

THE SIAMESE

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PREFACE

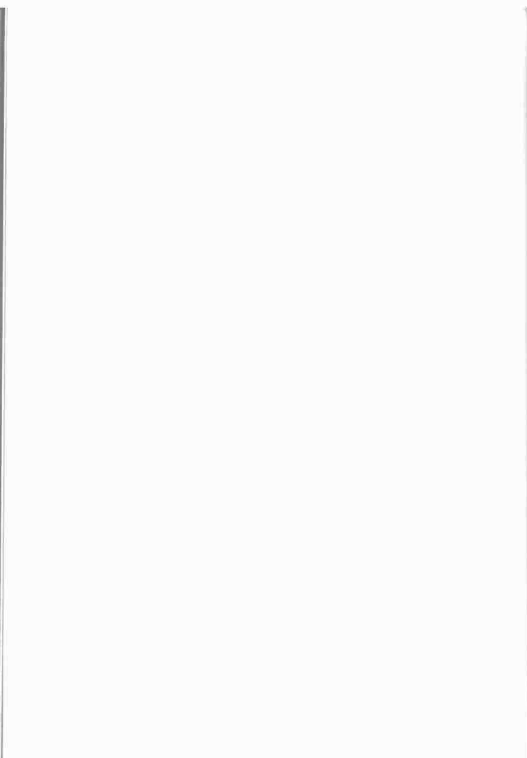
Our country is well known as a country which was colonized. The colonialists had brought about some good and bad effects to the people of Malaysia today.

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.

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THE SIAMESE

The Jawa Island was situated south to the Malay Peninsula. It was ruled by a number of ancient governments. The last was Majapahit which was established in 1292.

You must have heard stories about King Hayam Wuruk before. During his reign, the Majapahit government conquered almost all the states in the Malay Archipelago. This included the Malay Peninsula. The well known Prime Minister then was Pateh Gajah Mada.

By the end of the 14th century, the Majapahit

government started to fall and soon ceased to exist. Since the fall of Majapahit, Siam started to expand her territory to the south. Temasik or Singapore became her colonial territory. The Ruler of Ligor, who was the representative of the Siamese government in Bangkok, appointed Temagi as the ruler of Temasik.

Parameswara originated from Palembang, Sumatera. He failed to defeat the Majapahit government. When he escaped from Palembang, he was given protection by Temagi.

Because he wanted power to rule over Temasik, Parameswara killed Temagi. The Siamese government was furious with Parameswara's act. They wanted to kill Parameswara. The Siamese government sent her army to Temasik.

Parameswara escaped to the north and ended up establishing Melaka in 1400. The threat from Siam persisted even after Parameswara founded Melaka. Parameswara had to send 1.5 kilogram

of gold as tribute to Siam. The gift prevented the Siamese from carrying out any further threat on Melaka.

Parameswara knew that the tribute he sent to Siam could only secure temporary freedom. If Melaka were to stop sending the tribute, Siam would attack Melaka again.

Therefore, Parameswara started to establish diplomatic relationships with other larger nations. This was to ensure that Siam would not attack Melaka again.

In October 1403 a mission from China, under the command of Admiral Yin Ching, arrived in Melaka. Parameswara took this opportunity to request for protection from China. Melaka came under the protection of China.

The second mission from China arrived in 1409 under the command of Admiral Cheng Ho. Parameswara made return courtesy visits to China



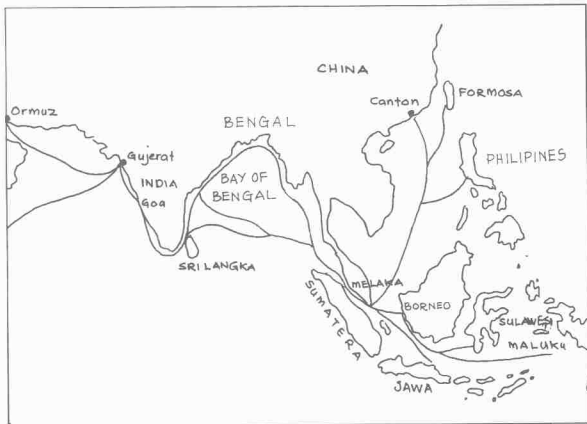
The map, showing the empire of Majapahit

in 1411 and 1414. Melaka became stronger under the protection of China. Attacks from Siam were foiled with assistance from China.

