement, Sultan Ahmad had also tried to obtain defensive aid from the East India Company,⁷¹ since he must have been conscious of the urgency of iso-

sequence to my country'. The implications are self-evident. See R.K. to G.G., 22 July 1810, SSR, 30, f.96 (FCCP, 31 Jan. 1811). It is of very special interest to this study that the Burmese assertion of suzerainty over Kedah was justified to the Pulau Pinang authorities on grounds of precedence. The Governor of Tavoy wrote: '... in former times it was the custom established in the countries of Perlis [Perlis] and Quedah [Kedah], for each succeeding Raja to present the Gift of Tribute and Submission consisting of Flowered Gold and Silver to the Exalted and Powerful King of Ava and at that time the countries of Perlis and Quedah were considered as Dependencies in the Birma [Burman] Empire.' [See Mai Maha Looiak (sic) to G.P., SSR, 30, ff.101-2 (FCCP, 31 Jan. 1811)]. This is an obvious reference to the occasions between 1760 and 1786 when the Bunga Emas dan Perak was sent to Ava. (See Chapters I and III).

⁶⁷ Raffles, *op.cit.* 53 and Burney to Court, *op.cit.* f.376.

⁶⁸ Tunku Bisnu had contracts with the government of Pulau Pinang and other firms for the supply of timber. It has been suggested by Raffles that the revenue Tunku Bisnu earned on these exports helped him very considerably in the furtherance of his ends. See Raffles, *op.cit.* 53.

⁶⁹ See Burney to Clubley, 29 May 1822, SSR, 86, ff.988-9 (FCCP, 30 May 1822) and G.N.S. to R.K., 20 Aug. 1825, SSR, 103, ff.841-3 (FCCP, 1 Sept. 1825).

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* also Burney to Court, *op.cit.* ff.376-7 and *BP*, II, iv (1912), 180.

⁷¹ See R.K. to G.P., 28 April 1810, SSR, 30, ff.93-4 (FCCP, 31 Jan. 1811).

lating Kedah from Burmese and Siamese pressure in the ensuing conflict. In this he failed, and undoubtedly he was told categorically by the Company authorities in Pulau Pinang that the 1802 Treaty made no provision for protection and informed of the Company's policy of non-interference.⁷²

In the meanwhile, on receipt of news at Bangkok of the Burmese attacks on south-western Siam, the Phaya Dasayodha and the Phaya Rajaprasiddhi left with about 6,000 men for Chalang by way of Chaiya and the Pak P'hnorn route, and the Chau Phaya Yomaraj and the Phaya Thai-nam made for Nakorn Si'thammarat with about 5,000 men and with orders to collect another 10,000 men before cutting across the Peninsula to Trang.⁷³ Sultan Ahmad regarded these moves with extreme apprehension because of his collusion with the Burmese and the forthcoming Siamese demands on Kedah for auxiliaries, boats and supplies, the satisfaction of which would be a severe drain on its resources.⁷⁴

The arrival of C. Bruce as the new Governor of Pulau Pinang in late March 1810⁷⁵ gave fresh hope to Sultan Ahmad, and on being informed of the latter's arrival in a personal communication⁷⁶ towards the end of April he deputed Tunku Long Puteh,⁷⁷ Tunku Ahmad, the Maharaja Lela and the Seri Paduka Tuan to Pulau Pinang, 'for the purpose of communicating with . . . [the Governor] . . . on the subject of the Treaty and to settle such parts thereof as may be proper . . .'.⁷⁸ In addition, he sent 'a writing'

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Gerini, *op.cit.* 78.

⁷⁴ See pp. 120.

⁷⁵ Low, 'Origin and Progress of British Colonies,' 16.

⁷⁶ See R.K. to G.P., 28 April 1810, SSR, 30, f.93 (FCCP, 31 Jan. 1811).

⁷⁷ Tunku Long Puteh (of Siak) was brother-in-law to Sultan Ahmad. See R.K. to G.P., 14 Jan. 1816, SSR, 54 (FCCP, 3 Feb. 1816).

⁷⁸ R.K. to G.P., 28 April 1810, SSR, 30, ff.93-4 (FCCP, 31 Jan. 1811). It is of importance to note that in this letter Sultan Ahmad referred to the defensive clauses in Sultan Abdullah's conditions for the lease of Pulau Pinang (and the failure of the Company to live up to them) as the legitimate basis for his appeals. It is not known whether he possessed a copy of the 1800 Treaty or not, or if he refused to recognize the validity of this treaty because it had been signed by Sultan Diya'u'd-din, either for reasons of expediency or out of genuine belief of its invalidity. What can be inferred, however, is that on being only recently told by the Pulau Pinang authorities that this treaty contained no clause for protection (see p. 118), Sultan Ahmad, either out of sincere conviction, or seeing fit to do so, pressed for the fulfilment of the 1785 conditions. See *ibid.* also note 79.

which he requested might be inserted in the Treaty and forwarded to the King of England, 'so that no misunderstanding can arise'.⁷⁹ The details of this mission, however, are unfortunately lacking.⁸⁰

The despatch of the mission, even though it failed in the realization of its objectives, was nevertheless well-timed, for quite soon after its return came the anticipated requisitions for perahuz and men, fully equipped, and the charges of complicity with Burma.⁸¹ Sultan Ahmad quickly reacted by deputing the Bendahara to Pulau Pinang to ask the Governor's advice on the policy he ought to pursue and as to the nature of 'whatever assistance and friendship' that could be expected of the Company.⁸² Quite definitely, it was the burdensome nature of these requisitions and the gravity of the charges that also prompted Sultan Ahmad to ask the Governor for a meeting at Pulau Tiga and to repeat his plea for a new treaty embodying protection for Kedah by the Company.⁸⁴ He was, however, again disappointed, for apart from the appeals being turned down, he was even advised to submit fully to Siam.⁸⁵

In all likelihood, the direct threat of a Siamese invasion in retribution for Sultan Ahmad's service to the Burmese, also seems to have existed,⁸⁶ and may well explain the deputation of the Benda-

⁷⁹ The exact text of this 'writing' is unknown, but it must have surely comprehended Company protection for Kedah. It also reveals that by this stage, Sultan Ahmad, given to believe that the Treaty of 1802 contained no clause for any form of protection, was seeking to amend the treaty by the inclusion of a new clause covering defensive aid for Kedah, justifying it on the basis of the 1785 conditions. See R.K. to G.P., 28 April 1810, SSR, 30, ff.93-5 (FCCP, 31 Jan. 1811).

⁸⁰ In his reply, Bruce mentioned that Colonel Macalister would be sent to meet Sultan Ahmad at Pulau Tiga on the subjects that had been raised by the mission, but I have been unable to confirm whether the meeting took place or not. See G.P. to R.K., 7 May 1810, SSR, 30, f.96 (FCCP, 31 Jan. 1811). Pulau Tiga, on the Sungai Merbok, was one of Sultan Ahmad's istana2 (see Burney to Court, July 1841, *op.cit.* 393; Farquhar to G.G., 18 Sept. 1805, SSR, 8; Caunter to G.P., 27 Nov. 1821, SSR, 80, ff.593-4 (FCCP, 29 Nov. 1821), and M. Radzi, 'Kota Kuala Muda', *MHJ*, 3, i (1956), 29.

⁸¹ See R.K. to G.P., 22 July 1810, SSR, 30, ff.97-9 (FCCP, 31 Jan. 1811).

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ G.P. to R.K., 3 Aug. 1810, SSR, 30, ff.100, 101 (FCCP, 31 Jan. 1811).

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* f.100.

⁸⁶ See Low, 'Origin and Progress of British Colonies', 16 and MaiMahaLehaLooiak (sic) to G.P., undated, SSR, 30, ff.101-2 (FCCP, 31 Jan. 1811).

hara to Pulau Pinang. If the interpretation of the evidence is correct, it is possible that Sultan Ahmad wrote to the Burmese in Thalang seeking assurances of Burmese assistance in case of a Siamese attack and to bring their influence to bear on the Company to help Kedah in its hour of need.⁸⁷

With regard to Siam, Sultan Ahmad recognized that the only way to insure Kedah from any Siamese attack was by complete submission to their demands,⁸⁸ which he did in the hope that it would help redeem himself and exemplify his loyalty to Siam. It was towards this end that the Bendahara and other officers together with a large fleet of perahu2 and men were despatched to Trang for the re-conquest of Thalang, and a considerable quantity of food and other supplies were furnished to the Siamese forces as well.⁸⁹

Despite the execution of the Siamese requisitions, in September 1810 Sultan Ahmad received news of even heavier demands and learnt of a number 'of unfavourable reports . . . indicative of the most dangerous and unjust proceedings towards the Country of Quedah . . .'.⁹⁰ With his resources stretched almost to the fullest and fearing the measures that Siam might impose on Kedah, he found himself sufficiently pressed to appeal for immediate consultations with a representative of the Company on these issues.⁹¹ But the reply he received was negative.⁹²

By the end of October,⁹³ it can be safely deduced that Thalang was back in Siamese hands, thanks largely to the efforts of the Bendahara of Kedah and his forces and the perahu2 and supplies

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ As Sultan Ahmad expressed it a few months later, ' . . . the only means of preserving peace with Siam and pacify resentment was to submit implicitly to their commands and orders, however unjust. I have however for the preservation of the People and as far as I could with propriety followed their wishes . . . ' See R. K. to G.P., 30 Oct. 1810, SSR, 30, ff.106-7 (FCCP, 31 Jan. 1811).

⁸⁹ See Burney to Court, July 1841, *op.cit.* 376 and Sultan Maulana MS.

⁹⁰ R.K. to G.P., 10 Sept. 1810, SSR, 30, f.104 (FCCP, 31 Jan. 1814). It is clearly apparent that Bisnu's allegations in Bangkok, Kedah's co-operation with the Burmese and delays in furnishing the Siamese orders formed the core of these 'unfavourable reports'.

⁹¹ *Ibid.* ff.104-5.

⁹² G.P. to R.K. 18 Sept. 1810, SSR, 30, f.105 (FCCP, 31 Jan. 1811).

⁹³ See R.K. to G.P., 30 Oct. 1810, SSR, 30, f.109 (FCCP, 31 Jan. 1811).

that Kedah had committed, at the expense of a heavy loss of life.⁹⁴ Kedah's problems were, nevertheless, far from being solved. To the revived allegations of consorting with the Burmese was added the fresh charge of attempting to seek an alliance with the British.⁹⁵ Apart from a few relatively minor issues,⁹⁶ there was also the Siamese intention to station 3,000 men in Kedah, ostensibly for the purpose of repelling any possible Burmese punitive attack.⁹⁷ Furthermore, it is clear that Tunku Bisnu had in the meantime returned to Kedah,⁹⁸ but found Tunku Ibrahim unwilling to surrender his authority of the Sungai Muda basin, and Sultan Ahmad was conscious that it was imminent before Tunku Bisnu called for Siamese assistance.⁹⁹

Confronted by these grave problems which threatened to undermine his own position and authority and Kedah's security as well, Sultan Ahmad wrote to the Governor of Pulau Pinang outlining the situation and requesting a categorical answer whether or not

⁹⁴ See Burney to Court, July, 1841, *op.cit.* 376; Sultan Maulana MS; *BP*, I, i (1910), 186; *BP*, I, ii (1910), 247; Vella, *Rama III*, 60 and Skinner in *Malayan and Indonesian Studies*, 157. In 1825, Burney found the chief and officials of Punga 'very kindly disposed towards the King of Queda [Sultan Ahmad] to whose exertions and particularly to the exertions of whose . . . Bendahara, they principally ascribe the repulse of the Burmese from Thalang in 1810. The boats sent by the King on that occasion were by far the most efficient and formidable to the Burmese, and the Bendahara was reported to have possessed great skill and precision in directing cannon and to have himself fired the shot which killed the chief of Mergui.' *BP*, II, iii (1911). In recognition of this, Sultan Ahmad was later given the rank of Chau Phaya, 'the [fifth and] highest grade of conferred' nobility in Siam. See Vella, *ibid.* 60 and Skinner, *ibid.* 156. Burney also wrote that 'Besides the Principal Ministers and a few other of the higher officers at Bangkok, this rank has only been conferred upon the Governors of only two provinces, Ligor and Chantabun.' See *BP*, II, iii (1911), 194.

⁹⁵ R.K. to G.P., 30 Oct. 1810, SSR, ff.107, 109 (FCCP, 31 Jan. 1811).

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.* ff.108, 109, 110. Of this move, Sultan Ahmad wrote: 'I have refused them permission to come and have not received a reply but am certain they will pay no attention to it. I inform my Friend [i.e. the Governor] of this because the Countries of Quedah and Penang are connected together as one Country as is contained in the Treaty with the Company. We have learnt . . . that the Singora armament is ready and will reach Quedah when the rain ceases. But the Birmas [Burmese] are already destroyed for what purpose therefore do they come to Quedah, unquestionably their intentions are bad . . . ' *Ibid.* ff.108. . . 109, *Italics* are mine.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* f. 109.

the Company intended 'fulfilling the Treaty'.¹⁰⁰ And probably out of sheer belief rather than in the hope of intimidating the Company into providing protection to Kedah, he went on to predict 'that War must inevitably ensue between Siam and the Company . . .'.¹⁰¹ The reply he received from the Governor, however, was extremely evasive on the point of the Treaty and also contained the advice that Kedah 'should pursue conciliatory measures with the Siamese'.¹⁰²

In mid-December came a further Siamese requisition for perahu, presumably fully equipped, and for which Sultan Ahmad, his financial resources almost completely exhausted, was forced to request an advance of the \$10,000 rent from the Company.¹⁰³ Inasmuch as he gave in to these orders, Sultan Ahmad clearly recognized that if Kedah were to submit continually to Siamese demands, even for the sake of preserving peace, this would eventually create a situation which would lead to its becoming a fully-fledged province of Siam.¹⁰⁴

Blunted in his appeals to the Governor of Pulau Pinang for protection and the fulfilment of the Treaty and in the face of mounting pressure and all the fears and the tension that went with it, it was not surprising that on 24 December 1810, Sultan Ahmad personally addressed the Governor-General of India, Lord Minto, appealing for defensive assistance for Kedah. After tracing the background of Kedah's connexions with the Company and the unfairness of Siamese demands on Kedah, he went on to state:

. . . I have in vain endeavoured to avert the enmity of Siam, but without any appearance of success. I have made known to the Governors of Pinang, every circumstance with relation to this Country and Siam,

¹⁰⁰ The firm manner in which this point is stated in the letter is indicative of a number of (possibly) inter-related alternatives. Firstly, that the provision for naval assistance in the 1800 treaty had been brought to his attention; secondly, that he remained convinced of the Company's obligation to assist Kedah because 'the countries of Quedah and Pulau Pinang shall be as one Country' as was contained in the Treaty (see note 97) and thirdly, that he may have been also referring to the 1785 conditions.

¹⁰¹ G.P. to R.K., 12 Nov. 1810, SSR, 30, f.110 (FCCP, 31 Jan. 1811).

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ R.K. to G.P., 21 Dec. 1810, SSR, 30, f.44 (FCCP, 31 Jan. 1811).

¹⁰⁴ R.K. to G.P., 19 Dec. 1810, SSR, 30, f.41 (FCCP, 31 Jan. 1811).

and have requested their advice and the assistance of the Company on which my Father relied, because the Countries of Quedah and Pinang are as one Country, and as one Interest; when therefore Quedah is distressed, it cannot be otherwise with Pinang. The Governor advised me by all means to avoid coming to a rupture with Siam, alledging, that it was not in his power to afford me assistance, for that the Supreme Government in Europe had forbidden all interference in the wars of the neighbouring powers. Perhaps this would be improper with respect to other Countries, but Quedah and Pinang are as one country; all the Ryots [raya'at] and People are much distressed by the labours necessarily imposed to avert the resentment of Siam, and every exertion on my part has been made to prevent coming to a rupture with that power, but I was unable to submit to demands exceeding all former precedent, which induced me to apply to the Governor of Pinang for the Company's aid, to enable me to repel their demands, for my Father having transmitted to me his Friendship and Alliance with the Company, it would be otherwise a reflection upon the power of the King of England, who is accounted a Prince greater and more powerful than any other. I conceive, that the Countries of Quedah and Pinang have but one interest, and perhaps the King and my friend may not have been well informed, and in consequence the Governor of Pinang has not been authorized to afford assistance, and that should they be acquainted therewith, they would consider it impossible to separate the two countries. In consequence, I request my friend to issue directions, and to forward a representation to the King, and to the Honourable Company, of the matters contained in this Letter. I request that the engagements contracted for by Mr. Light with my late Father, may be ratified, as my Country and I are deficient in strength; the favour of His Majesty the King of England extended to me, will render his name illustrious for justice and beneficence, and the grace of His Majesty will fill me with gratitude; under the power and Majesty of the King, I desire to repose in safety from the attempts of all my Enemies, and that the King may be disposed to kindness and favour towards me, as if I were his own subject, that he will be pleased to issue his Commands to the Governor of Pinang to afford me aid and assistance in my distress and dangers, and cause a regulation to be made by which the two countries may have but one interest; in like manner I shall not refuse any aid to Pinang, consistent with my ability. I further request a writing from the King, and from my friend, that it may remain as an assurance of the protection of the King, and descend to my successors in the Government. I place a

perfect reliance in the favour and aid of my friend in all these matters.¹⁰⁵

It was Sultan Ahmad's fate, perhaps, that his appeal reached Calcutta just after Lord Minto's departure on the Java expedition.¹⁰⁶

Sultan Ahmad, while probably oblivious of the fact that his appeal had reached Calcutta too late, next learnt of Minto's impending arrival at Pulau Pinang in a despatch from Stamford Raffles.¹⁰⁷ Wishing to take full advantage of the Governor-General's presence, he sent Tunku Long Puteh as his personal emissary to Raffles to explain the serious difficulties that Kedah was facing in relation to its northern neighbours,¹⁰⁸ and, it is only logical to conclude, to request the presentation of Kedah's case to Minto. Raffles advised that Sultan Ahmad meet Minto.¹⁰⁹

It was on this advice and in the hope that a personal representation would win for Kedah the protection he had so long appealed for, that Sultan Ahmad, on hearing of Minto's arrival, sailed to the island on 12 May to seek a meeting.¹¹⁰ Little did he know, however, that the Pulau Pinang authorities, pre-occupied as they were with the Java expedition and, quite understandably, determined that nothing or nobody (not even the Raja from whose father they obtained their tenure to the island and one who had supplied the bulk of the provisions for the very expedition) should delay or distract Lord Minto, would see to it that this meeting did not take place. And it did not.¹¹¹

Sultan Ahmad regarded his 'missing' Lord Minto 'not only as

¹⁰⁵ See Appendix 2 (c), for full text. See also R.K. to G.P., 19 Dec. 1810 and 21 Dec. 1810, SSR, 30, ff.40-45 (FCCP, 31 Jan. 1811).

¹⁰⁶ Burney to Court, July 1841, op.cit. f.377.

¹⁰⁷ Raffles, op.cit. 49.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ See C.E. Wurtzburg, *Raffles of the Eastern Isles* (London, 1954), 132. This is the first occasion, to my knowledge, that Sultan Ahmad left Kedah during the time he was *de facto* Raja, and well illustrates the gravity of the circumstances he was placed in and the hopes he placed on the meeting.

¹¹¹ See Wurtzburg, op.cit. 132. Of this incident, Capt. Taylor, Minto's military secretary, penned: 'About 3 o'clock two large prows [perahu] came in and with yellow flags at mastheads and yellow ensign. A note from the shore informed us that this was the King of Queda coming to pay his respects to Lord Minto. So we got under way and left His Majesty in the lurch'. Ibid.

a serious mortification, but as an absolute misfortune',¹¹² but he did not give up hope altogether. He immediately despatched the letter of appeal that he had meant to present Lord Minto at the expected meeting,¹¹³ to Raffles then at Melaka, accompanied by a request to Raffles to inform Lord Minto of Kedah's unfortunate circumstances.¹¹⁴ It might have been of some consolation to him that Raffles obliged in this,¹¹⁵ but his expectations of a positive reply from Lord Minto were disappointed, because the former was too busy with other matters and postponed any final decision.¹¹⁶

Soon after these disappointments came the first indications of the repercussions of Tunku Bisnu's efforts at Bangkok. Towards the end of September, the party sent to Bangkok conveying the Bunga Mas dan Perak returned with orders from Rama II that the Setul and Lungu areas were to be surrendered by Kedah and annexed to Singora (which Sultan Ahmad described as 'a procedure altogether repugnant to the laws of the state').¹¹⁷ Furthermore, the authority over the Sungai Yan, Sungai Merbok and Sungai Muda basins was to be transferred to Tunku Bisnu.¹¹⁸ Sultan Ahmad may perhaps have taken some comfort in his brother's inability to have replaced him as Raja, but what began to worry him was that Tunku Bisnu's return would mark the beginning of

¹¹² See Raffles, *op.cit.* 49. A few years later, in alluding to this incident, Sultan Ahmad stated that '... At the time the General [i.e. the Governor-General] came to Pinang, I was extremely happy to hear it and immediately sailed to wait on him and all the great men who accompanied him, but by the time I arrived, he had taken his departure, and I was disappointed'. See R.K. to G.P., 22 June 1815, SSR, 50, f.1387 (FCCP, 21 July 1814).

¹¹³ Burney states that this letter was a copy of that sent to Calcutta in December 1810, but I have not been able to verify this as yet. See Burney to Court, *op.cit.* 378.

¹¹⁴ Raffles, *op.cit.* 49.

