
THE DUTCH



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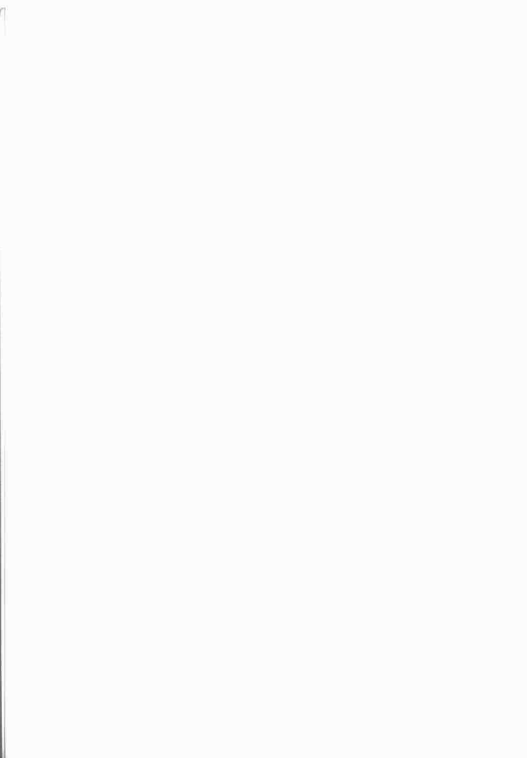
PREFACE

Our country is well known as a country which was colonized. The colonialists had brought about some good and bad effects to the people of Malaysia today.

Besides that, there are immigrants of various races who have now become part of the people of this country.

These impact of colonialism and the migration of people of various races have made Malaysia unique.

This historical series is published to help students of primary and lower secondary schools to enhance their understanding of the history of our country.



THE DUTCH

The Dutch were the second group of people from the West to colonize the Malay Peninsula. Just like the Portuguese, the Dutch came to the East to obtain spices from the Archipelago of Spices.

The Dutch bought spices and other goods from Portuguese traders at the port of Lisbon. Lisbon was the capital of Portugal. The Dutch became the middlemen for the distribution of goods from the East to Europe.

In 1589, the port of Lisbon was closed to Dutch merchants by King Philip II. King Philip II did this

because the Dutch had rebelled against Portugal. They rebelled because of their dissatisfaction over his rule in Holland.

King Philip II's action caused the Dutch to lose their earnings. Therefore, the Dutch decided to find for themselves the route to the East to get the supply of goods needed.

The wish began a reality with the availability of vast knowledge regarding the sea route to the East. There were also capable navigators and fine ships equipped with all the navigation equipments.

Therefore, voyages to the East began in 1596, with the first voyage being led by Cornelius de Houtman. Cornelius de Houtman sailed through the Indian Ocean and the Straits of Sunda. They did not pass through the Straits of Melaka because it was controlled by the Portuguese.

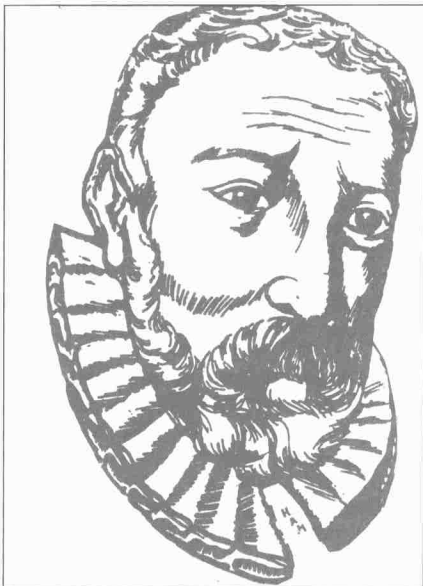
In the end, Cornelius de Houtman managed

to arrive at Bantam in Java. This was a great success for the Dutch. They wanted to wipe out the Portuguese empire. Furthermore, at that time the strength of the Portuguese in the East was declining.

The Dutch wanted to monopolize the spice trade in the East which was controlled by the Portuguese. The Portuguese had full control over the spice trade in the East, that is the Archipelago of Spices. The Dutch also wanted to strengthen their political status by controlling the trade in the East.

Therefore, the Dutch voyaged to the East to compete side by side with the Portuguese. They hoped to wipe out the Portuguese monopoly over the spice trade.

They wanted to buy the spices at low prices and sell them at high prices in Europe. The spices had attracted the power tussle between the countries of the West in the Malay Archipelago.