In 1443, disturbances occurred in Melaka. Power struggle erupted between Raja Kassim and Raja Ibrahim. This was an opportunity for Siam to attack Melaka. Siam attacked from Muar. Bendahara Tun Perak defeated the Siamese attack.

Siam attacked Melaka again in 1456. They launched their attack from Batu Pahat. The attack was foiled by the army from Melaka under the command of Bendahara Tun Perak. Bendahara Tun Perak was well known as a wise leader.

To overcome attacks from Siam, Bendahara Tun Perak advised the Sultan to maintain good relationships with China. A mission was sent to China in 1458. A friendship mission was also sent to Siam. Siam stopped their invasion of Melaka.



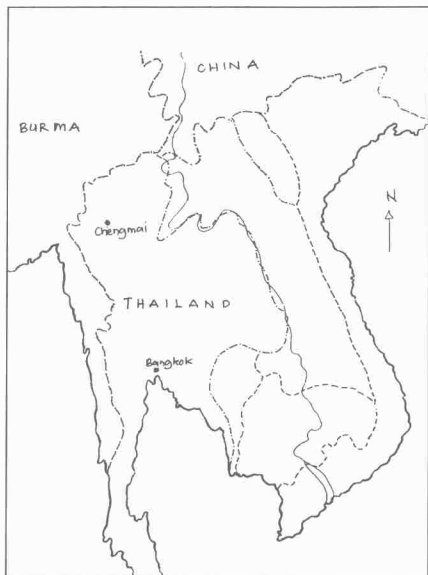
The map of Melaka

During the reign of Sultan Mansur Syah, Bendahara Tun Perak started to expand the empire of Melaka. Pahang was used as a stepping stone for Melaka to extend her authority over Kelantan and Terengganu. The Siamese government could not care less about Melaka's expansion. At that time, the Siamese were busy with their own domestic problems.

After the situation improved, the Siamese tried to regain Pahang. Siam lost in her battle with Burma. Melaka seized this opportunity to expand her territory to Pattani, south of Siam. This occurred from the year 1498 till 1500.

The defeat of Siam showed that Siam was no longer a threat to Melaka. This gave Melaka the opportunity to capture the surrounding states one after another. Melaka progressed to become a trade centre and also a propagation centre for Islam.

The countries under the protection of Siam



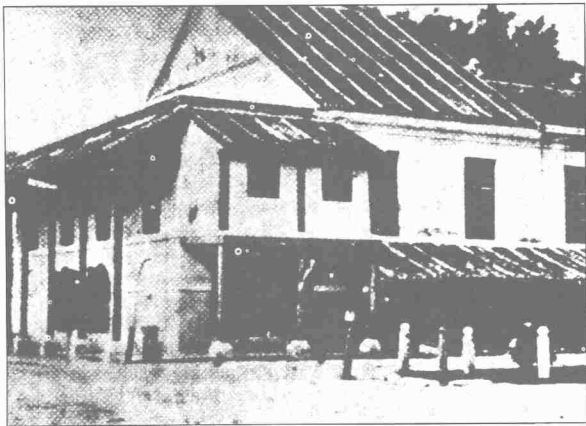
The map of Siam

were forced to send gold bouquets to the Siamese ruler every year. The reason for this was to gain protection from Siam if there was a threat from other countries. These countries would be safe from enemy threat.

In 1786, the Sultan of Kedah, Raja Abdullah, offered Pulau Pinang to the British East India Company without the consent of Siam. This angered the Siamese. Siam had treated Kedah as one of her colonial territories.

The Sultan of Kedah asked the British to help him to free Kedah from the oppression of the Siamese. Kedah no longer wanted to send gold bouquets to the Siamese King.

Kedah had long been under the colonization of Siam. Kedah constantly sent gold bouquets to Siam. In the 18th century, the Siamese were in battle with the Burmese. The Siamese government became weak.



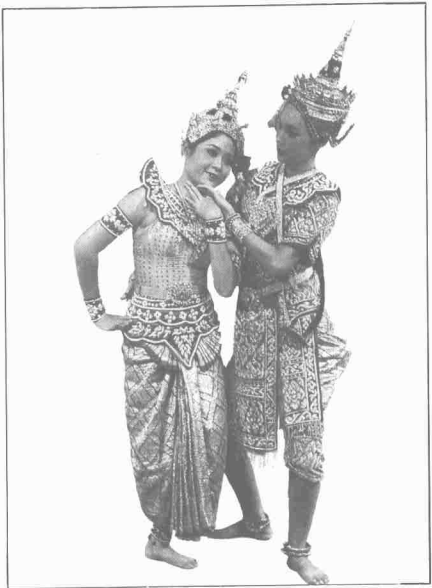
The British East-India Company's Headquarters in Pulau Pinang

Since then, the sultans of Kedah stopped sending gold bouquets to Bangkok. In the early 19th century, Siam became strong again and demanded the return of Kedah, Kelantan and Terengganu. They were referred to as the Northern States. They were situated near Siam.