¹¹⁵ It is of some import to note that Raffles complied with this request and presented a relatively strong case to Lord Minto, recommending that Kedah be placed under Company protection. *Ibid.* 48-56.

¹¹⁶ See Burney to Court, July 1841, *op.cit.* 378.

¹¹⁷ R.K. to G.P., 4 Oct. 1811, SSR, 32, f.1290 (FCCP, 17 Oct. 1811). The proposed annexation of Setul and Lungu were obviously the reward to the Governor of Singora for helping Tunku Bisnu.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

internal strife, in turn leading to greater Siamese interference, especially in the backing-up of the latter's claims.¹¹⁹

Sultan Ahmad therefore had every reason to seek the Company's protection for yet another time. He saw the news of Lord Minto's conquest of Java as the opportune moment to send this appeal to Pulau Pinang, writing,

I am happy that the Company has overcome and destroyed their Enemies, thereby increasing their Power on which I solely depend. I am impressed and admired at the power of the Company . . . in the rapid conquest of so many extensive countries and the overthrow of powerful Enemies. In consequence of which I am confirmed in the hope of obtaining from the Governor-General the protection and assistance which was the object of my former application : . . . In my opinion, the Siamese Government will no longer keep at terms with Queda nor can I submit to proceedings contrary to all former custom and usage. I think that from this time disturbances will arise in the Country . . . which must involve Queda with Siam. I think my Friend [i.e. the Acting Governor of Pulau Pinang, W.E. Phillips] is well informed that the Countries of Queda and Penang are but one country, and have but one interest. I depend on the Company to protect Queda. I am very anxious, if possible, to meet with the Governor-General should his Lordship come to Penang. I trust that my Friend will procure me the honour of a meeting with his Lordship.¹²⁰

Unfortunately for Kedah and for him, these words brought neither a favourable response nor the expected interview.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Sultan Ahmad was particularly concerned by these features of Siamese tributary control which represented a marked interference in Kedah's internal affairs. His greatest fears centred on the Sungai Muda basin, then under the jurisdiction of Tunku Ibrahim since he knew full well that Tunku Ibrahim would never give up his rights to this valuable area even to the extent of hostilities. See R.K. to G.P., 4 Oct. 1811, SSR, 32, ff. 1290-1 (FCCP, 17 Oct. 1811); see also, Mohd. Radzi Puteh, 'Kota Kuala Muda', *MHJ*, 3, 1 (1956), 26-34 for a description of the trade and politics of Kuala Muda, based largely on indigenous sources; and Cowan, 'Governor Bannerman and the Penang Tin Scheme,' 52-83 for an insight into the trade of Kuala Muda.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.* ff. 1289-91. Sultan Ahmad also requested the presentation to the G.G., of the latest acts of Siamese interference in Kedah.

¹²¹ There is a reference to another Burmese invasion of Thalang either in late December 1811 or early 1812, but details regarding its effects on Kedah in terms of Siamese tributary demands, are lacking. See Gerini, *JSS*, IV (1959), 83.

Almost simultaneously, Sultan Ahmad proceeded to Trang for a meeting with the Governor of Nakorn Si'thammarat who had probably been ordered by Rama II to investigate Tunku Bisnu's charges. It is known that a number of issues were discussed, including Tunku Amboon's attempted murder of the Raja of Trang.¹²² Towards the end of 1812 Sultan Ahmad, in order to disprove both the doubts that Tunku Bisnu had created in Bangkok of his loyalty to Siam and the reports that had reached the Governor of Nakorn Si'thammarat of his approaches to the East India Company (which brought further into question his allegiance to Rama II), sent the Dato' Bendahara and Tunku Abdullah, his favourite son, in the company of the Governor of Nakorn Si'thammarat, to pay homage and make obeisance at the Siamese Court to affirm his loyalty to Rama II.¹²³ Placed against this background and bearing in mind the unenviable circumstances of Sultan Ahmad's position, the significance of such a step can perhaps be best understood.

¹²² See Burney to Clubley, 10 March 1822, SSR, 84, f.419 (FCCP, 21 March 1822) and Burney to Clubley, 29 May 1822, SSR, 86, ff.988-90 (FCCP, 30 May 1822).

¹²³ See Anderson, *Considerations*, 84; Memorandum from the Raja of Kedah, 16 March 1829, in *BP*, III, i (1912), 112; Burney to Clubley, 10 March 1822, SSR, 84, f.419 (FCCP, 21 March 1822), Burney to Clubley, 29 May 1822, SSR, 86, ff.988-90 (FCCP, 30 May 1822), and G.N.S. to R.K., 20 Aug. 1825, SSR, 103, ff.841-3 (FCCP 1 Sept. 1825).

VI

THE INVASION OF PERAK

EARLY in November 1816, Sultan Ahmad Taju'd-din ordered the invasion of Perak.¹ By December, the Kedah land forces under the Dato' Bendahara had moved southwards from Kuala Kedah and Alor Setar to meet the Dato' Laksamana and his fleet of perahu at Kerian.² From there, a two-pronged attack was launched, the Bendahara and his army pushing southwards into Perak while the Kedah fleet headed for the Perak coast and the mouth of the Sungai Perak to enforce a blockade and to move up-river towards Pasir Garam, the royal capital.³ After various difficulties and desertions, Perak was occupied by September 1818⁴ and the Kedah forces were later recalled. The pattern of events that led to this invasion is of profound interest, for to a large extent it reflects Kedah's precarious and unfortunate position as a tributary of Siam and attests to the shrewd diplomatic manoeuvres of Sultan Ahmad Taju'd-din to safeguard the interests of Kedah in the face of unprecedented developments.

The conquest of Perak was in no way motivated by the ambitions of Sultan Ahmad Taju'd-din but had its origins in Siamese aims of aggrandizement over Perak. Siamese designs to bring Perak into tributary status were first indicated to the Dato' Bendahara of Kedah and Tunku Abdullah on their mission of homage to Bangkok in 1812-13, when they were informed by King Rama II

¹ R.K. to G.P., 19 Nov. 1816, SSR, 57 (FCCP, 5 Dec. 1816).

² R.K. to G.P., 21 Dec. 1816, SSR, 60, f.36 (FCCP, 9 Jan. 1817).

³ Cracroft to Clubley, 3 Aug. 1818, SSR, 67, f.12 (FCCP, 12 Sept. 1818).

⁴ Anderson, *Considerations*, 87.

of plans to send an army into Perak for this purpose.⁵ The Kedah pair realized its dangerous implications since Kedah bordered Perak and was obviously to be used by Siam as a base of operations. They were fully aware that 'if the Siamese were to send an army to Perak, they must pass through Quedah [Kedah], and that would occasion great surprise and disquiet among the subjects of Quedah and might cause a war to take place between the countries of Siam and Quedah'.⁶ The Bendahara consequently suggested to Rama II that the responsibility of subjecting Perak be handed to Kedah and that, instead of a Siamese army being sent, Kedah would undertake to bring Perak into tributary status on behalf of Siam.⁷ As we shall see, the overriding consideration that underlay Kedah's response to Siamese expansionist moves over Perak was the fear of the complications involved by the presence of a Siamese army in Kedah.

Siamese designs over Perak were, undoubtedly, part of their expansionist policy in the Malay Peninsula which had begun during the reigns of the first two Chakri kings.⁸ It was believed in Kedah, however, that the move to incorporate Perak into the Siamese empire did not originate in Bangkok itself, but at Nakorn Si'thammarat and Singora.⁹ The Governors of these two provinces, it was strongly believed, had suggested to the Siamese Court the extension of Siamese control over Perak because their position relative to Perak 'would make it likely, that they would be employed in this service . . . not only to ingratiate themselves with the King,

⁵ Anderson, *op.cit.* 84. See also chapter V. Sultan Ahmad must have obtained more than considerable satisfaction in that the mission succeeded in its purpose of reaffirming his loyalty to Siam. Matters, however, were quite serious indeed, for we are also told that two Siamese Commissioners were sent from Bangkok to examine the affairs of Kedah and to help stabilize his position [see Lieut. H. Burney's Report, 29 May 1822, SSR, 86, f.990 (FCCP, 30 May 1822)], thus providing confirmatory evidence on internal power-manipulations in Kedah (see chapter V) and further evidence of the reality of Siamese suzerainty.

⁶ Anderson, *op.cit.* 84.

⁷ *Loc.cit.*

⁸ Vella, *Rama III*, 59 and Crawford, *Embassy to Siam*, 401-6. See also chapters III to V.

⁹ See MacInnes to Clubley, 17 Jan. 1814, SSR, 44, f.101 (FCCP, 20 Jan. 1814).

but also to gratify a still more operative principle in these parts, the love of plunder'.¹⁰

This belief was to some extent corroborated by evidence provided by the Governor of Nakorn Si'thammarat at a later date and which dove-tails into a broader interpretation of the invasion plan. In 1822, he was to admit that it was he who had been responsible for having interested the Siamese Court in Perak when he wanted Sultan Ahmad Taju'd-din to bring Perak into tributary status in order to testify his (Sultan Ahmad's) gratitude to Siam for over-looking his (Sultan Ahmad's) gross misdeeds of the recent past.¹¹ Whatever the origin of the idea, Rama II obviously showed interest for it would mean the addition of another vassal state to his empire and earn him added prestige, especially in the eyes of Burma. To him and his Court and particularly to the Governor of Nakorn Si'thammarat, the spoils and potential revenues must have been equally attractive.¹²

Soon after the Bendahara's return with Rama II's orders, Sultan Ahmad despatched the Seri Raja Diraja, the Raja Setia Lela and the Tun Jaya Menteri to Perak with a letter and presents to its Raja, Sultan Mansur Shah II,¹³ informing him of Siam's aims of

¹⁰ Ibid. Siamese sources refer to a constant rivalry between the Governors of these two provinces (see Vella, *Rama III*, 61); it is to be wondered to what extent the Perak issue was representative of this rivalry, with each vying with the other for the King's favour. See also J. Low, *Journal of a Public Mission to the Rajah of Ligor*, SSR, 93, Appendix 3 (FCCP, 14 Sept. 1824); *The Burney Papers*, I, ii (1910), 201-2 and Burney to Cracroft, 23 Jan. 1825, SSR, 99, f.328 (FCCP, 27 Jan. 1825).

¹¹ See Capt. Burney's Report, 29 May 1809, SSR, 86, f.990 (FCCP, 30 May 1822) and chapter V. The Governor who met Burney in 1822 stated that Tunku Abdullah's visit to Bangkok and the proceedings of the Siamese Commissioners in Kedah had caused him great expense which he had wanted repaid by Kedah's bringing Perak into tributary status. His personal interest in the plan is thus all the more clearly indicated. See also below and chapter VII.

¹² It is of considerable interest to note that around 1825, Burney wrote that 'There is strong reason for believing that some of the subordinate Chiefs of Perak had privately before 1814, invited the interference of the Siamese Governors of Ligor and Singora, against the misgovernment of the old Raja of Perak . . .'. See *BP*, II, iv (1911), 160. In the light of Perak politics, this belief would seem credible.

¹³ See R.P. to R.K., 22 Aug. 1814, SSR, 45, f.2919 (FCCP, 28 Nov. 1814). Anderson, *op.cit.* 188; Gullick, *Indigenous Political Systems*, 56, gives the Raja's name as Sultan Abdul Malik Mansur Shah; R.J. Wilkinson, *A History of the Peninsular Malays* (Papers on Malay Subjects, Singapore, 1920), 106, wrongly identifies him as Sultan Ahmad-din Shah.

bringing Perak under its suzerainty,¹⁴ and as the evidence indicates, strongly advising compliance. Realizing the dangerous implications that Siamese designs over Perak would have for Kedah,¹⁵ Sultan Ahmad Taju'd-din also sent the Bendahara to Pulau Pinang to inform the Company officials of these developments.¹⁶ It is possible that Sultan Ahmad hoped that Siamese expansionist moves over Perak would draw the Company into the affairs of the Peninsula, but if this were so, he was disappointed, because the Governor of Pulau Pinang favoured Perak's peaceful submission.

Although the mission to Perak must have left around the middle of September 1813, by the beginning of January 1814¹⁷ no reply had been received. In the meantime, and as might have been expected, pressure to attack Perak was being exerted by the Governor of Nakorn Si'thammarat.¹⁸ Although Rama II had sanctioned an attempt by Sultan Ahmad to persuade the Raja of Perak to accept Siamese overlordship, the Governor of Nakorn Si'thammarat pressed for the immediate invasion of Perak, irrespective of whether its Raja would submit peaceably or not.¹⁹ Of this, Sultan Ahmad wrote,

I have been much annoyed by repeated despatches from the Raja of Ligor [Nakorn Si'thammarat] . . . calling upon me, not to delay attacking Pera [Perak] whether the Raja agrees or refuses, to yield the annual golden flower in token of subjection. Not a month passes without one

¹⁴ See R.K. to G.P., 10 Jan. 1814, SSR, 44, ff.50-1 (FCCP, 13 Jan. 1814); also R.P. to R.K., 22 Aug. 1814, SSR, 45, ff.2919-21.

¹⁵ See pp. 132-3.

¹⁶ R.K. to G.P., 10 Jan. 1814, SSR, 44, f.50 (FCCP, 13 Jan. 1814).

¹⁷ R.K. to G.P., 10 Jan. 1814, SSR, 44, f.51 (FCCP, 13 Jan. 1814). The Raja of Perak's reply eventually reached Sultan Ahmad in Nov. 1814 (see p. 136). Low, 'Origin and Progress of British Colonies', 18, writes that 'in 1813, the Siamese obliged the Rajah of Kedah . . . to attack the State of Perak . . . This was an unprincipled and unprovoked aggression. The Kedah forces evacuated the country soon after, but not before they had inflicted on it the miseries of demi-barbarian warfare.' Similarly, Low, *BP*, V, ii (1914), 110-1, writes, 'In 1813, the Siamese obliged the Rajah of Kedah to assist them in attacking Perak. This was an unprovoked and unprincipled aggression, and the Perak people have not forgiven the people of Kedah for the part they took in it, although the latter pretended that their co-operation was compulsory. But where plunder was to be had, we may doubt of this moderation of sentiment.' There is absolutely no evidence that Kedah invaded Perak in 1813.

¹⁸ R.K. to G.P., 10 Jan. 1814, SSR, 44, ff.51-2 (FCCP, 13 Jan. 1814).

¹⁹ *Ibid.* f.51.

of these and within the last month, I have received two demanding a categorical reply with regard to Pera and requiring me in peremptory terms to march against that country and to lay it waste, without regarding the Raja's determination²⁰

Largely out of the fear that the Governor of Nakorn Si'thammarat might take matters into his own hands and force the issue (there were already rumours of a Siamese expedition being mounted for the invasion of Perak via Kedah),²¹ Sultan Ahmad Taju'd-din sent the Dato' Temenggong and the Seri Paduka Tuan to Pulau Pinang for discussions, with a letter dated 10 January 1814²²

A study of the discussions held by the Kedah *wakilz* and the letter are of great interest for they provide an insight into the initial considerations behind the policy that Sultan Ahmad Taju'd-din decided to adopt in response to Siamese pressure on both Perak and Kedah. Sultan Ahmad was extremely perturbed by Rama II's order to bring Perak into the Siamese orbit for it placed him in a particularly difficult position, caught by virtue of his being a self-sought tributary of Siam. Unhappy as he was over attacking a neighbouring Malay state, he was only too conscious, in the first place, that to disregard the order would bring his loyalty to Siam into open doubt and court the invasion and subjugation of Kedah itself. Left with the unpleasant choice of complying with Siam's orders, he realized also that the invasion of Perak would involve extremely heavy expenditure which would not in itself be of any benefit or advantage to Kedah, but purely facilitate the attainment of the expansionist aims of Siam.²³ Furthermore, he feared that Siam would send its own troops to assist the Kedah forces in conquering Perak, an event which he dreaded for he would thereby be required to furnish the Siamese soldiery (in addition to his own men) with arms, ammunition, clothing, provisions and various means of transport by land and sea. Kedah, already financially

²⁰ R.K. to G.P., 10 Jan. 1814, SSR, 44, f.51 (FCCP, 13 Jan. 1814).

²¹ *Ibid.* f.52.

²² *Ibid.* ff.50-3. These discussions were held with MacInnes, the Malay Translator to the Pulau Pinang Government, and formed the basis of a report submitted by MacInnes to the Governor. See MacInnes to Clubley, 17 Jan. 1814, SSR, 44, ff.95-104 (FCCP, 20 Jan. 1814).

²³ MacInnes to Clubley, 17 Jan. 1814, SSR, 44, f.99 (FCCP, 20 Jan. 1814).

weak and burdened by previous Siamese demands, would not be able to fulfil these requirements.²⁴ The only conceivable course whereby both Kedah and Perak could be saved from ruin was to persuade Perak to submit peacefully.²⁵ It was on this consideration that he had sent the mission to the Raja of Perak.²⁶

With the Raja of Perak maintaining an obstinate silence and in the face of the orders from the Governor of Nakorn Si'thammarat, Sultan Ahmad seems to have feared that an invasion of Perak by the latter himself was imminent. The moderate course of counselling the Raja of Perak appeared to him to have been abandoned by the Siamese Governor and there were reports that an expedition was *en route* to Perak via Kedah which Sultan Ahmad feared would be 'the source of much mischief' to Kedah.²⁷ Fear of this had prompted him to send the emissaries to Pulau Pinang to ask the English for help.²⁸ In his letter to the Governor, he stated the dangerous implications to Kedah of the threat posed by the Governor of Nakorn Si'thammarat and sought advice on the policy that he should adopt.²⁹ Although in his letter he never specifically asked for protection, he seems to have hoped for it,³⁰ entrusting this matter, in all probability, to his wakil.³¹

In the discussions, the Temenggong and the Seri Paduka Tuan outlined to MacInnes the origin and background of Kedah's tributary relationships with Siam.³² They pointed out that prior

²⁴ Ibid. ff.99-100. It is very clear that, although he realized the burden of invading Perak without Siamese reinforcements, he preferred this to the presence of a Siamese army which would cause him greater trouble and expense. Ibid. f.100.

²⁵ See R.K. to G.P., 22 June 1815, SSR, 50, f.1389 (FCCP, 21 July 1815).

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ R.K. to G.P., 10 Jan. 1814, SSR, 44, ff.51-3 (FCCP, 13 Jan. 1814).

²⁸ Ibid. f.52.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid. This may be inferred from his statement 'Were the King of Europe [England] not too distant to be resorted to on such an occasion, I would submit my difficulties to him; but in my friend I have his representative, on whom I implicitly rely'. Ibid.

³¹ The emissaries are, in fact, recorded as having stated that Sultan Ahmad 'has again addressed the British Government whose power, he fondly hopes may be *someday* expected to rescue him, from the insupportable state of Vassalage'. MacInnes to Clubley, 17 Jan. 1814, SSR, 44, f.100 (FCCP, 20 Jan. 1814). Italics are mine.

³² Ibid. ff.96-9.

to 1767, the despatch of the Bunga Emas dan Perak to Ayuthia by Kedah had always been spontaneous and was regarded as a token of friendship and alliance, because the Kedah ruling house was a collateral branch of the ruling dynasty of Siam.³³ The fall of the Ayuthaya dynasty to Burmese arms in 1767, however, altered Kedah's connexions with Siam, for P'ya Taksin, who reunified Siam, and Rama I, the founder of the Chakri dynasty, were regarded as usurpers by the Kedah ruling house and it was therefore felt that it was in no way obliged to send the Bunga Emas dan Perak to Siam.³⁴ The resurgence of Siamese power and P'ya Taksin's policy of the reunification of the Siamese empire, however, soon compelled its despatch in order to avert invasion.³⁵ This concession, they pointed out, had led to demands by Siam for the provision of various services which Kedah had been too weak to deny.³⁶

It is interesting to note that the Temenggong and the Seri Paduka Tuan maintained that Perak, too, was ruled in early times by a dynasty descended from a collateral branch of the ruling house of Ayuthaya and had also sent the Bunga Emas dan Perak to Siam.³⁷ With a change of dynasties in Perak, however, the custom had ceased a long time previously but the precedent was used by the Governors of Nakorn Si'thammarat and Singora to demand that the practice be revived.³⁸ It is evident that the assertion of the Kedah wakilz that Perak had sent the Bunga Emas dan Perak to Siam in very early times was based on passages in the *Hikayat Mahrong Mahawangsa*.³⁹ It was certainly not stated to justify the Sia-

³³ *Ibid.* This claim was based on the *Hikayat Mahrong Mahawangsa* where a member of the Kedah ruling house reputedly founded the Ayuthaya dynasty. See Chapter I.

³⁴ MacInnes to Clublely, 17 Jan. 1814, SSR, 44, ff.99-100 (FCCP, 20 Jan. 1814).

³⁵ MacInnes to Clublely, 17 Jan. 1814, SSR, 44, f.98 (FCCP, 20 Jan. 1814) and Chapter I.

³⁶ *Ibid.* ff.99-100. In a sense, the Kedah emissaries weakened Kedah's claim for protection by admitting that the Bunga Emas dan Perak has been sent to Ayuthaya (although in their eyes, it was a spontaneous and mutual custom and not in any way exacted as a right by Siam). The British interpreted the practice as an unequivocal acknowledgement of Kedah's tributary status.

³⁷ *Ibid.* f.100; see also Chapter I.

³⁸ *Ibid.* f.101.