Cornelius de Houtman

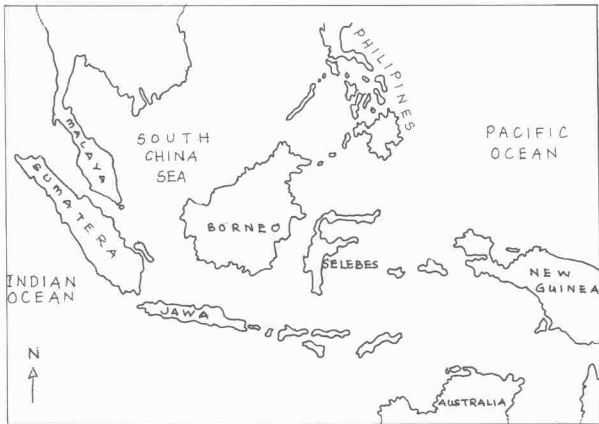
Seeking religious freedom was also one of the reasons the Dutch came to the East. The Dutch were Protestant Christians. The Protestants were of a new denomination which was against the Catholic denomination.

In the early 16th century, the Spaniards were in power in Holland. The Spaniards were Catholic Christians. This caused the Dutch who were Protestant Christians to be oppressed cruelly. The Dutch were enraged.

The Dutch hated the Spaniards. They tried to chase the Spaniards away from Holland. However, they failed.

The failure made them determined to leave Holland and come to the East. They wanted to explore the East.

After arriving in the East, the Dutch set up the Dutch East India Company in 1602. Their activities centred around Betawi. All activities



The Malay Archipelago in 18th century

like the running of business, cruising activities and the signing of treaties with the local authorities were carried out by the Dutch East India Company.

With the setting up of the Dutch East India Company, the position of the Dutch in the East became stronger. The company was a consortium of all the companies in Holland.

The company aimed to monopolize the spice trade in Southeast Asia. The company was fully sponsored by the Dutch government.

Later, the Dutch continued striving to threaten the position of the Portuguese in Melaka. The Dutch established Bantam as the main trading centre of the East India Company. A Governor General was appointed in Bantam to represent the East India Company. Pieter Both was the first Governor General.

In their effort to capture Melaka, the Dutch



The Dutch East India Company's Symbol (V.O.C.)

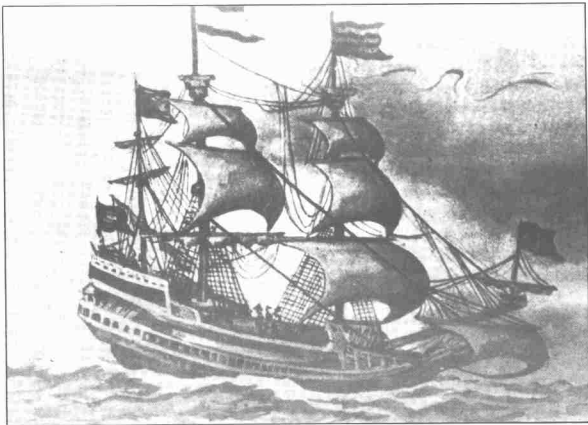
started to strengthen their position in Jawa. Betawi was made as the main trading centre in Southeast Asia. The Straits of Sunda was turned into a trading passage that was safe from the interference of the Portuguese.

As a result, trading in Melaka declined. Melaka incurred heavy losses because traders flocked to Betawi. The Portuguese were depressed.

In the end, Betawi replaced Melaka as the main trading centre in the region. As a result, the Dutch gained a great profit. Their hope of monopolizing the spice trade in the East had succeeded.

When their position was strong, the Dutch intended to capture Melaka from the Portuguese. They were worried that other countries from the West would conquer Melaka before them.

Therefore, the Dutch made preparations to attack Melaka and force the Portuguese out of Melaka.



The Dutch Ship

They wanted to turn Melaka into their activity centre.

Among the reasons the Dutch wanted to capture Melaka was that they did not want Melaka to compete with Betawi. They had the opinion that the development of the port of Melaka should be controlled. They did not want Melaka to threaten their position.

Besides that, the Dutch planned to control the spice trade in the East. Before that, the trade was in the hands of the Portuguese. The Dutch did not want other countries to take control of the trade.

The Dutch did not want any competition the spice trade from the other western countries. Therefore, they thought it right to capture Melaka. When they had forced the Portuguese out of Southeast Asia, their position would be safe.

Attacks were carried out to capture Melaka. In



The A Famosa

1602, the Dutch launched the first attack under Steven Van de Hagen.