In 1818, Siam commanded Kedah to attack Perak and forced her to send tribute to Siam. Kedah which was on friendly terms with Perak had to follow Siam's directive.

Kedah captured Perak. This made Kedah weak. At that time, Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin was the Sultan of Kedah. When Perak was captured, the Sultan of Perak was forced to send gold bouquets to Siam.

In 1821, the King of Siam accused the Kedah Sultan of conspiring with the Burmese to oppose Siam. The Kedah Sultan was also accused of not wanting to help the Siamese in their battle against the Burmese.



The Siamese dance

Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin Halim Syah was directed to have an audience with the Siamese King in Bangkok to answer those charges. The Kedah Sultan refused to obey because he feared the Siamese King.

The Kedah Sultan's action made the Siamese King angry. Siam attacked Kedah. The Kedah Sultan had to escape to Pulau Pinang to seek protection.

The Kedah Sultan and his followers received protection from the British. Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin requested the help of the British to fight against the Siamese. However, his request was turned down. The British did not want to interfere with the affairs of the Malay states.

The attack from Siam caused anxiety and fear amongst the British officers and traders. The Siamese army tried to intrude into Seberang Prai. They retreated immediately when a troop of the British army was dispatched from Pulau Pinang. The invasion was stopped.



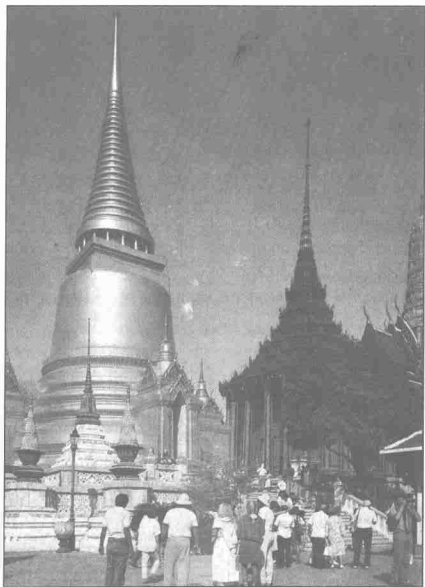
Pagoda – Siamese influence

The British did not want to help the Kedah Sultan to attack Siam for various reasons. The disturbances at the Indian-Burmese border had caused misunderstandings between the Burmese and the British. War could erupt between the British and the Burmese.

Therefore, the British needed a friend or an ally, which would not side with the enemy, like Siam. Siam was known for her neutrality. If Siam had sided with Burma, it would have been a loss to the British government in India. As a matter of fact, Burma was also Siam's enemy.

Besides that, the British also wanted to establish a trade relationship with the Siamese government. Till then, the Siamese government was practising a closed-door policy. Closed-door policy means not wanting to have any contact with foreign countries.

The British wanted to have a good relationship with the Siamese government. It hoped that



Buddhist Temple in Thailand

the Siamese government would open her door for British trade in that country. The British knew that Siam was rich in commodities like tin ore, sandalwood, camphor, gold, silver and ruby. The British wanted all these.

During Siam's attack, the British stayed neutral. The British was observing the stand of not getting involved in wars. This stand aimed to maintain the friendship with the Siamese for the purpose of trade.

However, after granting protection to Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin Halim Syah, the British were in a fix. The British wanted to establish a good relationship with the Siamese government. On the other hand, they also had to consider the treaty signed between Francis Light and the Kedah Sultan in 1791. According to this treaty, the British had to protect Kedah from the attacks of her enemies.

If the British were to take sides, it would offend

the other party. In the end, the British decided to maintain a good relationship with Siam.

This was because the people of Pulau Pinang depended on Kedah for their food supply. Since Kedah was Siam's colony, the British was worried that Siam would stop the supply of food from reaching Pulau Pinang.

In 1822, the British authority in Calcutta, India, sent John Crawford to Siam. John Crawford's main task in Siam was to obtain more trading concessions. They also wanted Siam's recognition on the British occupation of Pulau Pinang.

Besides that, it was also John Crawford's duty to obtain as much information as possible on the strength of the Siamese. He also made an effort to restore the Kedah Sultan to his throne.