³⁹ See Chapter 1.

mese tributary demands on Perak at that time, because they themselves asserted that Perak's ancient practice of sending the Bunga Emas dan Perak to Ayuthaya had grown into disuse a long time before and the connexion had entirely ceased.⁴⁰

The best solution to the problem confronting Kedah was to enter into defensive arrangements with a stronger power and thereby be in a position to disregard the Siamese order. There are indications that approaches might have been made to the Burmese for support against Siam a few years earlier,⁴¹ but the main characteristic of Kedah's foreign policy in the preceding years was her open overtures to the English East India Company for protection against Siam and Burma.⁴² Sultan Ahmad, however, appeared to have been sceptical of obtaining defensive aid from the British. Anticipating that the British would not agree to defend Kedah in her present crisis, Sultan Ahmad sought to obtain, in lieu of this, the Company's diplomatic support. Because he was convinced that it was only the Governors of Nakorn Si'thammarat and Singora who were the prime movers for the invasion of Perak, Sultan Ahmad presumed that King Rama II and his Ministers regarded the plan 'with feelings of no very strong interest'.⁴³ Working on the premise that Sultan Mansur of Perak could be induced to give recognition to Siamese overlordship by sending the Bunga Emas dan Perak to Bangkok, Sultan Ahmad hoped to use the good offices of the East India Company in persuading Rama II to repeal the invasion order to Kedah.⁴⁴ This, if achieved, would save Kedah from the dreaded passage of a Siamese army.⁴⁵ The Temenggong

⁴⁰ MacInnes to Clubley, 17 Jan. 1814, SSR, 44, f.100 (FCCP, 20 Jan. 1814). This is again an interesting point. The Kedah version of Perak's tributary history was based on the *Hikayat Mahrong Mahawangsa* which need not be taken as being historically accurate. Yet MacInnes accepted it as fact and in his report concluded that Siam's claim was historically justified. *Ibid.* ff.102-4. This was crucial because the Governor-General, on the strength of this report, arrived at the policy of recognising Siamese expansionist moves over Perak and refusing to offer Kedah protection. See pp. 137, note 54.

⁴¹ See Chapter V.

⁴² See Chapters II to V.

⁴³ MacInnes to Clubley, 17 Jan. 1814, SSR, 44, f.101 (FCCP, 20 Jan. 1814).

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* ff.101-2.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* f.102.

and the Seri Paduka Tuan did, in fact, propose this course of action for the consideration of the Pulau Pinang government.

The wakilz returned to Kedah together with only a conciliatory non-committal letter from the Governor of Pulau Pinang, because the latter wished to consult the Governor-General of India on the entire issue before defining policy.⁴⁶ It was therefore vital to Sultan Ahmad that the reply from Perak should be one which would be acceptable to the Siamese. Sultan Mansur, however, preferred to bide his time, and between January and the middle of November he kept Sultan Ahmad in the dark.

On 6 November 1814⁴⁷ Sultan Ahmad Taju'd-din received the long-awaited reply from Sultan Mansur which was worded in extremely vague terms, and though it contained no mention whatsoever of Perak's willingness to submit to Siam,⁴⁸ the messenger who brought the letter stated that this was the Raja's intention.⁴⁹ Sultan Mansur, reluctant to concede to what was to him an unprecedented demand from Siam for the Bunga Emas dan Perak, tried to safeguard Perak's position by asking Sultan Ahmad to shape his policy so that neither Kedah nor Perak would be endangered, and he suggested that both states should act in concert against Siam.⁵⁰ Much as Sultan Ahmad may have wished to collaborate with Perak, he knew too well that the two were no match for Siam and that any resistance would only jeopardize the security of Kedah and Perak. This assessment prompted him to send one of his principal menteri as head of another mission to Perak to persuade Sultan Mansur to acquiesce, or failing that, to obtain a definite answer whether or not he was prepared to send the Bunga Emas dan Perak.⁵¹ It is significant that Sultan Ahmad informed

⁴⁶ Ibid. f.104.

⁴⁷ R.K. to G.P., 12 Nov. 1814, SSR, 45, f.2917 (FCCP, 28 Nov. 1814).

⁴⁸ The reply was dated 22 Aug. 1814 and Sultan Mansur explained that the delay in replying was due to the time involved in consulting his chiefs and because of an attack on his tin mines in northern Perak by 'the people of Petani'. This does not explain, however, why it took two and a half months to reach Alor Setar, short of a possible picnic *en route*. R.P. to R.K., 22 Aug. 1814, SSR, 45, ff.2290, 2291 (FCCP, 28 Nov. 1814). The tin mines referred to were located in the later disputed Reman and Gerik districts.

⁴⁹ R.K. to G.P., 12 Nov. 1814, SSR, 45, f.2918 (FCCP, 28 Nov. 1814).

⁵⁰ R.P. to R.K., 22 Aug. 1814, SSR, 45, f.2920 (FCCP, 28 Nov. 1814).

⁵¹ R.K. to G.P., 12 Nov. 1814, SSR, 45, f.2918 (FCCP, 28 Nov. 1814). Sultan

the Pulau Pinang authorities of all these developments, presumably in the hope of obtaining the Company's diplomatic support in the impending crisis.⁵²

Almost immediately after he despatched a letter to Pulau Pinang informing its Governor of his decision to send another mission to Perak, Sultan Ahmad received a letter from the Governor in answer to the appeal that he had made for the Company's help in January 1814.⁵³ Sultan Ahmad was informed that, although the Governor-General of India greatly sympathized with the circumstances in which Kedah was placed, he recommended that Kedah should comply with the wishes of the Siamese government, the East India Company being unwilling to encourage Kedah to renounce Siamese overlordship.⁵⁴ The Governor of Pulau Pinang, on his part, was prepared to use his good offices with the Siamese court to lessen exactions on Kedah, but hoped that even this would be rendered unnecessary by the Raja of Perak conceding to send the Bunga Emas dan Perak.⁵⁵ The effect that this reply must have had on Sultan Ahmad can be well imagined, for it came as yet another rebuff in the series of Kedah's appeals to the East India

Mansur's response to Siamese pressure is most interesting. He wrote to the Governor of Pulau Pinang promising the Company a monopoly of tin and rattan in return for guarding the mouth of the Sungai Perak, as the Dutch had earlier done. It is quite clear that he was trying to draw the Company in as protectors of Perak, writing, 'One cause of my desiring to cultivate a good understanding with my friend [the Governor] is that my friend's power, dignity and greatness are noised abroad everywhere, whereas I am weak and helpless and in need of everything. I wish then my friend kindly to enter into this amicable and beneficial compact, for there is no one whose power is equal to my friend's.' R.P. to G.P., 18 Oct. 1814, SSR, 45, f.2916 (FCCP, 28 Nov. 1814).

⁵² R.K. to G.P., 12 Nov. 1814, SSR, 55, ff.3917-8 (FCCP, 28 Nov. 1814) and R.P. to R.K., 22 Aug. 1814 SSR, 45, ff.2918-21 (FCCP, 28 Nov. 1814).

⁵³ G.P. to R.K., 8 Nov. 1814, SSR, 45, ff.2922-5 (FCCP, 28 Nov. 1814). It is obvious that these two letters crossed.

⁵⁴ G.P. to R.K., 8 Nov. 1814, f.2924 (FCCP, 28 Nov. 1814). The Governor-General-in-Council, on the basis of MacInnes' report, recognized Kedah's and Perak's tributary status. It feared mediating between Kedah and Siam because of 'the discredit which may result to the British Government from meeting with a refusal on the part of the King of Siam to accept its proffered mediation.' They suggested that both Kedah and Perak submit to Siam and asked the Governor of Pulau Pinang to persuade them to do so. See Governor-General to Governor of Penang, 25 Feb. 1814, SSR, 45, ff.1965-70 (FCCP, 6 Sept. 1814).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

Company to be placed under its aegis and be thereby secured from Siam. Finding the Company resolved against granting Kedah protection and at the same time encouraging Perak's submission, Sultan Ahmad was back where he had started — to try to coerce Perak into tributary status.

Towards the end of 1814, Sultan Ahmad Tajū'd-din sent not one, but three high-ranking officials — the Seri Raja Wangsa, the Seri Raja Diraja and the Raja Setia Lela — to Perak with a letter to convince Sultan Mansur of the expediency of sending the Bunga Emas dan Perak to Siam.⁵⁶ In Perak, the officials were prevented from meeting Sultan Mansur personally, but were forced to communicate through the Seri Adika Raja and the Dato Bendahara of Perak.⁵⁷ This was reported to Sultan Ahmad who in turn instructed them to press for an audience with the Raja.⁵⁸ Greater difficulty was encountered in communicating further messages nor were they allowed to enter into consultations with the ruler.⁵⁹ The Kedah officials were given the impression that the Seri Adika Raja and the Bendahara favoured acquiescence to the Siamese demand in order to prevent an invasion, but as fate had it, both of them died of smallpox within fifteen days of each other.⁶⁰ Another attempt was made at obtaining an audience, but this once again was prevented.⁶¹ After nearly a four-month wait,⁶² Sultan Mansur's reply was at last received, dated 18 April 1815.⁶³

⁵⁶ R.K. to G.P., 22 June 1815, SSR, 50, f.1388 (FCCP, 21 July 1815). Sultan Ahmad either out of confidence that the gravity of the Siamese threat would ensure Perak's compliance, or out of mere bluff, sent "a form of address" which the Raja of Perak would have to use in his letter to Bangkok expressing his willingness to send the Bunga Emas dan Perak. See R.P. to R.K., 18 April 1815, SSR, 50, f.1396 (FCCP, 21 July 1815).

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* f.1389.

⁵⁸ The excuse given by the Perak officials was the smallpox epidemic then raging in Perak. *Ibid.* f.1390.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* f.1389-90.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* f.1390.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² R.K. to G.P., 22 June 1815, SSR, 50, f.1389 (FCCP, 21 July 1815).

⁶³ R.P. to R.K., 18 April 1815, SSR, 50, ff.1395-1401 (FCCP, 21 July 1815). Sultan Mansur claimed that Sultan Ahmad's letter reached him only on the 6th of April. *Ibid.* f.1395. That it may have been deliberately held back by his officials seems likely. It is also known that his authority was being challenged by the Dato'

Sultan Ahmad Taju'd-din received his emissaries and the Raja of Perak's reply on 15 May.⁶⁴ The letter was shrouded in inconsistency, evasion and vagueness.⁶⁵ Sultan Mansur accused the Kedah emissaries of gross slight by their failure to meet him personally, thereby depriving him of the opportunity of consulting them on such an important matter.⁶⁶ He appears to have been suspicious of Sultan Ahmad's real intentions and felt that the correspondence was related to the Laksamana of Perak's unsuccessful attempt to seize the Kerian district which was part of Kedah territory.⁶⁷ Sultan Ahmad was asked to delay the crucial issue of the sending of the Bunga Emas dan Perak to enable him to approach the Rajaz of Selangor and Siak for aid.⁶⁸ He also stated that if the Siamese invasion of Perak materialized, he was prepared to face it even alone but wanted Kedah to stand aside.⁶⁹

Sultan Mansur's reply must have come as a shock to Sultan Ahmad. He appears to have been so confident that Sultan Mansur

Laksamana of Perak who was in open revolt [see R.P. to R.K., 18 April 1815, SSR, 50, f.1399 (FCCP, 21 July 1815)] and that there were strong differences of opinion among his chiefs on the Siamese demand (see Cracroft to Clubley, 3 Aug. 1818, SSR, 67, ff.7-40 (FCCP, 12 Sept. 1818).

⁶⁴ R.K. to G.P., 22 June 1815, SSR, 50, f.1388 (FCCP, 21 July 1815).

⁶⁵ R.P. to R.K., 18 April 1815, SSR, 50, f.1401 (FCCP, 21 July 1815). MacInnes, commenting on the letter wrote, '... (then follows a list of insignificant presents sent to the King [the Raja of Kedah] and others which like some other parts of this inconsistent letter, it is not easy to determine whether to consider as most complimentary or sarcastic).' *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* ff.1395-7.

⁶⁷ R.P. to R.K., 18 April 1815, SSR, 50, ff.1399-40 (FCCP, 21 July 1815). This open admission by Sultan Mansur is amongst other irrefutable evidence that the Kerian district was Kedah's (see Chapter 1). He wrote, 'I cannot help thinking that the seizure of Crean [Kerian] by my Laksamana and its being given to Radin Muhammed without your knowledge, is the cause of this correspondence . . . I had no knowledge of that affair and it rested with the Laksamana and my other chiefs alone and you have since then had it back again . . .' *Ibid.* ff.1399-40. Furthermore, in a letter to the Governor of Pulau Pinang he stated, '... the Laksamana of Pera [Perak] took Krecan [Kerian] and gave it to Tunkoo Radin without making a word of communication to the King [i.e. Sultan Ahmad] on the subject and that also I knew nothing of it . . .' R.P. to G.P., 27 Aug. 1816, SSR, 57 (7 Nov. 1816).

⁶⁸ R.P. to R.K., 18 April 1815, SSR, 50, ff.1400-1 (FCCP, 21 July 1815). He also asked for a delay because of the untimely death of two of his principal menteri, the Bendahara and the Seri Adika Raja, which had deprived him of their counsel. *Ibid.* f.1401.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* f.1399.

would, faced with the reality of the Siamese threat, accept his advice and send the Bunga Emas dan Perak, that he had written to Rama II that the Perak question would be settled by the end of 1815.⁷⁰ Up till then, he had successfully avoided invading Perak by sending evasive answers to Rama II, pointing out the various problems involved in trying to persuade Perak to submit peaceably, and ignoring the pressure from the Governor of Nakorn Si'thammarat for an immediate attack.⁷¹ The receipt of Sultan Mansur's letter, however, left him with little room for further manoeuvre because a year's postponement was asked for instead of a definite answer being provided.⁷² What was most unsettling was that Perak's refusal to accede to the Siamese demand would undoubtedly be construed as an insult by Siam and he was positive that the Siamese court would be so infuriated as to order the immediate conquest of Perak.⁷³

The sequence of letters in the records of the Pulau Pinang government suggests that Sultan Ahmad and his Menteriz spent about a month considering the critical situation precipitated by Sultan Mansur's move and working out possible lines of action.⁷⁴ These deliberations resulted in the adoption by the Kedah government of a four-fold policy.

Firstly, Sultan Ahmad decided to make a final attempt to obtain the East India Company's protection for Kedah, despite the fact that all previous appeals by Kedah since 1785 had failed and it was barely seven months since the Company had turned down a similar application. This time he was determined to make a direct appeal to the Governor-General of India and the King of England.⁷⁵ His plea to the Governor of Pulau Pinang was couched in the strongest terms and was an explicit appeal for protection. It ran,

⁷⁰ R.K. to G.P., 22 June 1815, SSR, 50, f.1392 (FCCP, 21 July 1815). The undertaking to Rama II must have also been planned to delay direct Siamese action.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² Although Sultan Mansur was within his rights to consider the matter and therefore to ask for a delay, as far as Sultan Ahmad was concerned, a postponement was synonymous with a refusal.

⁷³ R.K. to G.P., 22 June 1815, SSR, 50, f.1392 (FCCP, 21 July 1815).

⁷⁴ For details, see R.K. to G.P., 22 June 1815, SSR, 50, ff.1386-1394 (FCCP, 21 July 1815).

⁷⁵ R.K. to G.P., 22 June 1815, SSR, 50, f.1384 (FCCP, 21 July 1815).

May my friend be informed that the Lord of the Universe inspired my heart with an earnest desire to cultivate terms of friendship with the English because I heard that the King of Europe [i.e. the King of England], the General of Bengal [i.e. the Governor-General of India] and the Company, the fame of whose Glory and perfect wisdom in all affairs is celebrated everywhere, are Compassionate and known to be friendly to everyone who commits himself to them — Day and Night my heart was filled with the wish to place myself under the protecting Shelter of the power of the King of Europe [England] and of the Company . . . for I am the Chief of a small country and without power which renders it difficult for me to protect my Subjects . . . It has therefore occurred to me that it would be advisable now to send a Person with a letter from myself to the General [Governor-General] of Bengal [India] that he may know the Sincerity of my heart and my desire to place myself under the sheltering power of the King of Europe [England] . . . I beg that my friend will kindly assist me in conveying my Messenger and letter in question to the General [Governor-General] along with a letter from himself, possibly thro' the good office of my friend the King of Europe [England] and the General [Governor-General] of Bengal [India] may receive me as one of their own people when under such shelter I shall be freed from the oppressions of every Kind of Enemy and Employ of myself in protecting the Country from all Annoyance, obtain a good name and continue on terms of concord with you my Friends all, until the last Day . . . Let not my Friend regard me as the Rajahs of other Countries for my Earnest hope is to be permitted to place myself under the Protection of the King of Europe [England] and the Company . . . If Pinang should be distressed in any way I should not fail to contribute all the relief that so small a country as I possess can afford . . .⁷⁶

Anticipating that this outright appeal for protection might fail or involve delays, Sultan Ahmad conceived three other courses of action. Firstly, he decided to make one last attempt to negotiate with Perak. Knowing that Sultan Mansur was extremely suspicious

⁷⁶ R.K. to G.P., 22 June 1816, SSR, 50, ff.1384-88 (FCCP, 21 July 1815). It must be noted that Sultan Ahmad sent two letters to the Governor bearing the same date. The first (*ibid.*) was in its entirety purely confined to his appeal for British protection, while the second (see note 78) was directed at obtaining the co-operation of the British, with absolutely no reference being made to his first letter.

of Kedah's intentions and that he minimized the Siamese threat, Sultan Ahmad planned to request the Pulau Pinang authorities to use their influence to persuade him to send the Bunga Emas dan Perak to Siam, obviously hoping that Sultan Mansur would regard the advice of the British as responsible and impartial.⁷⁷

Secondly, calculating that the British might not be receptive to such a plan, or even if accepted, that it might be rejected by Perak, Sultan Ahmad sought to win the diplomatic support of the British in the event of hostilities with Perak. He therefore addressed a second letter to the Governor of Pulau Pinang in which, in addition to tracing how his attempts at persuasion had failed, he outlined the dangerous implications that Siamese designs on Perak would have for Kedah.⁷⁸ He asked the Governor for advice, but stated simultaneously that, should the Governor advise him to ignore the Siamese order, he hoped for British protection. On the other hand, should the Governor favour the invasion of Perak, he requested the assistance of the British.⁷⁹ In addition, he enclosed Sultan Mansur's reply,⁸⁰ a move in keeping with his policy of informing the British of all developments, which was obviously done to win British sympathy, if not actual support. Tunku Abdullah was subsequently sent to Pulau Pinang with both of Sultan Ahmad's letters, as well as to convey his request to the Governor to use his good offices in persuading Perak to send the Bunga Emas dan Perak to Siam.⁸¹

Thirdly, with respect to Siam, Sultan Ahmad continued his delaying tactics. Rama II's instructions to him were to invade Perak immediately it became clear that Perak would not submit peaceably. On the assumption that Sultan Mansur would see the wisdom of submitting to Siam, Sultan Ahmad had given Rama II assurances that the Perak issue would be settled by the end of 1815. Strictly speaking, he should have begun hostilities on receipt of Sultan Mansur's evasive reply: instead, clearly playing

⁷⁷ See G.P. to R.K., 24 July 1815, SSR, 50, f.1402 (FCCP, 24 July 1815).

⁷⁸ R.K. to G.P., 22 June 1815, SSR, 50, ff.1388-94 (FCCP, 21 July 1815).

⁷⁹ R.K. to G.P., 22 June 1815, SSR, 50, f.1393 (FCCP, 21 July 1815).

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* f.1391.

⁸¹ See G.P. to R.K., 24 July 1815, SSR, 50, f.1402 (FCCP, 21 July 1815).

for time, he wrote direct to Rama II, relating what amounted to Perak's final refusal and 'desiring that he [Rama II] may do in the business, what may deem to him fit, whether to invade the country or not as he pleases, or if he should prefer ordering me [i.e. Sultan Ahmad] to attack'.⁸² The wakil2 who were sent with this message to Bangkok also took along with them the Bunga Emas dan Perak from Kedah for presentation to Rama II which could only have served, as was probably planned, to safeguard Kedah's position regarding the policy that she had adopted towards Perak. It is equally significant that Sultan Ahmad wrote to the King of Siam and not the Governor of Nakorn Si'thammarat. It is definite that he deliberately by-passed the latter because it was the Governor who had been pressing for the unconditional invasion of Perak and who, Sultan Ahmad was convinced, had originally initiated the scheme for selfish motives of his own.

The response from the British about the appeal to Perak was encouraging, for on 24 July, the Governor of Pulau Pinang addressed a letter to the Raja of Perak stating that it was on his advice that the Raja of Kedah had strongly recommended this course of action.⁸³ Towards the end of July, Sultan Ahmad received a reply from the Governor who acknowledged the receipt of his letters, but deferred giving an answer to his proposal to send an embassy to the Governor-General of India.⁸⁴

The Perak issue was further complicated early in January 1816 by Tunku Long and Syed Zyn of Siak, who decided to attack Perak on behalf of Kedah, obviously to extract as much as they could from that negeri.⁸⁵ When the Kedah mission was in Perak

⁸² R.K. to G.P., 14 Jan. 1816 SSR, 54, (FCCP, 3 Feb. 1816).

⁸³ G.P. to R.P., 24 July 1815, SSR, 50, ff.1402-4 (FCCP, 21 July 1815). He wrote, 'I earnestly recommend to my Friend to send the Letter and the Bunga Emas dan Perak as recommended by the King of Queda [Raja of Kedah] and thus avert the threatened mischief to my Friend's Country'. Ibid. f.1403.

⁸⁴ G.P. to R.K., 24 July 1815, SSR, 50, f.1402 (FCCP, 24 July 1815). The Governor wrote that pressure of work prevented his giving an opinion on the proposed mission. I have been unable to discover what exactly was engaging the Governor's attention. It seems quite clear that he felt that, the Governor-General, having in February 1814 issued instructions that Perak's submission be encouraged, the mission stood little chance of success. He therefore appears to have thought it more practical to attempt advising the Raja of Perak first before making any other move.