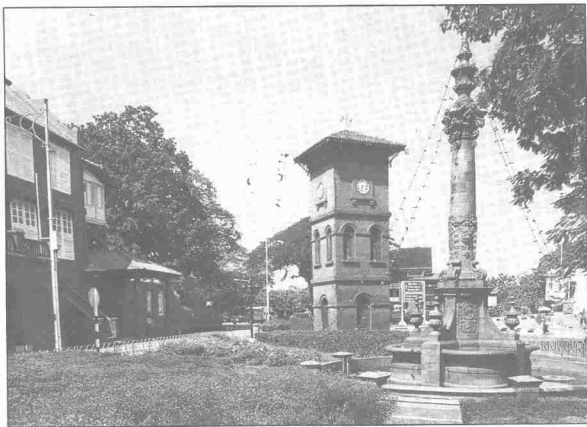
The Dutch surrounded A Famosa, the Melaka fortress. Unfortunately, they could not penetrate the A Famosa fortress which was strong. Thus, the first attack failed.

The failure of the first attack enraged the Dutch further. They continued with their efforts to capture Melaka. They tried to get the support of the Malay rulers to help them.

The Dutch had the support of Johor. Johor had for a long time wanted to capture Melaka to regain the rights of the Malay Sultanate of Melaka.

A treaty was signed in 1606 between Admiral Carrellius Mteliett de Songe and Johor.

According to the treaty, Johor was prepared to assist the Dutch in attacking Melaka. When the Dutch



The Stadthuys

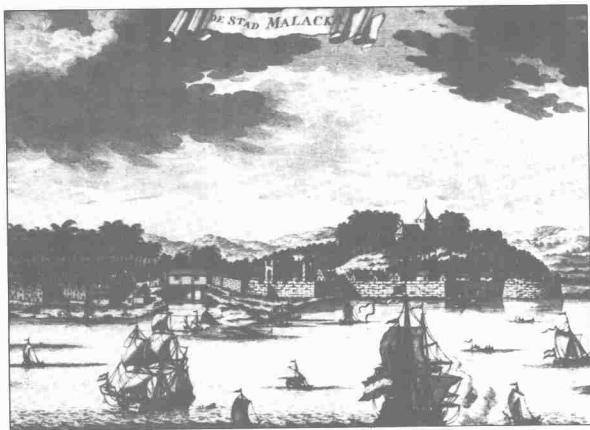
wanted to attack Melaka in that year, Johor broke its promise. The Dutch had to cancel the attack.

The Dutch later decided to take their own action on the Portuguese in Melaka. From 1606 to 1636, the Dutch attacked Portuguese ships in the Straits of Melaka. They managed to destroy the ships.

These attacks strengthened the Dutch. Although they failed to attack Melaka, they managed to weaken the Portuguese trade in the Straits of Melaka. When their trade weakened, the Portuguese were unable to administer Melaka effectively. This was a smart tactic of the Dutch.

In 1637, the Dutch signed another treaty with Johor. Johor agreed to attack Melaka. Johor would attack by land while the Dutch would attack by sea.

The attack was arranged by the Dutch Governor General in Betawi, that was, Anthony van Dieman. This attack too had to be cancelled because



The port of Melaka

disturbances occurred in Ceylon which was colonized by the Dutch.

The Dutch and Johor finally carried out an attack on Melaka in June 1640. The attack lasted for about six months. The Dutch army attacked the coastal area of Melaka. This time the Dutch succeeded in attacking the Portuguese. The Portuguese were forced into the A Famosa fortress.

Both sides were faced with problems. The Dutch lost their senior army officers. As for the Portuguese, they were starving because there was a shortage in the food supply. Whatever that could be found in the fort was turned into food by the Portuguese, like rats, snakes and others.

In the end, in January 1641, the Dutch launched the final assault on the A Famosa fortress. Captain Caertanue was chosen as the commander. On 16 January 1641, the Portuguese had to surrender.



The Dutch Fortress in Pulau Pangkor

Then A Famosa fortress was handed over to the Dutch. This ended the Portuguese rule for 130 years over Melaka.

The victory of the Dutch in capturing Melaka was helped by the Portuguese Governor who had switched side. He was bribed to surrender. Therefore, the last respect was given to this Governor. He was buried with military honours in appreciation of his deceitful act.

After capturing Melaka, the Dutch arranged a few suitable plans to develop Melaka. The Dutch repaired and reinforced those buildings that had been destroyed in the battle with the Portuguese.

A few new buildings were also constructed. Among these buildings was the Stadthuys building. This building was the Dutch administration centre in the Malay Peninsula. Stadthuys was also called the Red Building.