John Crawford's mission failed to achieve its goal. He failed to obtain any trading concession from the Siamese government. The Siamese

government also refused to restore the Kedah Sultan to his throne.

However, John Crawford was successful in obtaining Siam's recognition on the British occupation of Pulau Pinang. Information on the strength of the Siamese was also gathered. Siam was not as strong as the British had thought.

In 1822, Selangor helped Perak to break free from Siam's oppression. In 1824, the King of Ligor planned to regain Siam's control over Perak and Selangor. The King of Ligor made plans to attack Perak and Selangor.

In August 1824, Robert Fullerton became the new Governor of Pulau Pinang. The British authority in India instructed all governors of Pulau Pinang to abstain from meddling in the affairs of the Malay states.

Fullerton did not heed this directive. He wanted to stop the intrusion of Siam on the Malay states.

Governor Fullerton issued a warning to the King of Ligor not to invade Perak and Selangor. Fullerton sent a British gunship to frighten the King of Ligor. The King of Ligor had to cancel his plan.

After he had succeeded in preventing the King of Ligor from attacking Perak and Selangor, Fullerton sent Captain Henry Burney to Ligor in 1825.

Captain Henry Burney arrived at the right moment, as the King of Ligor was preparing to invade Perak by land.

Captain Henry Burney warned the King of Ligor that he would suffer the consequences if the plan was carried out. The warning frightened the King of Ligor.

The following year 1826, the Burney Treaty was signed. According to the treaty, the Siamese government and the British agreed to recognize

the sovereignty of Perak. Both parties could send missions to Perak but were not allowed to intrude or send their army.

The British, on the other hand, recognized the Siamese rule over Kedah and promised not to help the Kedah Sultan to regain his throne. The British also agreed not to allow the Kedah Sultan to stay in Pulau Pinang, Seberang Prai, Perak or Burma.

The Kedah Sultan was mistreated as a result of the Burney Treaty. He was instructed to move to Melaka. He tried to recapture Kedah several times. His attempts were blocked by the British.

After the signing of the Burney Treaty, the Sultan of Perak planned to stop sending gold bouquets to Siam. The King of Ligor sent an ambassador, accompanied by a small army to Perak.

This was to force the Sultan of Perak to send



The map of Siam and Burma

gold bouquets to Siam. Governor Fullerton asked for an explanation from the King of Ligor on his purpose of sending the army to Perak.

The King of Ligor could not provide a satisfactory answer. Captain James Low was instructed to go to Perak. His duty was to stop the invasion of the King of Ligor and to drive away the Siamese from Perak. Captain James Low had an audience with the Sultan of Perak. He assured the Sultan of Perak of the British's willingness to protect him and of the independence of Perak.

The Sultan of Perak was cautious of the actions of the British because he was worried over the Siamese King's moves. He was worried that he would face the same fate as the Sultan of Kedah. Therefore, he asked the British to sign a treaty of friendship.

Captain James Low agreed to the request. On 8 October 1826, James Low signed the treaty with the Sultan of Perak. The treaty was known as the Low Treaty.



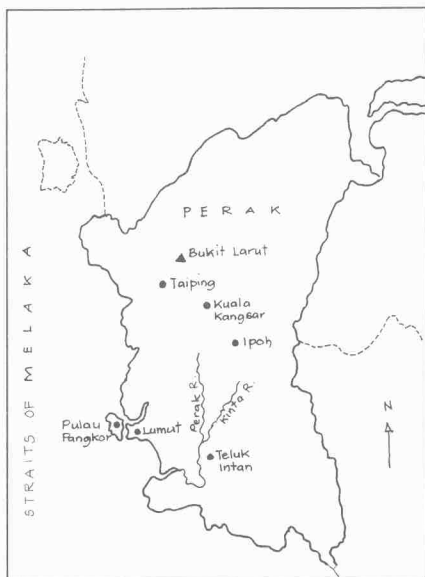
Pulau Pangkor today

According to the treaty, the Sultan of Perak would stop sending gold bouquets to Siam or any other countries. The British agreed to help the Sultan of Perak should there be any country which tried to meddle in the affairs of Perak.

The Sultan of Perak would not allow ambassadors or army troops to enter Perak, if they tried to interfere with her domestic affairs. Foreign traders were allowed to trade freely in Perak.

With the treaty, Perak lost her control over the Dinding district. The Pangkor Island and other surrounding islands of the coast of Perak were handed over to the British.