⁸⁵ R.K. to G.P., 14 Jan. 1816, SSR, 54 (FCCP, 3 Feb. 1816).

in the early part of 1815, Tunku Long and Syed Zyn were also there offering to defend Perak in the event of an invasion by Kedah or Siam.⁸⁶ It appears that the terms they offered for this service were unacceptable to Sultan Mansur and they therefore turned around and decided to attack Perak instead. Sultan Ahmad received a letter from them offering to invade Perak on Kedah's behalf and requesting money, provisions and arms.⁸⁷ Realizing that, they were capitalizing on the current crisis to launch an unprovoked attack for personal gain and that it might lead to complications, contrary to what might have been expected of a person in Sultan Ahmad's position, he rejected the offer.⁸⁸ It showed that, even though he might soon have had to invade Perak, he would be doing so only on Siam's orders; he himself had no personal objectives to gain by the subjugation of Perak nor was he willing to be a party to whatever designs Tunku Long and Siak had on Perak.⁸⁹ Fearing, however, that the pair might put their plans into operation and thereby cause further confusion, he decided to inform the British of this development.⁹⁰ The response from the British on this matter was most unusual, and in Kedah's favour, for the Governor of Pulau Pinang replied that:

... in writing to Toonkoo Loong [Tunku Long] and Syd [Syed] Zyn, my friend [i.e. Sultan Ahmad] will acquaint them *that although not bound by treaty to protect Pera [Perak] from invasion by Sea, as is the case of Quida [Kedah], I shall treat as pirates any whom I find waging hostility so near to this Island as in any part of the Pera [Perak] territory. Before then they embark on this lawless and unprovoked enterprise, my friend*

⁸⁶ R.K. to G.P., 22 June 1815, SSR, f.1393 (FCCP, 21 July 1815).

⁸⁷ R.K. to G.P., 14 Jan. 1816, SSR, 54 (FCCP, 3 Feb. 1816).

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ R.K. to G.P., 14 Jan. 1816, SSR, 54 (FCCP, 3 Feb. 1816). As he himself put it, '... on hearing this communication it glanced across my mind that there was no confidence to be placed in this Siak [Siak] people — Toonkoo Loong [Tunku Long] is certainly my brother-in-law but when he left Quida [Kedah] his heart was not right towards me — for this reason and the notorious deceitfulness of the Siak [Siak] people, I felt suspicious on the occasion. Moreover, I have no cause of disagreement with the Raja of Pera [Perak] — He who wishes to bring the country of Pera [Perak] into subjection is the Raja [King] of Siam Were I . . . however to take of my own choice in the matter, it would be to avoid all cause of discord, not with Pera [Perak] only, but with any other country . . .'. Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

[Sultan Ahmad] will do well to advise them of the displeasure of the British Government.⁹¹

About a month later, on receipt of intelligence that Tunku Long and Syed Zyn were about to launch their attack, Sultan Ahmad referred the matter to the British and the Governor of Pulau Pinang sent a strongly-worded letter to the Raja of Siak, writing,

. . . I hasten to apprise my friend that if any such action be carried into effect I shall consider this an act of hostility on his part against a State on an amicable footing with the British Government and that any one who shall be found disturbing this neighbourhood will be seized and treated as Pirate . . . whatsoever shall be known as an agent or abettor of such proceedings will be dealt with as an Enemy of the British Government. . . .⁹²

This move on the part of the British put a stop to Tunku Long's and Syed Zyn's plans.⁹³

The next development leading to the invasion of Perak was initiated by Sultan Ahmad Taju'd-din towards the end of April 1816. On the 25th of that month he addressed the Governor of Pulau Pinang, expressing a desire to meet him at Kuala Muda to discuss the Perak issue.⁹⁴ On learning that the Governor, although in favour of consultations,⁹⁵ was unable to meet him at Kuala Muda, he sent what was probably the highest-ranking delegation ever to leave the shores of Kedah.

The despatch of the mission indicates his near desperation and the urgency of his dilemma. By June 1816, neither had his appeal

⁹¹ G.P. to R.K., 29 Jan. 1816, SSR, 54 (FCCP, 3 Feb. 1816). Italics are mine. When seen in the context of later developments, the British Governor's statement that the East India Company was treaty-bound to defend Kedah from invasion by sea, is perhaps of greater importance. See page 148; also Chapter 5. Note too, the loose interpretation of 'piratical' activity.

⁹² G.P. to Raja of Siak, 22 Feb. 1816, SSR, 54 (FCCP, 2 March 1816). This surprisingly strong line taken by the Governor in support of Kedah can possibly be explained by two reasons. He had, as the records indicate, always shown a friendly and often sympathetic attitude towards Kedah and looked upon Kedah more as an ally. Secondly, as the Governor-General's instructions were to encourage Kedah to obey the Siamese order and for Perak to submit, his attitude must have been dictated by his desire to smooth things out for Kedah.

⁹³ See Sultan of Siak to Governor of Penang, 8 March 1816 and Tunku Long to Governor of Penang, 8 March 1816, SSR, 54 (FCCP, 13 April 1816).

⁹⁴ R.K. to G.P., 25 April 1816, SSR, 55 (FCCP, 11 May 1816).

⁹⁵ G.P. to R.K., 2 May 1816, SSR, 55 (FCCP, 11 May 1816).

for protection met with any response nor had Sultan Mansur broken the convenient silence that he was adopting towards the Company. Sultan Ahmad was convinced that any fresh appeal by him to Sultan Mansur would be futile, and that Rama II, his pride so greatly hurt by Perak's slighting attitude, would be so enraged as to send an army to conquer Perak and to lay it waste.⁹⁶ In these circumstances, and as Sultan Ahmad put it, 'I have no alternative left but to invade Perak *before a Siamese army comes* which I think will tend to alleviate the burthen of Quida [Kedah] by preventing its being overrun by a Siamese army'.⁹⁷ This crisply illustrates what had consistently been Kedah's primary consideration: that it was the fear of the presence of Siamese forces in Kedah that crystallized his decision to invade Perak.

In addition to his increasing apprehension of direct Siamese action, Sultan Ahmad had also received reports that the Burmese were preparing a naval expedition to invade the western coast of Siam and Kedah.⁹⁸ Sultan Ahmad was perturbed for two reasons. Firstly, although Burmese intentions may have been to break the Siamese hold over the lower region of the Isthmus of Kra, to wrest Kedah from Siamese tributary control and thereby deprive Siam of ports on the Bay of Bengal, Kedah itself was too weak to face a Burmese invasion,⁹⁹ especially when she herself would be involved in Perak. Secondly, and not without reason, he feared that Siam might suspect Kedah of collusion with Burma and take reprisals.¹⁰⁰ When pieced together, the whole picture must have been so terrifying as to intensify Sultan Ahmad's desire to consult the Governor of Pulau Pinang personally and thus to send a top-ranking delegation to meet him.

The delegation comprised the Bendahara, the Laksamana and the Temenggong, Kedah's highest-ranking Menteri, together with Tunku Zainal Abidin, a youthful nephew of the Raja, who went as Sultan Ahmad's personal representative.¹⁰¹ The com-

⁹⁶ R.K. to G.P., 1 June 1816, SSR, 55 (FCCP, 15 June 1816).

⁹⁷ *Ibid.* Italics are mine.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ R.K. to G.P., 1 June 1816, SSR, 55 (FCCP, 15 June 1816).

position of this delegation reflected the gravity of the situation facing Kedah. Having decided to invade Perak, Sultan Ahmad was afraid that Perak might obtain the aid or indirect assistance of some other negeri or power.¹⁰² He therefore sought to secure all possible support from the Company, despite their previous declarations of neutrality. In what appears to have been a brilliant diplomatic manoeuvre, Sultan Ahmad, in a letter conveyed by the delegation to Pulau Pinang, asked the Governor, in very respectful terms, to advise him on his resolution to invade Perak.¹⁰³ Knowing full well that the Company favoured Perak's submission, he stated that, should the Governor approve of such a course, he would therefore expect the assistance of the Company, since it was actually the Governor who would have advised him on his final decision!¹⁰⁴

The discussions held with the Governor on 5 June 1816 confirm the motives impelling Sultan Ahmad to invade Perak. The Kedah wakil2 stated that there were only two choices open to Kedah — to invade Perak in conformity with Rama II's orders or to disregard these orders altogether and risk the consequences.¹⁰⁵ Sultan Ahmad Taju'd-din, however, had decided 'to act in implicit conformity' with the Governor's advice about which of the two to adopt.¹⁰⁶ On being told by the Governor that he favoured renewed efforts at persuading Perak to submit, they replied that such a course was precisely what Sultan Ahmad wished to adopt, but in view of the Raja's suspicions of Kedah's aims and his refusal to communicate further on the subject, there did not seem to be any hope of success.¹⁰⁷ In the light of this, the Menteri stressed, Kedah was faced with two equally dangerous alternatives. These were, on the one hand, the obeying of Rama II's injunctions by opening hostilities with Perak and the presence of Siamese troops who 'would do almost as much injury to the Country, as if they

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Memorandum, 5 June 1816, SSR, 55 (FCCP, 15 June 1816).

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. The record of the discussions does not refer to the actual request that Sultan Ahmad made for another attempt to persuade Perak to submit. See Memorandum, 10 June 1816 (FCCP, 15 June 1816).

were declared Enemies', and on the other hand, incurring the hostility of Siam by disregarding those injunctions.¹⁰⁸ In these circumstances, an attack on Perak before the arrival of a Siamese army was considered to be, in Kedah's interest, the most expedient course.¹⁰⁹ In this event, the wakilz expressed the hope that the Company would help Kedah by supplying arms, ammunition and other forms of assistance, including a blockade of Perak and depriving it of the support of any other power.¹¹⁰

In the event of a Burmese invasion, the Kedah leaders 'expressed the hope of their Master [i.e. Sultan Ahmad], *founded on the Treaty, for the direct and effectual co-operation of the British Government in repelling any attack on the Quida [Kedah] Territory by sea. . .*'¹¹¹ In addition, the fear of a Siamese presence in Kedah prompted them to try to secure a guarantee from the Company to grant asylum to the females and the infirm of the Raja's family in Company territory should this come to pass.¹¹² Although outwardly this may appear unimportant, it reflected the prevailing fear that a Siamese army was about to be sent to assist in the invasion of Perak, but whose presence in Kedah would be tantamount to the invasion and occupation of Kedah itself.

¹⁰⁸ Memorandum, 5 June 1816, SSR, 55 (FCCP, 15 June 1816).

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid. This reference by the Kedah wakilz that the British Government was obliged to defend Kedah from any attack by sea is of unique importance for a number of reasons. On the assumption that it was based on the original Malay version of the Treaty of 1800 signed at Perlis between Sultan Diya'u'd-din and Caunter, then this statement gives credence to the claim that the 1800 Treaty was different from the surviving versions (See Chapter 5). Secondly, assuming that this Treaty was held as binding by both parties (in which, it will be remembered, that in the English version the E.I.C. was obliged to defend only the coast of 'Province Wellesley') then it is only logical to infer that the wakilz made this statement of the Company's responsibilities on the strength of the Governor's letter of 29 Jan. 1816 (see p.144) in which he had declared that the Company was obliged to defend Kedah by sea. Even though both of these assumptions may be wrong, and granting that the Governor could have erred, the conviction of the Kedah wakilz that the Company was legally bound to defend Kedah remains of considerable importance.

¹¹² Memorandum, 10 June 1816, SSR, 55 (FCCP, 15 June 1816). The Malay Translator to the Pulau Pinang government minuted that, although the wording of the Memorandum suggested only the Royal family, he was sure that the Kedah wakilz meant the entire female population of Kedah. Ibid.

In the final part of the discussions it was pointed out to the Governor the danger which Kedah would face if the Company attempted to apply diplomatic pressure on Siam in connexion with its policy towards Kedah and Perak. The Governor, on his own initiative, appeared interested in two possible lines of action. These were firstly, that Sultan Ahmad should write a letter to Bangkok that Kedah was under British protection and that he was on very close terms with the British government,¹¹³ and secondly, that the British government should write to Bangkok urging Siam to lessen the severity of its demands on Kedah.¹¹⁴ Fully conversant with the character of the Siamese court, the wakilz hastened to warn the Governor against such action as it would be construed as a direct insult by Bangkok,¹¹⁵ and in fact, tend to have an opposite effect and provoke heavier demands.¹¹⁶

After the discussions of 5 June, the wakilz remained in Pulau Pinang to enable the Governor to consult his council before giving an answer to Kedah's requests.¹¹⁷ On the 10th, however, the wakilz deemed it best to put down in writing the concessions that Kedah sought from the Company in order to prevent mistakes or misunderstandings and in order that they could obtain an unequivocal reply on the various points.¹¹⁸ The memorandum ran:

First — The King [Sultan Ahmad] is most reluctant to go to war with the Raja of Pera [Perak] and desires above all Things that the Governor would assist him in leading the Raja to acquiesce in the demand of Siam, but, if he should refuse, our Master [Sultan Ahmad] intends invading Pera [Perak] before the arrival of a Siamese Expedition, whose severities over the Country of Quida [Kedah], he much fears.

¹¹³ Memorandum, 10 June 1816, SSR, 55 (FCCP, 15 June 1816).

¹¹⁴ Minute by the Governor, 12 June 1816, SSR, 55 (FCCP, 15 June 1816).

¹¹⁵ Memorandum, 5 June 1816, SSR, 55 (FCCP, 15 June 1816).

¹¹⁶ Minute by Governor, 12 June 1816, SSR, 55 (FCCP, 15 June 1816). The wakilz explained that such a move would have 'the certain effect not of lessening but of increasing ten-fold the Exactions' by Siam. Ibid. It would also 'be regarded as an insult and not in the least tend to lead to any abatement of its [Siam's] demands, for that in its Pride and Ignorance the Siamese Government would not admit the Idea of any power on Earth [being] able to resist or Control its armies.' Memorandum, 5 June 1816 (FCCP, 15 June 1816).

¹¹⁷ Minute by Governor, 5 June 1816, SSR, 55 (FCCP, 15 June 1816).

¹¹⁸ Memorandum, 10 June 1816, SSR, 55 (FCCP, 15 June 1816).

Second — In the event of War he trusts to the Governor to supply him with whatsoever he may be wanting in, to carry it on with effect.

Third — He trusts the Governor will prevent either by force or otherwise, any who may be disposed to aid Pera [Perak], at least that any so inclined may be so threatened by letter.

Fourth — If however, the Raja [Sultan Ahmad] should not succeed against Pera [Perak] alone, a Siamese Army would necessarily be sent to assist him and Quida [Kedah] would be thrown into a State of confusion by the Oppressions, the extent of which it is impossible now to Estimate. In such event then, it would be the Raja's [Sultan Ahmad] wish to send all his women into the Company's Territory, there to be in security and under the protection of the British Government, while the Men remained to fulfil all the wishes of the Siamese to the extent of their ability.¹¹⁹

The reply to Sultan Ahmad's requests was, in the circumstances of the time and perhaps in the entire history of Kedah's connexions with the British before 1909, most unprecedented. The Governor of Pulau Pinang agreed 'to try the effect on an admonitory letter' to the Raja of Perak regarding his virtual refusal to send the Bunga Emas dan Perak to Siam.¹²⁰ Although couched in diplomatic language, Sultan Ahmad was assured of the Company's backing for the invasion of Perak. Kedah was also given the more specific promises of access to military supplies, the cessation of Pulau Pinang's trade with Perak and the prevention of British subjects in Pulau Pinang from aiding Perak in the event of the outbreak of hostilities.¹²¹ Nothing was perhaps more vital to Kedah than

¹¹⁹ Ibid. See Appendix 5 (a) for full text.

¹²⁰ This was no small triumph for Sultan Ahmad because the Governor was reluctant to adopt such a measure as a result of Sultan Mansur's outright snub for the advice that he had tendered in July the previous year. See G.P. to R.K., 22 June 1816, SSR, 55 (FCCP, 15 June 1816) and G.P. to R.K., 20 June 1816, SSR, 55 (FCCP, 29 June 1816). In a strongly worded letter to Sultan Mansur, the Governor recommended Perak's submission, warning him that a refusal would be met by severance of all links between Perak and Pulau Pinang. Ibid.

¹²¹ G.P. to R.K., 20 June 1816, SSR, 55 (FCCP, 15 June 1816). Even though Sultan Ahmad was unable to obtain the Governor's assurance that he would prevent any third party from coming to Perak's assistance, the Governor's response, in principle, ran contrary to the Pulau Pinang Government's declared policy of neutrality.

isolating Perak from the British and securing the Company's friendly neutrality. This had been achieved.

By the beginning of November 1816, the wakilz that Sultan Ahmad had sent to Bangkok returned, together with letters from the Siamese court ordering the immediate invasion of Perak.¹²² Left with little choice, Sultan Ahmad ordered his menteriz and chiefs to collect an armed force, but at the same time hopefully awaited Perak's positive response to the latest appeal by the Company.¹²³ Soon afterwards, however, these hopes were shattered. The Governor of Pulau Pinang reported Sultan Mansur's unwillingness to accept Siamese overlordship¹²⁴ and that he himself was unprepared to try further mediation.¹²⁵ In these circumstances, Sultan Ahmad was pushed to the conclusion that the invasion of Perak seemed inevitable. Preparations for the invasion were therefore intensified and the approaching month of Muharram¹²⁶ set as the period for the commencement of hostilities.¹²⁷

For lack of evidence, it is difficult to determine exactly when the first shots were fired. It is clear, however, that the Kedah land forces under the Bendahara were on their way to Perak by 11

¹²² R.K. to G.P., 19 Nov. 1816, SSR, 57 (FCCP, 5 Dec. 1816).

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ G.P. to R.K., 7 Nov. 1816, SSR, 57 (FCCP, 7 Nov. 1816); also R.P. to G.P., 27 Aug. 1816, 28 Aug. 1816 and 17 Sept. 1816, SSR, 57 (FCCP, 7 Nov. 1816). These three letters by Sultan Mansur are invaluable as they throw some light on Perak politics. More important, they reveal his anxiety to obtain the Company's military assistance to put down a rebellion and to defend Perak from aggression by Kedah or Siam, and confirm his refusal to recognize Siamese overlordship.

¹²⁵ G.P. to R.K., 7 Nov. 1816, SSR, 57 (FCCP, 7 Nov. 1816). Curiously enough, there was an uncanny coincidence in the Kedah-Perak-Siam-Pulau Pinang quadrangle. The Governor of Pulau Pinang, W. Petrie, who sympathized greatly with Kedah's problem, died at the end of October, the Kedah wakilz returned from Bangkok soon after Petrie's decease and Sultan Mansur's reply reached Pulau Pinang soon after the return of the wakilz: this is particularly marked because Sultan Mansur, prior to this, always took about a year to reply.

¹²⁶ The Muslim month of Muharram in 1816 corresponds with 21st November — 20th December. Ref. Freeman-Grenville, *The Muslim And Christian Calendars*, 53.

¹²⁷ R.K. to G.P., 19 Nov. 1816, SSR, 57 (FCCP, 5 Dec. 1816). Again, as part of his policy, Sultan Ahmad kept the Pulau Pinang authorities fully informed of this and subsequent developments.

December 1816 at the very latest.¹²⁸ The Laksamana, with the fleet of perahu that had been collected, left later to rendezvous with the land forces that were grouping at Kerian.¹²⁹ From there, the Bendahara and the forces under his command pushed southwards into Perak, while the Laksamana, after some initial delays, headed for the Perak coast to enforce a blockade and to assist in the two-pronged attack.¹³⁰ By October 1817, the Bendahara had succeeded in subduing half of Perak but was slowed down by shortages of food, arms, ammunition, cannon and men.¹³¹ These and other difficulties seem to have brought the invasion to a stalemate,¹³² which was worsened by large-scale desertions.¹³³ Attempts were therefore made to gain assistance for Kedah's forces for the Bendahara recruited ex-East India Company sepoy from Pulau Pinang¹³⁴ and Sultan Ahmad officially requested (and obtained) permission in March 1818 to enlist Malays living in 'Province Wellesley' for service in the Kedah forces.¹³⁵ On the strength of later events, however, we can safely conclude that by the end of May, the Kedah forces had consolidated their hold and were beginning to push forward again.

Around the middle of June 1818, Sultan Ahmad decided to

¹²⁸ R.K. to G.P., 11 Dec. 1816, SSR, 57 (FCCP, 19 Dec. 1816).

¹²⁹ R.K. to G.P., 21 Dec. 1816, SSR, 57 (FCCP, 9 Jan. 1817).

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ R.K. to G.P., 18 Oct. 1817, SSR, 62 (FCCP, 6 Nov. 1817). The only reference to Malay accounts of the invasion is Wilkinson's extremely brief mention of the efforts of a couple of Perak leaders in fighting the invaders. Unfortunately, his sources are not revealed. See Wilkinson, *A History of the Peninsular Malays*, 104-6. There is also a brief account in G.M. Khan's *History of Kedah, Penang, 1958*, 45, but since his sources are not revealed it cannot be accepted as being reliable.

¹³² These shortages in weapons and supplies are mentioned in the records. See *ibid.*; also Bendahara of Kedah to MacInnes, 25 March, 1817, SSR, 66, 274 (FCCP, 2 March 1817; R.K. to G.R. 10 Oct. 1817, SSR, 62, 139-40 (FCCP, 6 Nov. 1817 and R.K. to G.P., 15 Dec. 1817, SSR, 62, 288-91 (FCCP, 27 Dec. 1817).