The Governor General in Betawi became the



Padi Field

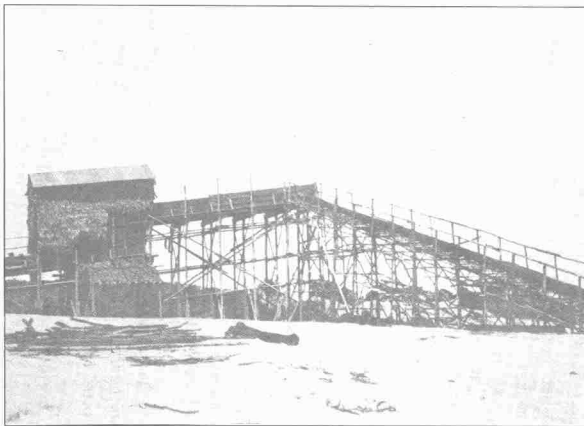
highest Dutch ruler. His work in Melaka was carried out by the Council of Dutch Officers in Melaka.

This council helped the governor in his administration tasks in Melaka. The council was represented by a few important people like the Trade Leaders. The Trade Leaders managed the trade at the port of Melaka and acted as garrison leaders.

Although they had captured Melaka, the Dutch did not intend to fully develop Melaka. The Dutch were worried that Melaka would compete with Betawi. The Dutch had only wanted to wipe out the Portuguese.

Betawi was the trading centre for the Dutch in the East. Therefore, Melaka was no longer the focus of traders. Melaka started to decline.

The Dutch only paid attention to Melaka because of the importance of the Straits of Melaka.



Tin mine

They only used Melaka as a base to monitor the passages of foreign merchant vessels in the Straits of Melaka. The traders were directed to trade at Betawi.

Whoever traded in Melaka was subjected to high tax and expensive goods. This caused those traders who used to trade in Melaka to look for other ports in Sumatera for their trading.

The port of Melaka was no longer the focus of the traders. The interest of the Dutch was only to use the port of Melaka as the collection centre for the quality commodities found in the Malay Peninsula.

As for religion, the Dutch gave freedom to the people of Melaka. They could choose whatever religion they preferred. They did not oppress the Islamic faith as the Portuguese had done.

However, the Portuguese who were of the Catholic faith were oppressed. The Catholic denomi-

nation was in conflict with the Protestant denomination to which the Dutch belonged.

To spread the Protestant Christian faith, the Dutch set up the Christ Church. Christ Church was the first Protestant church in the Malay Peninsula. The Dutch destroyed Catholic churches built by the Portuguese.

As soon as they had captured Melaka, the Dutch decided to rule directly the territories near them. They forced the rulers to pay tribute.

The Dutch wanted to control the territories which produced tin in the Malay Peninsula. Ships that carried tin had to have permits. For this reason, since the beginning, the Dutch established ties with Perak, Kedah and Naning.

Since 1575, Perak had become the protectorate of Aceh in northern Sumatera. According to the treaty signed in 1639, Aceh allowed the Dutch to buy tin from Perak. Since the Dutch

occupied Melaka in 1641, they wanted the Sultan of Perak to sell all the tin to them.

The Sultan of Perak refused to do so. The Dutch were furious. The estuary of Sungai Perak was surrounded. However, the efforts of the Dutch failed.

In 1650, the Dutch signed another treaty with Aceh. According to this treaty, the Dutch and Aceh controlled the tin trade in Perak. Other traders were not allowed to involve themselves in the tin trade.

This caused the relationship between Aceh and the Indian traders to turn sour. The Indian traders had been trading with the Perak people for a long time. Other traders were against the Dutch too. As a result, in 1651 the Dutch factory in Perak was destroyed.

The following move of the Dutch was to sign another two treaties with Perak, in 1653 and 1655.

The Sultan of Perak still refused to fulfil the wish of the Dutch.

In 1659, the Aceh-Dutch Treaty was signed. According to this treaty, the Dutch were allowed to control two thirds of the tin trade in Perak. The Sultan of Perak went against the Dutch because of dissatisfaction over the treaty.

The Dutch became very angry with the Sultan of Perak. They used force against him. The Sultan of Perak had to sell tin to the Dutch from 1679.

As a result, the tin trade between Aceh and Perak declined whereas the trade between Perak and the Dutch increased.

The Dutch built their defence stockades in Pulau Pangkor and on the river banks of Sungai Perak. They stopped the local people from selling tin ore to other traders. However, their efforts failed because the Dutch stockades were constantly under attack by the local people.

The relationship between the Dutch and Kedah also started because of tin. In 1642, the Dutch signed a treaty with Kedah. In the treaty, the Kedah Sultan agreed to sell part of the tin produced to the Dutch.