As a result of the Burney Treaty, the British instructed Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin to move to Melaka. The Sultan refused to move. Therefore, the British authority withheld his pension payment temporarily. The British threatened to use force on the Sultan to make him move to Melaka.



The map of Perak

In the end, the Sultan agreed to move.

Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin never gave up hope in his effort to regain the throne of Kedah. The Sultan and his men launched three attacks on Siam from 1829 to 1838. The Siamese managed to foil the attacks.

The success of the Siamese was due to the assistance from the British. The British warships surrounded the coast of Kedah. This prevented supplies and assistance from the sea to reach Kedah.

This prevented the Sultan's men from receiving the assistance needed. The British did not treat Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin fairly. As a result, many British traders objected to this.

After the death of the King of Ligor in 1840, the Siamese government changed its policy towards Kedah. In 1841, Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin sent his son, Tengku Anom, to Bangkok. He

persuaded Siam to return the throne of Kedah. The British supported the effort.

In the end, the King of Siam, Rama III, agreed to return the throne of Kedah. Raja Ahmad Tajuddin was reinstated as the Sultan in 1842. King Rama III realised that the constant attacks from the Kedah Sultan would not benefit Siam.

However, Kedah became smaller because Perlis was separated as a different state.

The first ruler of Perlis was Syed Husin Jamallullail. He was crowned in Bangkok with the title *Phya Sungkeram Rammu Wisit Wilis Asmara Phya Perlis*. The Raja of Perlis was required to send gold bouquets as tribute. The tribute was sent once every three years.

In Kelantan, in 1800, a civil war erupted between the ruling sultan, Tengku Muhamad and his cousin Long Muhamad. Tengku Muhamad withdrew to Terengganu. Tengku Muhamad



The map, showing Dinding and Pulau Pangkor

was the prince of Terengganu and also the son-in-law of Long Yunus.

After Tengku Muhamad had withdrawn to Terengganu, Long Muhamad, son of Long Yunus, was installed as the Sultan of Kelantan. The title he used was Sultan Muhamad I.

Sultan Muhamad I realized that his throne was not secure because of the threat from Terengganu. Tengku Muhamad who had withdrawn to Terengganu could launch an attack on Kelantan anytime. Therefore, Sultan Muhamad I asked for the help from Siam.

In 1832, Sultan Muhamad sent a mission to Siam to ask for assistance. An agreement was struck. Sultan Muhamad would send tribute to Siam in return for Siam's help. Since then, Kelantan came under the protection of Siam until 1909.

Siam also took control of Terengganu. During the 1860's, Sultan Mansur helped the Siamese

King to defeat the King of Ligor. After the victory, Siam gave part of the booty to Sultan Mansur.

Sultan Mansur treasured the gift from the Siamese King. He conferred with all his headmen and decided to send a gift in the form of a gold bouquet to the Siamese King, once every three years.

However, the tribute did not mean that Terengganu was Siam's protectorate. Only Siam thought of it this way.

The British succeeded in controlling the Malay states from 1874. The first state was Perak with the signing of the Pangkor Treaty. This was followed by Selangor, Negeri Sembilan and Pahang.

After controlling these states, the British were still not satisfied. They wanted to control those which were still under the Siamese rule — Kedah, Kelantan, Perlis and Terengganu.



Kato, Bhutan today

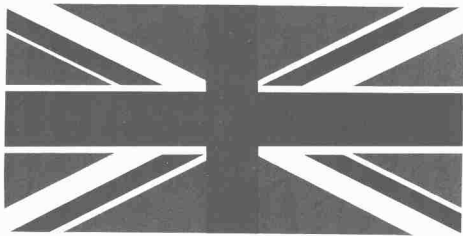
In 1909, a treaty was signed between the British and the Siamese. The Siamese agreed to hand over to the British the control of Kedah, Kelantan, Terengganu and Perlis. The sultans of these states had no prior knowledge of the treaty.

From 1909, the Siam's rule over these Northern States ended. However, Siam was always interested in regaining the control over these states.

The opportunity came in 1941. The Japanese made a pact with the Siamese. Siam would not obstruct the Japanese invasion on the Malay Peninsula. In return, Japan would hand over the Northern States to Siam.

On 8 December 1941, Japan invaded the Malay Peninsula. On 15 February 1942, Japan captured the Malay Peninsula and occupied it. The Japanese kept their promise to Siam. The Northern States were handed over to Siam.

When Japan was defeated, the British returned to the Malay Peninsula. The British regained these Northern States.



British flag