¹³³ R.K. to G.P., 10 March 1818, SNL, Vol. F.1, ff.30-1. It must be remembered that neither Kedah nor any of the Negeri had standing armies. At times of war, a *kerah* or *levée en masse* was instituted, and, as the force that entered Perak was made up of such levies, it was only natural to find quite a high rate of desertions, especially when the sanctuary of British territory was close at hand. The Laksamana too, had to 'collect' suitable perahu and boats for the war effort.

¹³⁴ R.K. to G.P., 15 Dec. 1817, SSR, 62, ff.289-90 (FCCP, 27 Dec.) 1817.

¹³⁵ R.K. to G.P., 10 March 1818, SNL, Vol. F.1, f.31.

request the Company to make one last attempt to persuade Sultan Mansur on the expediency of submission. Although outwardly this move might seem surprising, it was, nevertheless, explicable in the light of two major developments. Sultan Ahmad had received reliable reports that a Burmese force had attacked Thalang¹³⁶ and Kedah appeared to be threatened. Even more ominous was the entry of large numbers of Siamese (troops in all probability) into Setul and Lungu, the two northernmost ports of Kedah.¹³⁷ Their entry had been unannounced and Sultan Ahmad was apparently worried as to their intentions. Apart from the fear of a Burmese attack on Kedah itself, the Siamese elements in Setul and Lungu were equally a threat for they might have either been sent in anticipation of a full-scale Burmese offensive or may have represented the vanguard of an army for the conquest of Perak. Whichever of these three possibilities may have actuated Sultan Ahmad to appeal to the British, it is only logical that in these circumstances he felt the great urgency, firstly, of Perak's submission, and secondly, the withdrawal of the Kedah forces from Perak so that they could defend Kedah should events precipitate this. It is difficult to accept the argument that Sultan Ahmad's decision was necessitated by a military stalemate in Perak, because the evidence suggests that by this time the Kedah forces had regained the initiative, and furthermore, Sultan Ahmad was personally confident that the interposition of the British would 'be attended with certain and immediate success'.¹³⁸

Sultan Ahmad consequently sent an emissary to Governor Bannerman of Pulau Pinang asking him to exert 'the high influence of the British name and character . . . in order to put a stop to all further effusion of blood, and to avert the calamities of War from neighbouring and friendly states'.¹³⁹ Fortunately for Ke-

¹³⁶ R.K. to G.P., 14 June 1818, SNL, Vol. F.1., f.35.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.* This reference implies that they were still under his authority (see Chapter 5).

¹³⁸ See Minute by Bannerman, 22 June 1818, SSR, 66, 507 (FCCP, 22 June 1816).

¹³⁹ *Ibid.* The author has been unable to trace the actual letter to Bannerman, but this reference to the war spreading so as to involve other states appears to allude to Siam and the Dutch. It will be remembered that Malacca had been returned to the Dutch in the middle of 1818, and Sultan Ahmad must have feared that with their return, they would attempt to renew their treaties with Perak, and

dah, Bannerman agreed to do so, although at the same time, in true Company tradition, he took full opportunity of the situation to try to obtain commercial concessions from Perak.¹⁴⁰

On being informed of the appointment of W.J. Cracroft as the Company emissary to Perak,¹⁴¹ Sultan Ahmad sent Syed Salee to accompany Cracroft, as had been requested by the Governor of Pulau Pinang.¹⁴² Sultan Ahmad also advised his Bendahara and Laksamana in Perak of the mission as well as informing Cracroft of his instructions to the Kedah commanders, simultaneously entrusting Syed Salee with full powers to act as liaison between the Kedah commanders and Cracroft.¹⁴³ In Perak itself, the Kedah forces which had hitherto been making slow progress, finally gained very great advantages in the first two weeks of July.¹⁴⁴ After Cracroft's arrival at Kuala Perak, the Laksamana established contact with him on 14 July and immediately suspended all hostilities so as to create a more conducive atmosphere for the talks.¹⁴⁵

Although the Company succeeded in obtaining a treaty from Perak with certain commercial concessions, the Cracroft mission, from Kedah's point of view, was a complete failure.¹⁴⁶ The Perak leaders to whom Cracroft spoke at first appeared to realize the expediency of submission to the Siamese demand but later were averse to doing so. When Cracroft realized that the Perak leaders were using the truce to strengthen themselves and were even asking for an indefinite suspension of hostilities, he concluded that the prolongation of his stay would serve little useful pur-

an offer to protect Perak as before could be the Dutch inducement to Perak. The Raja of Perak would be only too willing to accept the offer and this, undoubtedly, would place Kedah in a quandary. The Dutch did in fact make such a move but that came after the defeat of Perak. See Chapter VII.

¹⁴⁰ For the Company's motives behind its willingness to send a mission to Perak, see Minute by Bannerman, 22 June 1818, SSR, 66, 504-15 (FCCP, 22 June 1818), and C.D. Cowan, 'Governor Bannerman and the Penang Tin Scheme', *JM-BRAS*, XXIII, i (1950), 52-6. The Company was equally afraid of the return of the Dutch for it would seriously affect its trade in tin.

¹⁴¹ G.P. to R.K., 23 June 1818, SNL, Vol. G.1, f.14-15.

¹⁴² R.K. to G.P., 2 July 1818, SNL, Vol. F.1, f.37.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ Cracroft to Clubley, 3 Aug. 1818, SSR, 67, 5, 34 (FCCP, 5 Sept. 1818).

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.* f.5-6.

¹⁴⁶ For full proceedings of the mission, see Cracroft to Clubley, 3 Aug. 1818, SSR; Vol. 67, ff.1-50 (FCCP, 5 Sept. 1818) and Cowan, 'Penang Tin Scheme'.

pose.¹⁴⁷ Unable to persuade the Perak leaders to send the Bunga Emas dan Perak to Bangkok, Cracroft broke off the talks.¹⁴⁸

On hearing of Cracroft's failure, the Laksamana made one last attempt to see if Perak would give in before the resumption of hostilities and the final offensive.¹⁴⁹ A note was despatched to Sultan Mansur (accompanied by a letter from Cracroft) on 1 August¹⁵⁰ stipulating that Sultan Mansur should send him a letter making peace with Kedah and promising to send the Bunga Emas dan Perak to Siam, if he wished to end hostilities.¹⁵¹ Although the Laksamana gave the Raja three days to reply, he delayed the resumption of the war pending further instructions from Sultan Ahmad Taju'd-din. On learning of Perak's refusal when Syed Salee returned with a letter from Cracroft on 9 August, Sultan Ahmad ordered the resumption of hostilities.¹⁵² The new offensive, combined with the tight blockade of the Sungai Perak which completely cut off Perak's supplies,¹⁵³ brought all resistance to an end. By the end of September 1818 the invasion of Perak was over, and early in 1819 the Bunga Emas dan Perak was on its way from Pasir Garam to Bangkok.¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁷ Cracroft to Clubley, 3 Aug. 1818, SSR, 67, f.34 (FCCP, 5 Sept. 1818).

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.* ff.33-40.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.* f.36.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ Laksamana of Kedah to Raja of Perak, SSR, 67, f.50 (FCCP, 5 Sept. 1818).

¹⁵² R.K. to G.P., 31 Aug. 1818, SNL, Vol. F.1, f.80.

¹⁵³ Cracroft to Clubley, 3 Aug. 1818, SSR, 67, ff.5, 34 (FCCP, 5 Sept. 1818).

¹⁵⁴ Anderson, *op.cit.* 87; see also, *BP*, 11, iii (1911), 76.

VII

THE SIAMESE INVASION

THE sudden and brazen invasion of Kedah by Siamese naval forces 12 November 1821¹ and the story of Kedah's subsequent heroic resistance to Siamese occupation and the liberation movements to free it from its incorporation as a Siamese province, together with its intricate diplomacy up to the restoration to Sultan Ahmad Taju'd-din in 1842 are among the less obscure aspects of Malaysian history.² Begun under guise and surprise, its swift and bloody progress was matched only by the absence of organized defensive measures or forces of any major significance.³ The brave defence spiritedly put up at Kuala Kedah in the face of very heavy odds, which apart from providing some colour and a show of great val-

¹It is of great significance to note that the Siamese force which took Kedah came by sea, thus bringing to mind the relevance of the 1800 Treaty by which Burney states the East India Company was obliged to defend Kedah from any attack by sea (see Chapter V); Sultan Abdullah's conditions for the lease of Pulau Pinang in 1785 and Macpherson's 'Replies' in 1786 in which he had promised the tentative naval defence of Kedah (see Chapter 3), apart from the Malay interpretation of the phrase 'Kedah and Pulau Pinang shall be as one country' (see Chapters 3-6). The overall view of relationships with the East India Company to the Malay mind, particularly the above-cited facts which were held as binding by Sultan Ahmad, are best brought out in his letters to the East India Company between 1822 and 1842 (see *The Burney Papers*, I-IV (1910-13) and in Swettenham's *British Malaya*. The naval force came from Trang and the Siamese Isthmian areas, including Setul and Lungu while the land force led by the Governor of Nakorn Si'thammarat came much later, both also being part of major defensive measures against Burma (see below) and of aggressive designs over the Malay states. See Anderson, *Considerations*, 1-112; *BP*, I-IV (1910-13) and *SSR*, 80-117 and Bibliography.

²See Anderson, *op.cit.* 1-10; *SSR*, Vols. 80-117; *SNL*, 1-4; *The Burney Papers*, I-IV (1910-13); Manuscript Papers Relating to Kedah (IOL); Low, in *The Burney Papers*, V (1914); Low, 'Origin and Progress of British Colonies'; Bebgie, *Malayan Peninsula*, 85-132; Moor, *Notices*; Wynne, *Triad and Tabut*, 202-44; Vella, *Rama III*, 59-77; Skinner, 'A Kedah Letter of 1839', and S. Osborne, *My Journey in Malayan Waters* (London, 1857).

³See Low, in *The Burney Papers* (1914), for a possible explanation of this.

our⁴ at least served the purpose of delaying the onslaught and enabling Sultan Ahmad Taju'd-din, then at Pulau Tiga,⁵ to escape to Tunku Suleiman's residence at Kota and then to Pulau Pinang.⁶ The singular exception to the panic and near state of defencelessness was the defence of Pulauz Langkawi (greatly helped by those who escaped the initial onslaught) which proved to be the strongest centre of resistance and which was to suffer the ravages of two brutal Siamese assaults⁷ and further attacks in later years.

The conquest of Perak had seen the extension of Kedah's southern 'boundary' to the Sungai Kurau basin,⁸ and Sultan Mansur deposed in October 1818⁹ and replaced by his son, Sultan Taju'd-din.¹⁰ The Bendahara and the Laksamana of Kedah remained temporarily in Perak to supervise matters, and in good stead too, for they were able to block a Dutch embassy's attempt in the last days of December 1818 at renewing previous Dutch agreements with Perak.¹¹ In Kedah, however, intense pressure continued to exist, gradually developing, as far as Sultan Ahmad and others were concerned, into a highly untenable position.

The Burmese attack on Thalang in June 1818 was to be the last during Bodawpaya's reign.¹² Though caused by disputes over the

⁴ Anderson, *op.cit.* 2-5, 8.

⁵ See below.

⁶ Anderson, *op.cit.* 5-8.

⁷ See SSR, 81-4.

⁸ See Crawford, *Embassy to Siam*, 42, and Moor, *op.cit.* 242.

⁹ R.K. to G.P., 26 July 1819, SSR, 72, ff.835-7 (FCCP, 30 Sept. 1819) and R.P. to Dutch Ambassador (Enclosure 2 in Anderson to Clubley), SSR, 70, ff.67-8 (FCCP, 25 Jan. 1819).

¹⁰ Anderson, *op.cit.* 188. The position of Raja Muda, previously held by Taju'd-din, was taken by the Raja Bendahara. Sultan Ahmad permitted their request 'to retain their Names and Titles during the lifetime of the old King [i.e. Sultan Mansur], engaging however to be answerable for the good government of Perak . . . and that the old King should cease to exercise authority or be admitted to their Councils . . .' See R.K. to G.P., 26 July 1819, SSR, 72, ff.835-6 (FCCP, 30 Sept. 1819).

¹¹ See Enclosures 1 and 2 in Anderson to Clubley, 19 Jan. 1819. SSR, 70, ff.65-8 (FCCP, 25 Jan. 1819). It is of interest to note that in July 1819, the Dutch government of Java issued instructions to Dutch officials at Melaka against the renewal of their former treaties with the Malay States. See *BP*, II, iv (1911), 158.

¹² Vide Chapter VI. Low, 'Origin and Progress of British Colonies,' 21-2, writes that 'the Burmese attacked in 1818 the Siamese dependency [sic.?] of Junk Ceylon [Thalang], but from which island they were shortly expelled with great slaughter. The Burmese army consisted of 10,000 men. The Siamese force it is

control of the Bird's Nest islands, the wider Burmese strategy was aimed at wresting the island and its adjacent areas, including Kedah, from Siamese control.¹³ The references to these events, however, are vague, and the exact duration and extent of the Burmese push cannot be exactly determined. Siamese requisitions on Kedah, however, were not long in forthcoming, for on 7 September Sultan Ahmad received letters from the Kalahom and the Governor of Nakorn Si'thammarat¹⁴ ordering the immediate provision of 300 koyan of rice and 100 fully-equipped perahu for the defence of the Siamese Isthmian states and Kedah.¹⁵

On this occasion Sultan Ahmad found himself in more exacting and delicate circumstances, for the Siamese messenger of the Governor of Nakorn Si'thammarat who brought the letters hinted suspiciously at the presence of forty Burmese perahu at Pulau Pinang and remained behind to watch his actions.¹⁶ Furthermore, in addition to being burdened by the costly invasion of Perak (which was still in progress), he was instructed not to export any rice to Pulau Pinang, which he felt was designed 'to cause disaffection' between Kedah and Pulau Pinang, since it would harm his good relations with the Company and violate the existing treaty.¹⁷ He consequently applied for the advice of the Governor of Pulau Pinang on his intention to disregard the orders and requested that Cracroft be sent.¹⁸

On 12 October Sultan Ahmad received Messrs Caunter and Cracroft who had arrived ostensibly in response to his appeal, but

believed was about equal to this, and the Kedah contingent was composed of 100 boats manned by 2,500 men . . .'. This is a very interesting reference and it also seems to have escaped the attention of the compiler of the Burmese chronicles, either deliberately or otherwise (see Salarak, 'Hmannan Yazawin Dawgyi'). Furthermore, Sultan Ahmad is known to have refused to furnish Siamese tributary demands (see below).

¹³ See the Kalahom to R.K., June 1818, SSR, 67, ff.256-8 (FCCP, 7 Oct. 1818).

¹⁴ R.K. to G.P., 12 Sept. 1818, SSR, 67, f.254 (FCCP, 7 Oct. 1818).

¹⁵ Enclosures in *ibid.* ff.256-61.

¹⁶ R.K. to G.P., 12 Sept. 1818, SSR, 67, ff.254-6 (FCCP, 7 Oct. 1818). The presence of the Burmese perahu are highly relevant to this story, but details are unfortunately lacking.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* He wrote that 'it has always been the established and agreed Custom for the Kedah people never to cease from carrying Rice to sell for the supply of the Penang market, for *Kedah and Penang are as one Country.*' *Ibid.* f.259. Italics are mine.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

as it turned out in due course, to take advantage of his pressing circumstances to seek certain concessions.¹⁹ Two points emerged from the discussions that were held, first, that Sultan Ahmad used their presence to impress upon the Siamese messenger an idea of a close connexion between himself and the Company, for he despatched a letter to the Governor of Nakorn Si'thammarat the next day stating his inability to fulfil the demands, and second, he turned down an offer of British interference on his behalf at Bangkok except in the case of actual invasion, because 'such interference whether by letter or Embassy would greatly offend the Emperor [i.e. Rama II] whom . . . [he] . . . did not believe to be his enemy unless stirred up by the Raja of Lagore [Governor of Nakorn Si'thammarat] and other Chiefs of whose evil intentions he had great apprehension'.²⁰ The discussions also served the purpose of confirming Sultan Ahmad's fore-knowledge of the Company's plans.²¹ Since the proposed concessions sought by the Company²² were not reciprocated by any offer of defensive assistance and would adversely effect his revenues if granted, Sultan Ahmad tactfully asked Caunter and Cracroft to commit their proposals to writing, and to await the return of his principal menteriz from Perak, without whose customary consultation he could not act.²³

In the period following this rebuff until July 1819 Sultan Ahmad exercised great patience and tact in the face of the haughty and arrogant diplomacy of Bannerman, the Governor of Pulau Pinang, who attempted by insolent letters and by devious and unfair means such as interference in Kedah affairs by attempting to break the monopoly rights of the Kuala Muda farmers and the withholding

¹⁹ See Minute by Bannerman, 21 Sept. 1818 and Minute by Phillips, SSR, 67, ff. 250-2, ff. 263-4 (FCCP, 7 Oct. 1818) and Cracroft and Caunter to Clubley, 13 Oct. 1818, SSR, 67, ff. 525-37 (FCCP, 29 Oct. 1818). The Company wanted an extension of territory on the mainland; the free navigation of the Sungai Muda, Perai and Kerian; ground for the establishment of factories, and the overall control of the tin exports of Perak and Petani. See also Cowan, 'Tin Scheme', 52-6 for a good documentary presentation of this important subject.

²⁰ Cracroft and Caunter to Clubley, 13 Oct. 1818, SSR, f. 526 (FCCP, 29 Oct. 1818)

²¹ *Ibid.* ff. 528-9.

²² *Ibid.* ff. 531-3.

²³ R.K. to G.P., 12 Oct. 1818, SSR, 67, ff. 535-7 (FCCP, 29 Oct. 1818).

of the annual rent of \$10,000, which violated the 1802 Treaty, to effect his pet project, the 'Penang tin scheme.' This entailed a monopoly of the tin trade of Perak and Petani, the free navigation of rivers and trade and the cession of Pulau Pangkor — matters over which Sultan Ahmad was deeply concerned.²⁴

Sultan Ahmad's firm stand in refusing to give in to the Company's demands were dictated by two considerations. These were his unwillingness to break his agreement with the Kuala Muda farmers and the paramount fear of giving Siam room for offence — a point which he repeatedly stressed.²⁵ To these, it may be safely deduced, was added the total absence of any advantage to his own security and material wealth. The issue was to a large extent resolved by the death of Bannerman in July 1819 but was only finally closed in December by the gradual backing down of Phillips, the then Acting Governor.²⁶

Fate, it would seem, was against Sultan Ahmad, for barely had relations with the East India Company begun to improve before the traditional Burman-Siamese contest again began to rear its ugly head, heralded by the death of Bodawpaya in June 1819.²⁷ The latter was succeeded by his grandson, Bagyidaw, who began his reign by concentrating on completing the extension of Burmese rule westwards by the incorporation of Assam, Manipur and Kachar²⁸ — and who then, true to tradition, next set his sights on Siam — to re-assert Burman superiority and to bring an end to

²⁴ See G.P. to R.K., 21 Oct. 1818, SSR, 68, ff.890-6 (FCCP, 31 Dec. 1818); R.K. to G.P., 27 Oct. 1818, SSR, 68, ff.897-903 (FCCP, 31 Dec. 1818); G.P. to R.K. 9 Nov. 1818, SSR, 68, ff.904-13 (FCCP, 31 Dec. 1818); R.K. to G.P., 29 Nov. 1818, SSR, 68, ff.913-7 and ff.917-8 (FCCP, 31 Dec. 1818); G.P. to R.K., 14 Dec. 1818, SSR, 68, ff.918-20 (FCCP, 31 Dec. 1818); Anderson to Clubley, 25 Jan. 1819, SSR, 70, ff.138-40 (FCCP, 9 Feb. 1819); G.P. to R.K., 29 May 1819, SSR, 71, ff.177-80; R.K. to G.P., 22 June 1819, SSR, 71, ff.180-1; G.P. to R.K., 9 July 1819, SSR, 71, ff.182-3 (FCCP, 16 July 1819) and R.K. to G.P., 20 July 1819, SSR, 71, ff.482-4 (FCCP, 26 Aug. 1819). Also, Cowan, 'The Penang Tin Scheme', 52-83, for a full documentary study of this problem.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ See G.P. to R. K., 6 Aug. 1819, SSR, 71, ff.485-6; R.K. to G.P., 8 Aug. 1819, SSR, 71, ff.487-9; G.P. to R.K., 13 Aug. 1819, SSR, 71, ff.490-1; R.K. to G.P. 16 Aug. 1819, SSR, 71, ff.491; Minute and Enclosures by Governor, 29 Sept. 1819, SSR, 72, ff.808-28 (FCCP, 30 Sept. 1819) and R.K. to G.P., 27 Oct. 1819, SSR, 72, ff.1206-8 (FCCP, 23 Dec. 1819).

²⁷ Salarak, *op.cit.* 177-8.

²⁸ *Loc.cit.*

the Chakri dynasty.²⁹ Towards this end, intensive preparations were begun in the southern provinces around the middle of 1820. The Siamese, however, gained intelligence of this and counter-preparations were set in motion to defend the Isthmian region.³⁰

It is unfortunate that a lack of concrete evidence at this stage prevents the formation of a clear picture of the sequence of subsequent events. The records of the Pulau Pinang government are unhelpful in this respect (there being a surprising gap in the Kedah-Pulau Pinang correspondence between 1819 and 1821), the Burmese chronicles are strangely silent at this point³¹ and reliance has to be placed largely on the Thai version of events as contained in relevant correspondence in the records of the Pulau Pinang government.