The Kedah Sultan did not keep his promise and this enraged the Dutch. The Dutch army attacked the Kedah coast. This action of the Dutch was a wasted effort because Kedah was situated far to the north. The Dutch who were stationed in Melaka had difficulties keeping watch on Kedah.

The Dutch continued with their efforts in the trade. In 1644, the Dutch made a treaty with Siam. Through this treaty, the Siamese government allowed the Dutch to trade in Kedah freely. At that time, Kedah was a protectorate of Siam.

What was wanted by the Dutch was not totally fruitful. This was because Siam's control over Kedah was minimal. The Dutch failed to control fully the tin trade in Kedah.

Besides Perak and Kedah, the Dutch also had ties with Naning. The Dutch's relationship with Perak and Kedah was based on tin. The relationship with Naning was based on rice production.

Naning was part of Melaka's colony when the Portuguese captured Melaka. Naning was situated at the northern boundary of Melaka. Most of the people in Naning were the Minangkabau people.

After taking over Melaka in 1641, the Dutch signed a treaty with the headman of Naning. The Naning headman agreed to supply 10% of its rice production to the Dutch in Melaka.

Actually, the people of Naning were angry with the Dutch for treating their area as part of Melaka. Attack after attack was launched on the Dutch.

In 1645, a group of Dutchmen were attacked and killed by the Minangkabau people. The Dutch

counter attacked. The people of Naning were defeated. In the end, a treaty was signed in 1646.

After that, the Dutch started to meddle in the affairs of Naning. In 1679, the Dutch interfered in the appointment of the rulers of Naning. Naning became part of the colonized area of the Dutch in Melaka.

Throughout the Dutch occupation, not much progress was brought to Melaka. This was because the Dutch paid more attention to Betawi. The Dutch were worried that Melaka would become a competitor to Betawi which had just started to develop. Melaka was treated only as a place to gather goods from the Malay Peninsula.

As a result, the port of Melaka declined. Port facilities were also not taken care by the Dutch. Ships that traded in Melaka were subjected to high taxes. This caused many traders to leave Melaka and search for other new ports.

Melaka also fell because of the monopoly of the spice trade practised by the Dutch. The monopoly policy enraged other traders like the Chinese, Indian and Muslim traders.

The Dutch did not want other traders to interfere in the spice trade in the Straits of Melaka. As a result, these traders moved to trade at other ports in Sumatera.

Piracy was widespread in the Straits of Melaka. Piracy became one of the reasons for the fall of Melaka. Merchant vessels were constantly attacked by the pirates.

The Dutch did not secure the Straits of Melaka firmly. This was because there were no competent administrators. The Dutch officers cared more about their own interests. They took bribes and misappropriated funds.

The Dutch ruler in Betawi did not pay any attention at all to these problems. Therefore, the

importance of port of Melaka declined further. The Dutch who neglected Melaka had caused the port to become shallower because of the collection of mud from Sungai Melaka.

Efforts to deepen the port again were not carried out. Big ships found it difficult to berth at the Melaka port. This caused merchants vessels to stay away from Melaka.

At the time when the Dutch were ruling Melaka, the British entered into the Straits of Melaka area. The British wanted a place to keep watch over the Straits of Melaka.

The British took Pulau Pinang in 1786. Francis Light occupied Pulau Pinang after cheating the Kedah Sultan, Sultan Abdullah. Later, it was found that Pulau Pinang was hard to develop. It was situated far to the north.

The British tried to enter the Dutch territory. They took over Singapore in 1819 from Sultan Husin

of Johor. Stamford Raffles occupied Singapore in 1819.

The action of the British enraged the Dutch. Singapore was located under the Dutch territory. A dispute erupted between the British and the Dutch over the occupation of Singapore.

However, the British and the Dutch government in Europe managed to settle the dispute. A treaty was signed between the British and the Dutch governments. The treaty was called the London Treaty and was signed in 1824.

According to this treaty, the Dutch recognized Singapore as belonging to the British. Melaka was also handed over to the British. That was how the Malay Peninsula fell into the hands of the British. The Dutch retreated to Indonesia.

The Dutch occupation of the Malay Peninsula did not leave many effects. This was because the Dutch paid more attention to Betawi. There were

buildings built by the Dutch as administration centres.

Besides the Stadthuys building, built by the Dutch, there were also stockades constructed in Pulau Pangkor, Kuala Selangor and others. These stockades were used as shelters and defence from enemy threats. These stockades still exist today and have become tourist attractions.