It is to be inferred from different sources that Sultan Ahmad, partly out of despair over earlier and then current exactions on Kedah and partly because of the Burmese preparations, allowed the establishment of contacts with the Burmese, although on whose initiative, it is not definitely known. Gerini states that Siamese officials at Thalang gained possession of a Burmese letter addressed to Sultan Ahmad instigating him to 'rebel' against Siamese authority: this was duly transmitted to Bangkok and is said by Gerini to have been the direct cause of the invasion of Kedah.³² In 1826, however, Captain Burney was told at Bangkok that it was Sultan Ahmad who 'thought of connecting himself with the Burmese enemies, to whom he sent a man with letters . . .',³³ an allegation that was repeated by the Thai Court in 1842.³⁴ Further evidence

²⁹ The Burmese chronicles state that 'his sole reason for the invasion was that Yodaya [Ayuthaya i.e. Siam] had once been completely conquered by King Hsinbyushin, the city destroyed, and the royal family captured. Since then a new dynasty had sprung up and the state had declared its independence: and that the king had not been reigning justly, whereby the population, both monks and laymen, found no peace and happiness . . .'. *Ibid.* 180.

³⁰ See G.N.S. to G.P., 28 Oct. 1821, SSR, 85, ff.899-900 (FCCP, 2 May 1822) and *BP*, IV, ii (1913), 44-5.

³¹ See Salarak, *op.cit.* 178-9.

³² Gerini, 'Historical retrospect of Junk Ceylon Island', 84.

³³ *BP*, I, i (1910), 231.

³⁴ *BP*, IV, ii (1913), 45. The Court then maintained that Sultan Ahmad 'had despatched the Chief or Nakodah Si Amang to Ava with overtures to the Court there, and requesting that His Majesty of Ava would despatch a force to invade the territory of Siam . . . [and] that the people of Kedah would not join the Chau Phaya of Ligor [Governor of Nakorn Si'thammarat] on account of the above

on this crucial facet of the Kedah-Burma-Siam mosaic will indeed be most welcome.

To worsen matters for Sultan Ahmad even further, Tunku Amboon, with whom he had been in conflict for some time,³⁵ made a bid for favour, and quite obviously, the rulership.³⁶ Making his way to the Governor of Nakorn Si'thammarat some time in 1820, he asked to be sent to Bangkok personally to lay his charges against Sultan Ahmad 'in the customary form'. Sultan Ahmad was accused of shifting his seat of authority to Pulau Tiga,³⁷ of misgovernment³⁸ and of planning to desert Kedah for

negotiations with Ava . . . Ibid. While the context of this reference suggests a degree of credibility on this point, the likelihood of some confusion with certain events of 1823-4 has also to be borne in mind. See SSR, 94, ff.96-119 (FCCP, 5 Feb. 1824).

³⁵ G.P. to G.G., 28 Nov. 1821, SSR, 80, f.625 (FCCP, 29 Nov. 1821) and M. Radzi, 'Kota Kuala Muda', *MHJ*, III, i (1956), 31. Radzi states that Tunku Amboon was the Raja Muda, which is likely, since Tunku Ibrahim, the previous Raja Muda, had died after attempting another major rebellion against Sultan Ahmad's authority in 1815. See R.K. to G.P., 8 May 1815, SSR, 49, ff.953-4; R.K. to G.P. 1 Oct. 1815, SSR, 51, ff.2319-20 (FCCP, 12 Oct. 1815) and R.K. to G.P., 1 Nov. 1815, SSR, 52, ff.49-53 (FCCP, 9 Nov. 1815).

³⁶ G.P. to G.G., 28 Nov. 1821, SSR, 80, f.625 (FCCP, 29 Nov. 1821) and Radzi, *op.cit.* 31-2. Radzi on the basis of Kedah sources writes of Tunku Amboon as 'an extremely ambitious scoundrel who was not averse to slitting his brother's throat to attain his base ends. He had already been made Raja Muda, but such was his thirst for power that he aspired to the Regency of Perlis and Setul . . . "Thrice did [he] prostrate himself before His Highness [i.e. Sultan Ahmad] and each time he left the court disappointed and more bitter."'

³⁷ G.N.S. to G.P., 28 Oct. 1821, SSR, 80, ff.574-5 (FCCP, 29 Nov. 1821). See also Radzi, *op.cit.* 26-33 and Caunter's Report, 27 Nov. 1821, SSR, 80, ff.592-5 (FCCP, 29 Nov. 1821). Burney states that the shift in royal capitals took place around October 1818 [see *BP*, II, iv (1911), 181] but it will also be recollected that the istana at Pulau Tiga had been established much earlier (see Chapter 5). The shift can be attributed, at this stage, to difficulties in the internal political situation; the growing fear of the Governor of Nakorn Si'thammarat's designs; the proximity of 'Province Wellesley' and the rapid growth of the trade of Kuala Muda which port he linked by an artificial channel to Pulau Tiga. Burney states that the position was fortified and this is corroborated in Caunter's Report. It is also of some note that the Siamese took offence at this shift, for it was done without permission and it was again indicative of another feature of tributary control.

³⁸ G.N.S. to G.P., 28 Oct. 1821, SSR, 80, ff.574-5 (FCCP, 29 Nov. 1821). While detailed information is lacking on this point, a few basic facts are known. Sultan Ahmad is said to have entrusted the government at Alor Setar to his principal adviser, a Chulia merchant named Bapu Kundor (who misappropriated the revenues), an act which 'alienated the minds' of his Menteri and Dato'. The Bendahara is said to have been 'much dissatisfied and . . . to have foreseen the con-

Siak.³⁹ Although details are lacking, it is clear that Tunku Amboon's plans fitted neatly into the designs of the Governor of Nakorn Si'thammarat and those of most members of the Thai Court with whom the Governor had intimate connexions and helped precipitate the Thai decision to invade Kedah.⁴⁰ This has to be seen within the context of all the other contributory factors and the prevailing mood at Bangkok.

The sequence of evidence indicates the growth of strong animosity if not actual enmity between Sultan Ahmad and the Governor of Nakorn Si'thammarat arising from Sultan Ahmad's suspicions of the latter's intentions, the excessive tributary demands levied on Kedah in the preceding twelve years or so,⁴¹ and a jealousy on the part of the Governor that is said to have arisen by virtue of their both holding the same rank of Chau Phaya, especially since Sultan Ahmad was younger in age and office.⁴² This was a source of great embarrassment and friction because Kedah was nominally under the superintendence of the Governor of Nakorn Si'thammarat.⁴³ Furthermore, Sultan Ahmad's efforts at the expulsion of the Burmese from Thalang in 1810 and the successful conquest of Perak were feathers in his cap which within the Siamese political framework were far more meaningful than the largely supervisory and administrative functions of the Governor.

sequences of his master's misgovernment, having repeatedly made private applications' to the government of Pulau Pinang for aylum in the event of eventualities. Burney tastefully accuses Sultan Ahmad of having 'secluded himself among his women' while Radzi pens of 'merry-making and feasting . . . surrounded by innumerable sychophants, the blood-suckers who were for ever reminding him of his munificance and greatness . . . ' See *ibid.* See also, *BP*, II, iv (1911), 182 and III, i (1912), 176.

³⁹ G.N.S. to G.P., 28 Oct. 1821, SSR, 80, ff.574-5 (FCCP, 29 Nov. 1821).

⁴⁰ See G.P. to G.G., 28 Nov. 1821, SSR, 80, f.625 (FCCP, 29 Nov. 1821); Radzi, *op.cit.* 31-2 and Caunter's Report, 27 Nov. 1821, SSR, 80, f.602 (FCCP, 29 Nov. 1821). Caunter, who was deputed to Kedah immediately following the invasion, reported that, ' . . . Tunku Mome [Amboon] who is now at Kedah, is suspected at having caused this visit of the Siamese . . . '.

⁴¹ See Chapter V; also Crawford to Clublely, 12 July 1822, SSR, 87, ff.206, 213-4 (FCCP, 28 Nov. 1822).

⁴² Ref. Manuscript papers presented to the Kedah Historical Society located at the Kedah Museum, Alor Setar.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

To this must also be added the personal ambitions and the more deep-rooted rivalry between the Governors of Nakorn Si'thammarat and Singora which was also projected into and embodied in their respective intrigues in the power-politics of Kedah as well as over the eastern Malay States, with their attendant sub-plots and counter-intrigues.⁴⁴ The Governor of Singora is known to have maintained his friendship with Sultan Ahmad⁴⁵ (he having been, in fact, the channel of Sultan Ahmad's rise to power)⁴⁶ and was actually taken prisoner to Bangkok shortly after the invasion of Kedah by the Governor of Nakorn Si'thammarat, for having shown some unwillingness to co-operate with the expansionist aims of the latter.⁴⁷

In 1820 the Governor of Nakorn Si'thammarat visited Bangkok on a mission that, apart from the other major issue of the anticipated Burmese invasion, was basically designed to seek Rama II's approval for the invasion of Kedah and the extension of Siamese suzerainty over the other Malay States, especially Perak and Selangor.⁴⁸ Armed with the accusations of Tunku Amboon, Sultan Ahmad's defiance of his directives, the refusal to fulfil military requisitions and the charges of being in contact with the Burmese, and conditioned by the diminution of his own resources,⁴⁹ the Governor of Nakorn Si'thammarat successfully exerted his influence over his nephew, the powerfully-placed Wang-na and his faction at the Court in support of his schemes.⁵⁰ Rama II,

⁴⁴ See Chapters V, VI and above; also *BP*, I, ii (1910), 201-2; II, iv (1911), 174-80; III, i (1912) 217-8 and note 46.

⁴⁵ *BP*, III, i (1912), 217-18. Burney wrote of the Governor as a long concealed friend of Sultan Ahmad, both of whom kept up a private correspondence even after 1821.

⁴⁶ See Chapter V. Despite the fact that later the Governor had also actively encouraged Tunku Bisnu against Sultan Ahmad to which the Governor of Nakorn Si'thammarat had promptly responded by patronizing Sultan Ahmad i.e. insofar as the latter Governor's ambitions clashed with those of the Governor of Singora (see Chapter V), Sultan Ahmad and the Governor of Singora must have been drawn closer to each other again in the light of their identical interests against the Governor of Nakorn Si'thammarat.

⁴⁷ *BP*, II, iv (1912), 178.

⁴⁸ The Governor had received full intelligence of the Burmese preparations and probably even of their actual plans. See *BP*, IV, ii (1913), 44-5.

⁴⁹ See Burney to Clubley, 8 Nov. 1825, SSR, 108, ff.133-4 (FCCP, 26 Jan. 1826).

⁵⁰ Crawford wrote that 'from confidential information . . . I was aware that it was this party [i.e. the Wang-na faction] that had recommended the invasion of

though he initially disagreed, was soon persuaded to consent, especially after repeated consultations with the Portuguese Consul at Bangkok indicated that the British government and the East India Company would not interfere.⁶¹

The vital strategic importance of Kedah featured crucially in the considerations of the Thai Court, far more largely than is currently thought. The control of the Isthmus was fundamental in the rival Burman-Siamese strategy and of identical importance to both in a number of ways. Full control of the Isthmus by either power would enable the only quick naval access to the Bay of Bengal and to the Gulf of Siam, while separate control of the western and eastern seaboard by Burma and Siam respectively would deprive either of this access. Both these points have to be seen in all their full military, diplomatic, economic and commercial implications. Burmese possession of the principal ports of Tavoy and Mergui had deprived Siam of access to the Bay of Bengal, with the exception of Thalang, Bang-ri and Kedah which were about to be threatened.⁶² Kedah, with its ship-building centres and food resources was by far the most vital of the three in this respect. One of the principal arguments used by the Governor of Nakorn Si'thammarat in winning over the Thai Court's consent to the invasion of Kedah had been that '... this province [i.e. Kedah] is bounded by the sea on the west and its coasts lie very conveniently for descents on it by the Burmese, while on the other hand its ports are equally convenient for the fitting out of fleets of Siamese boats to oppose the Burman armaments . . .'.⁶³ And with the even more

Queda and the seizure of the King's [i.e. Sultan Ahmad's] person and this for an accusation of treason for assistance given to the traditional enemy the Burmese. See Crawford to Clublely, 12 July 1822, SSR, 87, f.221 (FCCP, 28 Nov. 1822). For the Wang-na's personal interest and that of the Siamese court, see BP, I, ii (1910) 176, 500. On the Wang-na's powerful position, see BP, II, iv (1911), 42-3 and on the Governor's intimate relations with the Siamese Court, see BP, III, i (1912) 3-4, 176.

⁶¹ BP, II, iv (1911), 135.

⁶² For an account of the economic and strategic importance of the Isthmian region, the trans-Isthmian routes and Pulau Pinang, see BP, II, iii (1911), 176-222.

⁶³ BP, IV, ii (1913), 45. In 1823, Crawford wrote that 'their [i.e. the Siamese] exclusion from the navigation of the Bay of Bengal affords a great uneasiness to the Siamese Court and to regain ports in that quarter [i.e. Mergui and Tavoy] is at present one of the great objects of its ambition and policy.' See *The Crawford Papers*, 106.

convincing charge of Sultan Ahmad's collusion with the arch-enemy Burma, the Governor of Nakorn Si'thammarat-Wang-na faction won the day and the issue of the invasion of Kedah was clinched.

In February 1821, Sultan Ahmad was warned by the Governor of Pulau Pinang of the receipt of intelligence that about 6,000 Siamese soldiers were about to embark at Bangkok for Kedah via Singora on account of his failure to send the Bunga Emas dan Perak.⁵⁴ Sultan Ahmad, oblivious to the fact that his own position and his standing at the Siamese Court had been so fully undermined, was convinced that the despatch of the Siamese army was not prompted by the delay in the sending of the Bunga Emas dan Perak and that, if that was the cause assigned, 'it is only a pretext, because there has been some delay on many former occasions, nor were they angry'.⁵⁵ Rather, his own intelligence sources revealed that the Siamese had begun preparations in Setul to meet the expected Burmese invasion (the Burmese also taking advantage of the epidemic) and that the Siamese army was about to be sent to Trang, Kedah and Perlis as part of the defensive strategy.⁵⁶ Unknown to him also was what appears very likely to have been a plan for an attack on the Burmese Isthmian provinces as well.⁵⁷

On Sunday, 12 November 1821, a large fleet of Siamese perahu from Trang anchored off Kuala Kedah.⁵⁸ The Penghulu of Kota Kuala Kedah brought his guns to bear on the perahu, awaiting only the orders of the Bendahara or the Laksamana (then at Alor Setar and to whom messages were instantaneously sent), to open

⁵⁴ Anderson, *op.cit.* 88.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* 89. The Bunga Emas dan Perak was due to have been sent in 1819 or 1820 but the outbreak of a serious cholera epidemic and strained financial resources had caused the delay. For notes on the seriousness of the epidemic, see Raffles, *Memoir*, 431 and Crawford, *Embassy*, 20.

⁵⁶ Anderson, *op.cit.* 89-90. The Burmese invasion did not materialize largely because of the very extensive Siamese military preparations. See Salarak, *op.cit.* 180.

⁵⁷ See G.N.S. to G.P., SSR, 81, ff.674-5 (FCCP, 13 Dec. 1821) and Crawford to Clubley, 12 July 1822, SSR, 87, f.207 (FCCP, 28 Nov. 1822). The Governor of Nakorn Si'thammarat had been given the order 'to collect the armies of Siam, Ligor, Singora, Merdelong, Thalang, Kedah and Trang and to gather them together at the Western Ports from Trang to Kedah . . . and to assume the general command of the whole.'

⁵⁸ Anderson. *op.cit.* 2.

fire.⁵⁹ Taken completely by surprise, the Bendahara chose to try peaceful measures to ascertain the purpose of the fleet's presence and probably as a delaying stratagem. Under the guise of procuring supplies of rice for an expedition to attack the Burmese to which the Bendahara promised an immediate supply, a large heavily-armed landing party was slipped ashore.⁶⁰ By this time the Laksamana, the Temenggong and a few other Dato'2 had joined the Bendahara, only to be surrounded, betrayed and briefly but very bravely embattled.⁶¹ The invasion of Kedah had begun.⁶²

Here, within the limitations of available sources, ends this brief account of the circumstances and contributory factors leading to the invasion of Kedah, culminating in its incorporation as a full province of Siam. The painful survey of the East India Company's refusal to provide assistance, of later British collusion with Siam over Kedah and the official British contribution to the frustration of the liberation movements has yet to be unfolded. The fuller story of Sultan Ahmad's and Kedah's determined search for freedom, of the diplomacy of resistance and of the final concessions and compromises that led to Sultan Ahmad's return to Kedah in 1842 also remains to be told.

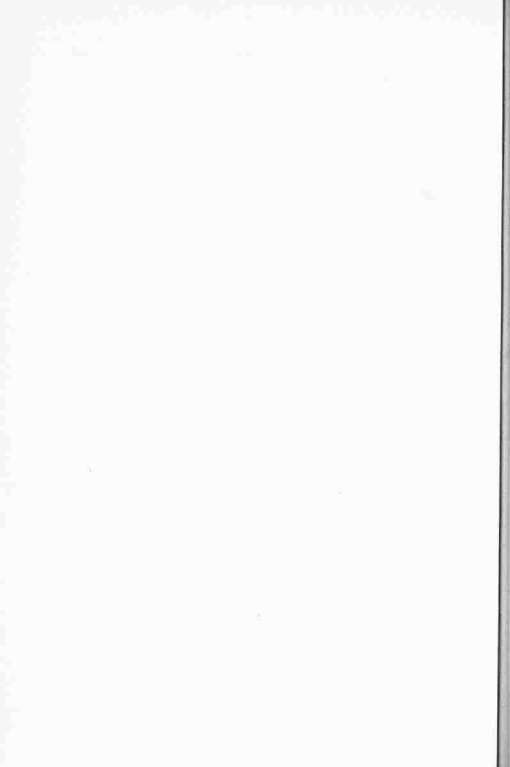
The main strands that thread the narrative form the fabric of the two major and incompatible themes of the search for security and independence. 1821 thus marked the abrupt end to this dual search.

⁵⁹ Ibid. 2-3.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid. 3-4. With keris, ta'at dan setia, the Laksamana, the Temenggong and several of the Dato'2 each met a hero's death. The Bendahara was captured for it was intended by the Siamese that he and the person and family of Sultan Ahmad be sent to Bangkok in traditional style.

⁶² See Anderson, *op.cit.* 2-10, for details; also G.N.S. to G.P., 28 Oct. 1821, SSR, 80, ff.574-7 (FCCP, 29 Nov. 1821); Enclosure No. 2 in Minute by Phillips, 21 Nov. 1821 and other correspondence directly related to the invasion in SSR, 80, ff.568-603 (FCCP, 29 Nov. 1821). For details of following events, see subsequent volumes of the Straits Settlements Factory Records; *BP*, I-V (1910-14); *The Crawford Papers* (1915); and Crawford, *Embassy*. Sometime after the invasion, 'The Portugese Consul at Bangkok was again summoned by the Siamese Ministers . . . and his conferences with the Ministers convinced him of the intention of the Court of Siam to extend its dominion not only over Perak and Selangor, but over Acheen also, and to impose Siamese Governments over every one of the Malay States.' See *BP*, II, iv (1911), 135.



APPENDIXES

APPENDIX 1(a)

COPY OF SULTAN MUHAMMED JIWA'S GRANT TO THE EAST INDIA COMPANY, DATED 19th APRIL 1772¹

In the year of the Hegira 1186 on the 16th day of the Moon Mahanom, on the day Ahad, the Hon'ble Edward Monckton Esqr., Agent for the English Company arrived and had Audience of His Majesty the King of Quedah, and requested a Contract from the King of Quedah, the King ordered Hakem Seree Maharajah Kankannah to write the Contract in the form following, and to give to the Hon'ble Mr. Monckton, Viz. In promise the King gives the Qualla Bahang on both sides in a line to Batin Dattoo Maharaja's River to be under the direction Order and Subjection of the Company and in a line with the Sea Coast to the Right and left of the Qualla of each side four Hundred Relongs, and to extend inland in a parallel line from Batin, also by this Contract all the Tin at the price of 35 Dollars per Bahaar, Black Pepper, and Elephants Teeth, these three Articles shall be sold to the Company and cannot be sold to any other person, by this Contract the Company shall keep Fighting Vessels, to Guard the King's Coast, and for the expense of such Vessels, the Company's Agent shall put Dutys as He shall think proper on all Foreign Prows, Sloops, Ketches, Ships, Sinnat, and Junks that shall enter Qualla Bahang and upon all Vessels that enter the Qualla Purlis, he shall receive half such Dutys as shall be levied at Qualla Bahang for the Expense of defending the Kings Coast, and Ophium as much as the King shall choose to buy the Company's Agent shall sell him at the price of 350 Spanish Dollars per Chest and if the Company sells Ophium to the Merchants the price shall not be more than 400 Spanish Dollars per Chest and no where on the Coast of Quedah any other Nation be allowed to settle.

Here ends this Contract.

Mr. Monckton engages when the King sends his Prows to Salangore to send a Vessel with them, and to suffer no other Prows in the River of Salangor while they are there, and if any English ship is there to order them not to assist the People of Salangor.

¹Sumatra Factory Records, Vol. 15, ff.103-4 (Fort St. George, 25th June 1772).

APPENDIX 1(b)

TEXT OF A LETTER FROM SULTAN MUHAMMED JIWA TO
THE GOVERNOR OF MADRAS, DATED 20th APRIL, 1772¹

Health and all Friendly greeting to continue with increase as long as the Sun and Moon shall revolve from Paduker Sree Sultan Mahomed Jevazynul aduleen Maolam Shaw, presiding over the Kingdom of Que-dah, (named) Daroolhaman, according as God shall direct, unto our Friend who with a pure Unspotted Heart every day excels in the Art of Governing, whose Wisdom and Knowledge of all Nations, no Words can express, as the Sun which shines upon all the Earth without distinction, so does our Friend sit in the high Chair of Justice over the Country of Madras, to whom Riches, Greatness and Understanding will increase beyond measure, the Letter and Present which our Friend sent, was gracefully presented to Us by Mr. Monckton, and was received with infinite Pleasure and Satisfaction. We so delight in our Friend that we keep Monckton with us, who is become the head of our Consultation, we have given him a place of residence, we have granted Him a Contract, we desire his Assistance to send with our officers, to demand all our Property from Salangore, Calang, formerly was governed by Malay Kings, and are inhabited by Malays from whom Raja Ismael who is at Trangany is descended, he is the Son of King Mahomed, Grandson of King Thilchy Sultan Abdooljalil, who descended in a right line from the great King of Johore and Rheo, after whom the Buggesses came and settled at Rheo, and from thence to Salangore, from Salangore to Salang, from what pretensions the Buggesses derive their authority in these places, We know not, but common Fame reports to Us that they are governed by Hollanders but if the Kings of Salangore, Calang and Rheo will not return the Plunder taken from my Country then we entreat our Friend to assist Us in taking Salangore, Calang and Rheo which business if it can be done, then our Friend's Agent, Mr. Monckton may place King Ismael over Rheo and return those Countrys to their antient Possessors, but all these things We have given in charge of Mr. Monckton, if our Friend's affection is great towards Us, he will send us Twenty Guns, of Six, Seven and Eight feet long. This our letter on the day of Isnine, on the 17th of the Moon Mahanam in the year 1186.

¹ Sumatra Factory Records, Vol. 15, ff. 101-3 (Fort St. George, 25th June 1772).

APPENDIX 2(a)

RAJA OF KEDAH TO GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF INDIA ¹

This letter wrote with the purest friendship that may last while the Sun and Moon endures from Padukar Serce Sultan Aibdullah Makrum Shah who presides and rules over the Country of Quedah, according to the commands of the God of all Nations unto our Friend the Governor-General King of Bengal first among the Believers in Jesus Christ renewed for wisdom and superior knowledge in the arts of War by Land and Sea and in every science known on Earth.

Whereas Captain Light Deva Raja came here and informed us that our Friend requested Pooloo Pinang we have instantly given to our Vakeel and Friend Captain Deva Raja to plant the Hon'ble Company's English Flag upon Pooloo Pinang a place for Trade and to repair Your ships of War, and for refreshments, wood and Water. Moreover we have made known to the said Captain all our desires which being come to the knowledge of our Friend and accepted with all possible speed send people to take possession and remain on Pooloo Pinang. Whatever necessities this Island does not afford shall be supplied by us from Our Country of Queda.

Signed on the 24th Day of the Moon Shaval in the year 1199 Year Ha.'

*Conditions required from this Government by the King of Queda**Article 1st*

That the Hon'ble Company shall be Guardian of the Seas and whatever Enemy may come to attack the King shall be an enemy of the Hon'ble Company and the expense shall be borne by the Hon'ble Company.

[Article] 2nd

All vessels Junks Prows small and large coming from either East or West and bound to the Port of Queda shall not be stopped or hindered by the Hon'ble Company's Agent but left to their own Wills either to buy and sell with us or with the Company at Pooloo Pinang as they shall think Proper.

¹ Straits Settlements Factory Records, Vol. 2, ff. 33-6 (Fort William, 2 March 1786).

[Article] 3rd

The Articles Opium Tin and Rattans being part of our Revenue are prohibited and Qualla Mooda, Pray and Krean places where these articles are produced, being so near to Pinang, that when the Hon'ble Company's Resident shall remain there this Prohibition will be constantly broke thro' therefore it should end and the Governor General allow us our Profits on these Articles, viz. 30,000 Spanish Dollars every year.

[Article] 4th

In case the Hon'ble Company's Agent gives credit to any of the King's Relations, Ministers, officers or Ryatts the Agent shall make no claim upon the King.

[Article] 5th

Any man in this country without exception, be it our Son or Brother, who shall become an enemy to Us, shall become an Enemy to the Hon'ble Company, nor shall the Hon'ble Company's Agent protect them without Breach of this Treaty which is to remain while Sun and Moon endures.

[Article] 6th

If any enemy come to attack us by land and we require assistance from the Hon'ble Company of Men, Arms or ammunition the Hon'ble Company will supply us at our expence."

APPENDIX 2(b)

RAJA OF KEDAH TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF INDIA ¹

"Whereas Captain Light, Dewa Raja, came here and informed me that the Raja of Bengal ordered him, to request Pulo Pinang from me, to make an English Settlement, where the Agents of the Company might reside, for the purpose of trading and building ships of war to protect the Island and to cruize at Sea, so that if any enemies of ours from the East or the West should come to attack us, the Company would regard them as enemies also and fight them, and all the expenses of such Wars

¹From J. Anderson, *Political and Commercial Considerations Relative to the Malayan Peninsula, and the British Settlements in the Straits of Malacca*, Prince of Wales Island, 1824, pp. 56-7.

shall be borne by the Company. All Ships, Junks or Prows, large and small, which come from the East or the West and wish to enter the Quedah river to trade, shall not be molested or obstructed, in any way, by the Company, but all persons desirous of coming to trade with us shall be allowed to do as they please; and at Pulo Pinang the same.

The Articles of Opium, Tin and Rattans are monopolies of our own, and the Rivers Mooda, Prye, and Krian are the places from whence Tin, Rattans, Canes, besides other Articles are obtained. When the Company's people, therefore, shall reside at Pulo Pinang, I shall lose the benefit of this monopoly, and I request the Captain will explain this to the Governor General and beg, as a compensation for my losses, 30,000 dollars a year to be paid annually to me as long as the Company reside at Pulo Pinang. I shall permit the free export of all sorts of Provisions and Timber for Ship-building.

Moreover, if any of the Agents of the Company make loans or advances to any of the Nobles, Chiefs or Rajahs of the Kedda Country, the Company shall not hold me responsible for any such advances. Should any one in this country become my enemy, even my own Children, all such shall be considered as enemies also of the Company: the Company shall not alter their engagements of alliance, so long as the heavenly bodies continue to perform their revolutions; and when any enemies attack us from the interior, they also shall be considered as enemies of the Company. I request from the Company, Men and Powder, Shot, Arms large and small, also Money for the purposes of carrying on the war, and when the business is settled, I will repay the advances; should these propositions be considered proper and acceptable to the Governor General, he may send a confidential agent to Pulo Pinang to reside; but if the Governor General does not approve of the terms and conditions of this engagement, let him not be offended with me. Such are my wishes to be made known to the Company, and this Treaty must be faithfully adhered to, till the most remote times.

Written on Tuesday, 24th Shawal, 1199.'

APPENDIX 2(c)

TEXT OF LETTER FROM SULTAN AHMAD TAJU'D-DIN
HALIM SHAH TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF INDIA
24th DECEMBER, 1810¹

'In the year 1199, in the time of my late Father, Mr. Light bearing on the head of submission the commands of the King of England, and the orders of the Governor General, with various splendid presents appeared in the presence of my late Father, the Rajah, and requested in the name of the King of England, and of the Governor General, the Island of Pinang, for the purpose of repairing their Ships of War, highly extolling the greatness, splendour, power, wisdom, and beneficence of His Majesty, the prosperity of the Honorable Company, and all those connected in the ties of friendship with them; promising, that the King and the Governor General would assist my Father in whatever might be required, and would prevent the Enemies of Quedah engaging in proceedings detrimental to the Country. Moreover, that they should pay rent for the Island 30,000 Dollars per Annum, and entered into sundry other engagements. My Father consulting with the Ministers, considering that the neighbouring Burmah and Siamese Nations were more powerful than Quedah, and having reflected that the King of Europe (i.e. England) was greater and more powerful than either of those nations, and that by means of the friendship of the English Company, these powers would be prevented from violence or molestation, perceived, that it would be very desirable to enter into Alliance with the Company, because the Europeans were just and regular in conducting all their affairs, and should the Burmah or Siamese Powers unjustly attempt violence, the powerful aid and protection of the Company, would enable my Father to repel the aggression. My Father was therefore extremely desirous of obtaining the friendship of the Company, under whose powerful shelter and protection, the Country might be transmitted to his descendants increased in strength. For this Country being small, and deficient in strength, would depend on the power of the Company to repel the attacks of the Siamese and Burmahs. My Father accordingly impressed with a sincere desire to obtain the friendship of the

¹From J. Anderson, *Political and Commercial Considerations Relative to the Malayan Peninsula, and the British Settlements in the Straits of Malacca, Prince of Wales Island, 1824*, pp.75-81.

Company, granted the Island of Pinang according to the request of Mr. Light, the Agent for the Governor General, and a written engagement, containing my Father's demands from the Company, was given to Mr. Light, for the purpose of being forwarded to the Governor General. After some time, Mr. Light returned to settle on the Island, bringing some Sepoys, and informed my Father, that the Governor General consented to his requests, and had sent people to settle on the Island; that the Writing from my Father had been transmitted by the Governor General to Europe, for the purpose of receiving the Royal Seal and Sanction, and that it would be returned in six Months. My Father accordingly granted permission to proceed to settle on the Island of Pinang, and sent his people to assist in the work, and his Officers to protect them from the Pirates in the commencement. My Father having waited some time, at the expiration of one year, requested the Writing from Mr. Light, who desired him to wait a little; at the end of six years no authentic writing could be obtained; he received 10,000 Dollars per Annum, but Mr. Light refused to fulfil the remainder of his engagements, and in consequence of my Father insisting upon having a writing, agreeably to his former stipulation, a misunderstanding arose between Quedah and Pinang, after which a new Treaty of Alliance was concluded.

Since that time, many Governors have been placed over Pinang, but my Father was unable to obtain a writing either from Europe, or from the Governor General. In the year 1215, my Father left the Government to my Uncle, at which time, the then Lieutenant Governor of Pinang, Sir George Leith, requested the cession of a tract of land on the opposite Shore, alledging that the Island being small, the Company's people were distressed for procuring Timber, and the raising of Cattle. My Uncle being desirous to remove the uneasiness, granted a tract (of which the boundaries were defined) accordingly, placing entire dependence on the power of the Company to protect and defend him against his Enemies, and Sir George Leith made a new Treaty, consisting of fourteen articles, and constituting the two as one Country. This, and the former Treaty, are inscribed on the Company's Records. During the whole Government of my Father and Uncle, no injury or molestation of any consequence had been sustained, nor has any one ever offered to send my letter of supplication to the King or to the Governor General. I consequently desisted, and only communicated with the several Governors of the Island in matters relating to the two Countries, but no

certain arrangement from Europe could be heard of, nor could I obtain any assurances on which I could depend.

Moreover so long as I have administered the Government of Quedah, during the time of the late King of Siam, his proceedings were just and consistent with former established custom and usage. Since the decease of the old King, and the accession of his Son to the Throne, in the year 1215, violence and severity have been exercised by the Siamese against Quedah, in demands and requisitions exceeding all former custom and usage, and which I cannot support for a length of time, the Rajahs of Quedah have been accustomed to submit to the authority in matters clearly proper and consistent with the established customs of the Government, for the sake of the preservation of the Country, being unable to contend with Siam, from the superior number of their people. During my Administration, their demands have been beyond measure increased, and heavy services have been required of me, inconsistent with the custom of the Country; these however I submitted to, as far as I have been able, for the sake of the people, and to prevent the danger of a rupture with them; how many services, unprecedented in former years, have I not performed, and what expences have I not incurred in carrying into effect their requisitions; nevertheless, I cannot obtain any good understanding with them, nor any peace, nor any termination to their injuries and oppressions; they no longer confide in me, and seek to attach blame, alledging, that I have joined with the Burmahs, with whom this year, they have made war, and their intention is to attack Quedah for the purposes of reducing the Country under their Government. I have in vain endeavoured to avert the enmity of Siam, but without any appearance of success. I have made known to the Governor of Pinang, every circumstance with relation to this Country and Siam, and have requested their advice and the assistance of the Company, on which my Father relied, because the Countries of Quedah and Pinang are as one Country, and as one Interest; when therefore Quedah is distressed, it cannot be otherwise with Pinang. The Governor advised me by all means to avoid coming to a rupture with Siam, alledging, that it was not in his power to afford me assistance, for that the Supreme Government in Europe had forbidden all interference in the wars of the neighbouring powers. Perhaps this would be improper with respect to other Countries, but Quedah and Pinang are as one Country; all the Ryots and People are much distressed by the labours necessarily imposed to avert the resentment of Siam, and every exertion on my part has been made to prevent coming to a rupture with that power, but I was unable

to submit to demands exceeding all former precedent, which induced me to apply to the Governor of Pinang for the Company's aid, to enable me to repel their demands, for my Father having transmitted to me his friendship and Alliance with the Company, it would be otherwise a reflection upon the power of the King of England, who is accounted a Prince greater and more powerful than any other. I conceive, that the Countries of Quedah and Pinang have but one interest, and perhaps the King and my friend may not have been well informed, and in consequence the Governor of Pinang has not been authorized to afford assistance, and that should they be acquainted therewith, they would consider it impossible to separate the two countries. In consequence, I request my friend to issue directions, and to forward a representation to the King, and to the Honorable Company, of the matters contained in this Letter. I request that the engagements contracted for by Mr. Light with my late Father, may be ratified, as my Country and I are deficient in strength; the favor of His Majesty the King of England extended to me, will render his name illustrious for justice and beneficence, and the grace of His Majesty will fill me with gratitude; under the power and Majesty of the King, I desire to repose in safety from the attempts of all my Enemies, and that the King may be disposed to Kindness and favor towards me, as if I were his own subject, that he will be pleased to issue his Commands to the Governor of Pinang to afford me aid and assistance in my distress and dangers, and cause a regulation to be made by which the two countries may have but one interest; in like manner I shall not refuse any aid to Pinang, consistent with my ability. I further request a writing from the King, and from my friend, that it may remain as an assurance of the protection of the King, and descend to my successors in the Government. I place a perfect reliance in the favor and aid of my friend in all these matters.'

APPENDIX 2(d)

CALCUTTA'S REPLIES TO THE RAJA OF KEDAH'S CONDITIONS¹

'To the 1st Article. This Government will always keep an armed vessel stationed to guard the island of Pinang and the coast adjacent belonging to the King of Queda.

¹ Straits Settlements Factory Records, Vol. 2, ff.67-9 (Fort William, 2 March 1786).

To the 2nd Article. All Vessels under every denomination bound to the port of Queda shall not be interrupted by the Hon'ble Company's Agent or any person acting for the Company or under their authority but left entirely to their own free will either to trade with the King of Queda or with the Agents or subjects of the Hon'ble Company.

3rd Article. The Governor-General and Council on the part of the English East India Company will take care that the King of Queda shall not be a sufferer by an English settlement being formed on the Island of Pinang.

4th Article. The Agent of the Hon'ble Company or any person residing on the island of Pinang under the Company's protection shall not make claims upon the King of Queda for debts incurred by the King's relations, Ministers, officers or Rayats. But the persons having demands upon any of the King's subjects shall have power to seize the Persons and property of those indebted to them according to the custom and usage of that country.

5th Article. All Persons residing in the country belonging to the King of Queda who shall become his enemies or commit capital offences against the state shall not be protected by the English.

6th Article. This Article will be referred for the orders of the English East India Company together with such parts of the King of Queda's requests as cannot be complied with previous to their consent being obtained.'

APPENDIX 2(c)

GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF INDIA TO RAJA OF KEDAH¹

'Your friendly letter containing a grant of Pooloo Pinang to the Hon'ble English Company was delivered to me by Captain Francis Light, the 6th February, 1786.

Captain Light also made known to me the requests of my Friend and Brother which I having the friendship and interests of my noble Friend at Heart have already transmitted to England for the approbation of the King of England and the Hon'ble English Company.

¹Straits Settlements Factory Records, Vol. 2, ff.89-90 (Fort William, 2 March 1786).

In the meantime I have deputed Captain Light to be agent for the Company and have directed him to plant the Hon'ble Company's colours upon Pooloo Pinang and to defend that island against all invaders. I have likewise ordered a ship for the defence of this island and the protection of the coast of Queda.

It is not my intention to subject to any duties or impediments the vessels or merchandise that may come to Pooloo Pinang, but to suffer every one to go and come at their pleasure and should it happen that my friend may become a sufferer by the English Company settling at Pinang I will take the same into consideration and recompense my Noble Friend and Brother.

To Captain Francis Light I have given full instructions and hope that you my Noble Friend will have every reason to be satisfied with the friendship of the English Company and the good conduct of their servants.

APPENDIX 3(a)

TRANSLATION OF A LETTER FROM THE CHIEFS AT PRY
TO THE SUPERINTENDENT OF PRINCE OF WALES ISLAND
RECEIVED THE 9th APRIL, 1791¹

'A letter of pure love and friendship not to be dissolved from the Bendara and Laxamana, Raja Wolama and Raja Mooda Ante and all the Rajas and all the Chiefs sent to our friend the Governor of Poolo Pinang whose knowledge in business is great, first for the business on which we are assembled it is by order of the King, the business of Poolo Pinang has been long in hand, how many letters have been sent and received and nothing yet determined agreeable to the desires of the King, our friend will not submit neither will we agree to the desires of our friend, therefore now we will cut the matter short. If that our friend will not send five thousand Dollars more and agree to pay 10,000 Dollars per annum for the years that are passed, and send over Toonku Petrie and if our friend does not send the Tannoos likewise if our friend will not come with us and do homage to the King, the King is not content that

¹ Straits Settlements Factory Records, Vol. 4, ff. 537-8 (FWCP, 1 June 1791).

our friend should remain any longer on Poolo Pinang therefore our friend will get away about his business quickly for Poolo Pinang is the property of the King of Queda from time immemorial, moreover if our friend attempts to stay by force God who knows all things will place the evil upon his head, we are free from blame. Us and the Raja, Raja of the Lanoons and all the Panglimas put our trust in God and our Lord by name Mahomed the last of all the Prophets. Therefore we have sent Dattoo Bunder Seralata Pallowan and Che Kadar with this final determination.¹

A true translation
F. Light

APPENDIX 3(b)

TRANSLATION OF A LETTER FROM THE CHIEFS AT PRY TO THE DATO PONGGAWA OF PRINCE OF WALES ISLAND AND RECEIVED 9th APRIL, 1791¹

Peace and health from Dattoo Bendara and Laxamana and Raja Wolama to our friend and brother Dattoo Pongawa and to all Mussulmen so with Buggnisses, Achinese, men of Menangcabo, Malays and Chuliars who dwell at Pulo Pinang under the protection of the Almighty from the commencement to the end of the world. Our brother and all the above mentioned People are acquainted with the conduct of the English who are at Pulo Pinang, that they begged the place from the King, that this place has belonged to the King from time immemorial as well as the Country of Queda, that the English agreed to many things not one of which they have performed and that many of the English do much evil to the King. Therefore the King has sent me to finish the Business. How long have we been here and how many letters have passed to and fro wherein we have submitted to a great many things because we were desirous of peace but now the English will not submit to the King's demands, therefore we have written to these English to go away from Pulo Pinang in the name of peace for when they first came it was with a good name, if they refuse and make resistance in the King's land all the evil which may arrive will rest upon them and the

¹ Straits Settlements Factory Records, Vol. 4 (Fort William, 1 June 1791).

good rest with us, God will assist us and our Lord Mahomed the Guardian of the Muslamans and the last of all Prophets.

We therefore make known to our Brother and all Muslamen whatever our desire that with our Brother they will separate from these English for if they engage in this business on the part of the English and destroy in battle the Muslamen who are with us, the blood of those who are killed will be upon those who are joined with the English and the Muslamen who commit these murders are judged by the word of God and are delivered in the Koran. If on the other hand the Muslamen who are joined with the English are killed the blame is not upon us, we are free by the word of God and his Prophet. Therefore we give this advice to our brother for the sake of our Master the Prophet."

A true translation
F. Light

APPENDIX 3(c)

TEXT OF THE TREATY OF PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP, 1791¹

In the Higyara of our Prophet 1205 year Dalakir, on the 26th of Moon Saban on the day Ahad. Whereas on this date this writing sheweth that the Governor of Poolo Pinang Vaheel of the English Company concluded Peace and Friendship with His Highness Empetuan of Queda, and all his great officers and Rayatts of the two countrys to live in peace by Sea and Land, to continue as long as the Sun and Moon gives light the Articles of Agreement are

- First The English Company will give to his Highness Empetuan of Queda Six Thousand Spanish Dollars every year for as long as the English shall continue in possession of Poolo Pinang.
- 2nd. His Highness Empetuan agrees that all kinds of Provisions wanted for Pooloo Pinang the Ships of War and the Company's Ships may be bought at Queda without impediment or being subject to any duty.
- 3rd. All slaves running from Queda to Pooloo Pinang or from Pooloo Pinang to Queda shall be returned to their owners.

¹ *Straits Settlements Factory Records*, Vol. 4, ff. 591-6 (Fort William, 1 June 1791).

- 4th. All persons in debt running from their Creditors from Queda to Pooloo Pinang or from Pooloo Pinang to Queda if they do not pay their debts their persons shall be delivered to their Creditors.
- 5th. The Empetuan will not allow Europeans of any other Nation to settle in any part of his country.
- 6th. The Company shall not receive any persons committing high Treason or rebellion to Empetuan.
- 7th. All Persons committing Murder running from Queda to Pooloo Pinang or from Pooloo Pinang to Queda shall be apprehended and returned in Bonds.
- 8th. All persons stealing chops (forgery) to be given up likewise.
- 9th. All persons Enemys to the English Company Empetuan shall not supply them with provisions.

These Nine articles are settled and concluded and peace is made between Empetuan and the English Company. Queda and Pinang shall be as one country. This done and completed by Toonkoo Sheriff Mahomed and Toonkoo Allang Ibrahim and Datoos Pongava of Tilebone, Vakeels on the part of Empetuan and given to the Governor of Pooloo Pinang Vakeel for the English Company. In this agreement whoever depart from any part herein God will punish and destroy, to him there shall be no health.

The Seals of Sheriff Mahomed and Toonkoo Allang Ibrahim and Datoos Pongava Tilebone are put to this writing with each persons handwriting. Transcribed by Hakim Bunder Pooloo Pinang.

Signed sealed and executed in Fort Cornwallis on Prince of Wales Island, this first day of May in the year of our Lord, One thousand Seven hundred and Ninety One.

A true translation,
F. Light.

APPENDIX 4(a)

THE FAMILY OF SULTAN ABDULLAH MUKARRAM SHAH¹

Sultan Abdullah had two wives, Wan Meh (who was childless) and Wan Mas, and four favourite gundek, Che Bonda, Che Mas, Chendera Sari and Bida Sari. The following were his issue:

by Wan Mas,
Tunku Pangeran
Tunku Bisnu
Tunku Petra and
six daughters

by Che Mas
Tunku Daud

by Che Bonda,
Tunku Ibrahim
Tunku Suleiman
Tunku Kusoo and
a daughter

by Chendera Sari
Tunku Ambon
Tunku Muhammed and
two daughters

by Bida Sari
two daughters

¹From J. Anderson, *Political and Commercial Considerations Relative to the Malayan Peninsula and the British Settlements in the Straits of Malacca* (Prince of Wales Island, 1824), pp. 154-5.

APPENDIX 4(b)

TRANSLATION OF A TREATY OF PEACE, FRIENDSHIP AND ALLIANCE ENTERED INTO BETWEEN SIR GEORGE LEITH, BARONET, LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF PRINCE OF WALES ISLAND, ON THE PART OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT AND THE KING OF QUEDAH, TLEAOODEEN [DIYA'U'D-DIN]¹

In the year of the Hejirat of the Prophet (the peace of the most high God be upon him) One thousand Two hundred and Fifteen, the year Ha, on the twelfth day of the month Maharrum, Wednesday. Whereas this day this writing sheweth that Sir George Leith Baronet, Lieutenant Governor of Pulo Pinang (on the part of the English Company) has agreed on and concluded a Treaty with His Majesty the Rajah Mooda of Purlis and Quedah, and all the Officers of State and Chiefs of the two Countries, to be on friendly terms by Sea and Land as long as the Sun and Moon retain their motion and splendour; the articles of which Treaty are as follow.

Article 1st. The English Company are to pay annually to His Majesty of Purlis and Quedah, Ten thousand Dollars as long as the English shall continue in possession of Pulo Pinang and the country on the opposite Coast hereafter mentioned.

Article 2nd. His Majesty agrees to give to the English Company for ever, all that part of the Sea Coast, that is between Kwala Krian and the River side of Kwala Mooda, and measuring inland from the sea side sixty Orlongs, the whole length abovementioned to be measured by people appointed by His Majesty and the Company's people. The English Company are to protect this coast from all enemies, robbers and pirates that may attack it by sea from North or South.

Article 3rd. His Majesty agrees that all kinds of provisions wanted for Pulo Pinang, the Ships of War, and Company's Ships, may be bought at Purlis and Quedah without impediment, or being subject to any duty or custom: and all boats going from Pulo Pinang to Purlis and Quedah for the purpose of purchasing provisions are to be furnished with proper Passports for that purpose to prevent impositions.

Article 4th. All Slaves running away from Purlis and Quedah to Pulo

¹J. Anderson, *Considerations*, Appendix, vi-xviii.

Pinang or from Pulo Pinang to Purlis and Quedah shall be returned to their owners.

Article 5th. All Debtors running from their Creditors from Purlis and Quedah to Pulo Pinang or from Pulo Pinang to Purlis and Quedah, if they do not pay their debts, their persons shall be delivered up to their Creditors.

Article 6th. His Majesty shall not permit Europeans of any other nation to settle in any part of his dominions.

Article 7th. The Company are not to receive any such people as may be proved to have committed rebellion or High Treason against His Majesty.

Article 8th. All persons guilty of murder, running from Purlis and Quedah to Pulo Pinang or from Pulo Pinang to Purlis and Quedah, shall be apprehended and returned in bonds.

Article 9th. All persons stealing Chops (Forgery), to be given up likewise.

Article 10th. All those who are or may become enemies to the Company, His Majesty shall not assist with provisions.

Article 11th. All persons belonging to His Majesty bringing the produce of the countries down the Rivers, are not to be molested or impeded by the Company's people.

Article 12th. Such articles as His Majesty may stand in need of from Pulo Pinang are to be procured by the Company's Agents and the amount to be deducted from the gratuity.

Article 13th. As soon as possible after the ratification of this Treaty, the arrears of gratuity now due, agreeable to the former Treaty and agreement, to His Majesty of Purlis and Quedah, are to be paid off.

Article 14th. On the ratification of this Treaty, all former Treaties and agreements between the two Governments to be null and void.

These fourteen articles being settled and concluded, between His Majesty and the English Company, the Countries of Purlis and Quedah and Pulo Pinang shall be as one Country, and whoever shall depart or deviate from any part of this agreement the Almighty punish and destroy him, he shall not prosper.

This done and completed, and two Treaties of the same tenor and date interchangeably given between His Majesty and the Governor of Pulo Pinang, and sealed with the Seals of the State Officers immediately officiating under His Majesty in order to prevent disputes hereafter.

Written by Hakim Ibrahim, Son of Sri Rajah Mooda, by order of His Majesty of exalted dignity.

Originally translated by J. SWAINE,
Malay Translator.

Revised from the original by
JOHN ANDERSON,
Malay Translator to Government.

APPENDIX 4(c)

INILAH SURAT TANDA BERJANJI DAN BERSAHABAT DIPERBUAT OLEH GOVNROR SIR GEORGE LEE SA-BELAH KAMPENI INGERIS DI-PULAU PINANG DENGAN RAJA KEDAH DIYA'U'D-DIN¹

Chap Diya' u' d- din Sultan Muda ini ma' alom sah Raja Kedah.

Kapada tahun "Ijrat'un Nabi Sal 'Allah alai al salam kekasih Tuhan yang Maha Besar atas-nya sunnah 1215 pada tahun ha pada 12 haribulan Muharram pada hari Raba'a [Rabu] ia-itu pada hari ini surat ini menyatakan Sir George Lee Baronet Lieutenant Govnor di-Pulau Pinang pehak sa-belah dari Kampeni Ingeris sudah berjanji dan memutuskan kahul sama duli Raja Muda Perlis dan Kedah dan segala Menteri2 dan Dato'2 yang dua buah negeri itu bersahabat atau di-laut atau di-darat selama dan sa-lagi ada-lah bergerak dan berchahaya matahari dan bulan dan fasal perjanjian dan kahul ini mengikut saperti yang tersebut dibawah surat ini.

Fasal yang Pertama: Kampeni Ingeris mahu bayar pada tiap2 tahun kapada Duli Raja Muda Perlis dan Kedah sa-puloh ribu rial selama Ingeris ada pegang dan dudok di-dalam Pulau Pinang dan negeri yang di-seberang kemudian ada tersebut.

Fasal Yang Kedua: Duli Yang Maha Mulia janji kasi kapada kampeni Ingeris selama2-nya itu jajaran [jajahan] laut dari Kuala Kerian sampai sa-belah Kuala Muda dan ukoran-nya dari tepi laut ka-dalam darat enam puloh relong dan segala panjang dan lebar yang sudah tersebut ini. Ke-

¹Kedah Museum, Alor Star. Jawi Text by courtesy of Dato' Wan Ibrahim Suloh, Romanized by Azmi Junid and Jamaluddin Ahmad.

mudian mahu di-sukat dengan orang Duli Yang Maha Mulia perchaya bersama2 dengan orang perchaya Kampeni dan kampeni Inggeris mahu pelihara jajahan laut ini daripada penchuri dan perumpak2 yang datang menyerang dari laut baik dari sa-belah utara atau dari sa-belah selatan.

Fasal Yang Ketiga: Duli Yang Maha Mulia janji segala jenis makanan yang ada kurang di-Pulau Pinang atau kapada kapal perang atau kapada kapal kompeni boleh di-beli segala jenis makanan itu di-Perlis dan Kedah dari Pulau Pinang. Sebab mahu membeli makanan boleh kasi surat pas supaya jangankan tipu atau inaya.

Fasal Yang Keempat: Segala budak lari dari Perlis dan Kedah ka-Pulau Pinang atau dari Pulau Pinang ka-Perlis dan Kedah dapat tiada mahu di-pulangkan kapada yang punya.

Fasal Yang Kelima: Segala orang hutang lari daripada tuan hutang-nya dari Perlis dan Kedah ka-Pulau Pinang atau dari Pulau Pinang ka-Perlis dan Kedah jikalau tiada di-bayar hutang-nya badan orang hutang itu mahu dipulangkan kapada tuan hutang-nya.

Fasal Yang Keenam: Duli Yang Mulia tiada boleh kasi bangsa orang puteh duduk di-dalam negeri yang ada di-bawah perentah duli Tuanku.

Fasal Yang Ketujuh: Kampeni tiada boleh terima segala orang yang sudah nyata salah melawan Raja atau salah besar yang lain.

Fasal Yang Kedelapan: Segala orang yang sudah salah membunuh orang lari dari Perlis dan Kedah ka-Pulau Pinang mahu ditangkap dan di-pulangkan kapada tempat-nya.

Fasal Yang Kesembilan: Segala orang menchuri chap atau membuat lanchong mahu di-pulangkan juga.

Fasal Yang Sepuluh: Segala bangsa yang jadi musuh Kampeni Duli Yang Maha Mulia tiada boleh tolong dengan makanan.

Fasal Yang Sabelas: Segala orang ra'ayat Duli Yang Maha Mulia membawa segala jenis barang2 turun sungai tiada boleh di-usek atau di-tahan oleh Kampeni atau orang-nya.

Fasal Dua Belas: Apa2 jenis barang2 Duli Yang Maha Mulia ada kekurangan atau mahu dari Pulau Pinang wakil Kampeni mahu chari kirim dan harga-nya mahu di-tolak dari sewa Pulau Pinang.

Fasal Tiga Belas: Bagaimana lekas kemudian apabila sudah di-nyatakan dan di-terangkan perjanjian dan kahul ini segala sewa yang tinggal tiada habis washil atas perjanjian yang dahulu kapada Duli Yang Maha Mulia di-Perlis dan Kedah mahu di-bayar habis.

Fasal Empat Belas: Atas di-nyatakan ini kahul dan perjanjian segala perjanjian dan kahul yang dahulu yang sudah di-buat yang kedua pehak penghulu negeri jadi batal tiada boleh di-pakai lagi.

Inilah empat belas perkara sudah tentu dan sudah di-putuskan kedua pehak Duli Yang Maha Mulia dan Kampeni Inggeris itu. Negeri Perlis dan Kedah dan Pulau Pinang jadi satu negeri dan barang siapa mungkir dan ubahkan barang suatu-nya janji dan kahul ini Tuhan Allah Ta'ala boleh hukum dan rosakkan dia-nya dan tiada boleh dapat baik di-dalam dunia.

Ini sudah di-perbuat dan di-putuskan dan di-tetapkan dua surat ini hari dan serupa di-tukar bagi kapada Duli Yang Maha Mulia dan Governor Pulau Pinang dan charat di-turunkan chap segala orang besar yang memegang perintah di-bawah Duli Yang Mulia menolahkan segala da'awa da'awi pada kemudian hari.

Surat di-perbuat hakim Ibrahim bin Seri Raja Muda dengan hukum Duli Yang Maha Mulia yang mashor dan mulia ada-nya.

Chap Hakim Ibrahim

Mula di-salin oleh Che Suhin, kemudian di-salin dan di-betulan oleh Che Anderson juru salin bahasa Melayu.

APPENDIX 5(a)

MEMORANDUM BY THE VAKEELS¹

We the Bindahara, Prime Minister of Quida, Laksamana, Admiral and Temengoong Sree Indra Wangsa having been deputed to confer, with the Honourable the Governor, deem it best to commit the substance of our communication to writing, in order, to prevent mistake and to satisfy His Majesty, Ourselves and all others concerned. We have therefore to request our friend Capt. John MacInnes to translate this Memorandum for the Governor in order that being before him, We may have a distinct reply to convey to the King. These then are the particulars of our Message.

1st. The King is most reluctant to go to war with the Raja of Perak and desires above all Things that the Governor would assist him in leading the Raja to acquiesce in the demand of Siam, but, if he should refuse, our Master intends invading Pera before the arrival of a Siamese Expedition, whose severities over the Country of Quida, he much fears. On this point we beg to know the Governor's opinion.

2nd. In the event of War he trusts to the Governor to supply him with whatsoever he may be wanting in, to carry it on with effect.

3rd. He trusts the Governor will prevent either by force or otherwise, any who may be so disposed to aid Pera, at least that any so inclined may be so threatened by letter.

4th. If however the Raja should not succeed against Pera along, a Siamese Army would necessarily be sent to assist him and Quida would be thrown into a State of confusion by the Oppressions the extent of which it is impossible now to Estimate. In such event then, it would be the Raja's wish to send all his women into the Company's Territory, there to be in security and under the protection of the British Government, while the Men remained to fulfil all the wishes of the Siamese to the extent of their ability.

10th June, 1816.

¹ Straits Settlements Factory Records, Vol. 55, unfolioed (Fort Cornwallis, 15 June 1816).

APPENDIX 5(b)

Below is a brief account by James Low of certain sources of revenue in Sultan Ahmad Taju'd-din's time.¹

'Kedah was never a rich country. Its chief products were grain, cattle, tin and rattans. The Chiefs or Rajas [Rajaz] increased their scanty legitimate revenues by exactions of various kinds, and by a monopoly of trade — consequently the bulk of the people were mere slaves dependent on the will of their despotic rulers. Forced services were perhaps one of the most grievous impositions, the individual receiving no pay. The service might be compounded for by a grain payment, equivalent to about three rupees per head. The Raja bought the grain from his subjects at his own price. There was a house tax also paid partly in grain and partly in cash, averaging about a rupee for each domicile. The tax to support the Raja's band and drums of state [nobat] was from one rupee up to two according to the ability and wealth of the inmates. House timber and thatching were supplied by the people to the Chiefs. The Ryots were bound to supply gun-powder of their own manufacture to the Chiefs. Betel leaf also supplied gratis. The Rajah's elephants were kept and fed at the ryots' expense. Debtors were dragged along with their families by the creditors at once to their houses, and if unable to pay they were kept as slaves and a fee of two dollars was paid to the Raja. If any of the Raja's slaves killed a ryot nothing was said. If a ryot, on the contrary, killed one of the Raja's slaves, he and his family became slaves to the Raja. Fines were fertile sources of oppression. Persons stealing the Raja's cattle were made slaves, as were persons indebted to the Raja's mercantile agent. The ryots had to supply provisions to the Raja or any of his officers and their followers who were attending the mosque on particular occasions. Sireh or betel growers paid a monthly tax of produce to the Chiefs. The people had to perform warlike services by sea and by land, both on account of the Rajah and as Siamese subjects in the armies of Siam. On these occasions each ryot had to carry ten guntongs of rice along with him, and when that was expended the Raja supplied provisions, but no pay. If any one resisted the order to serve he was killed.'

¹From J. Low, 'Retrospect of British policy in the Straits of Malacca, Part I, 1786-1839', *The Burney Papers*, V, i (1914) pp. 69-70.

GLOSSARY

<i>Baginda</i>	<i>His Majesty, the King</i>
<i>Bendahara</i>	<i>Prime Minister</i>
<i>Benua Siam</i>	<i>Empire of Siam</i>
<i>bersahabat</i>	<i>friendship</i>
<i>Bunga Emas dan Perak</i>	<i>Gold and Silver Flowers (ornamental plants with gold and silver leaves and flowers)</i>
<i>Chap</i>	<i>chop, stamp, insignia</i>
<i>Che (Enche)</i>	<i>a titular prefix corresponding with Mister</i>
<i>Chulia</i>	<i>South Indian Muslim usually from the Malabar coast</i>
<i>Daroolhaman</i>	<i>Abode of Peace; a term popularly affixed to</i>
[<i>Daru'l-aman</i>]	<i>Kedah</i>
<i>Dato'</i>	<i>titular designation of any great non-royal chief; lit. grandfather</i>
<i>Dato' Penggawa</i>	<i>minor territorial chief</i>
<i>derhaka</i>	<i>disloyalty or treason</i>
<i>dua</i>	<i>two</i>
<i>dua buah negeri</i>	<i>two countries, buah being the numeral coefficient</i>
<i>Duli Yang Maha Mulia</i>	<i>His Majesty</i>
<i>gundek</i>	<i>secondary wife, usually non-royal</i>
<i>Gunong</i>	<i>mountain</i>
<i>Haji</i>	<i>a titular prefix used for all Malayo-Muslims who have performed the pilgrimage to Mecca</i>
<i>jadi</i>	<i>to be, become, shall be (depending on context)</i>
<i>(men) jadi satu negeri</i>	<i>shall be as one country</i>
<i>jajahan</i>	<i>district, territory</i>
<i>jihad</i>	<i>a (holy) war</i>
<i>kampung/kampong</i>	<i>village</i>
<i>kerah</i>	<i>corvee</i>
<i>keris</i>	<i>dagger</i>
<i>kota</i>	<i>fort; centre or head-quarters with some fortifications</i>

<i>kralahom</i>	<i>the Siamese Minister of the South</i>
<i>Kuala</i>	<i>river mouth or estuary</i>
<i>Lada</i>	<i>pepper</i>
<i>Laxamana</i>	<i>Admiral</i>
<i>ma'alom</i>	<i>to be known, understood, recognised</i>
<i>menghadap</i>	<i>to make obeisance</i>
<i>Menteri</i>	<i>Minister or executive</i>
<i>Mesjid</i>	<i>mosque</i>
<i>mukim</i>	<i>parish</i>
<i>Nakodah</i>	<i>ship-master</i>
<i>negeri</i>	<i>country, kingdom, state, sultanate, land or territory, normally denoting its being under an independent ruler.</i>
<i>negeri dan jajahan²</i>	<i>country, kingdom, state, sultanate, land or territory and its dependencies</i>
<i>ta'alok-nya</i>	<i>the ceremonial royal band</i>
<i>nobat</i>	
<i>Orang Kaya</i>	<i>(a member of a class of) territorial chiefs or nobleman</i>
<i>Orang Besar</i>	<i>a Great and or Major Chief, dignitary</i>
<i>paddy, padi</i>	<i>unhusked rice</i>
<i>Pangeran</i>	<i>a title presumably of Javanese origin given to a prince of the highest rank</i>
<i>penghulu</i>	<i>headman, usually of a village or village district</i>
<i>perahu</i>	<i>undecked native ship</i>
<i>Prakhlang</i>	<i>the Siamese Minister of Foreign Affairs</i>
<i>Pulau</i>	<i>island</i>
<i>ra'ayat (rakyat)</i>	<i>subject class</i>
<i>Raja</i>	<i>Hindu generic term for ruler</i>
<i>Raja Maha Besar</i>	<i>Emperor</i>
<i>Raja Muda</i>	<i>Heir Presumptive</i>
<i>relong (orlong)</i>	<i>the linear relong is equivalent to 240 feet.</i>
<i>rial (reale)</i>	<i>the old Spanish dollar</i>
<i>sa'pakat</i>	<i>alliance</i>
<i>sampai</i>	<i>to reach, reached</i>

<i>satu</i>	<i>one</i>
<i>Sawbaw</i>	<i>Burmese term for Governor or ruler</i>
<i>setia</i>	<i>loyalty</i>
<i>Shah</i>	<i>Persian term for king or ruler; normally used as a personal honorific suffix</i>
<i>Shahbandar</i>	<i>Harbour Master and Collector of Customs</i>
<i>Sultan</i>	<i>Arabic term for king or ruler; normally used as a honorific prefix denoting an independent ruler</i>
<i>Sultan Muda</i>	<i>deputy or junior ruler</i>
<i>Sungai</i>	<i>river</i>
<i>ta'alok</i>	<i>in dependence upon</i>
<i>ta'at</i>	<i>devotion</i>
<i>tanda</i>	<i>sign, token, emblem</i>
<i>tanda sa'pakat dan bersahabat</i>	<i>token of friendship and alliance</i>
<i>Temenggong</i>	<i>Military or Police Officer, normally the latter</i>
<i>Tunku</i>	<i>Prince</i>
<i>Undang-Undang Kedah</i>	<i>Statute Laws of Kedah</i>
<i>Uparat (Uparaja)</i>	<i>Siamese for Heir-Apparent or Vice-King</i>
<i>wakil</i>	<i>agent, emissary, representative</i>
<i>Wan</i>	<i>personal prefix used by those closely related to a chief</i>
<i>Wang-na</i>	<i>Siamese colloquial name for the Uparat</i>
<i>Yang di-Pertuan</i>	<i>Malay designation for king or ruler; lit. 'He who is made Lord'</i>
<i>Yang di-Pertuan Muda</i>	<i>deputy or junior ruler</i>

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