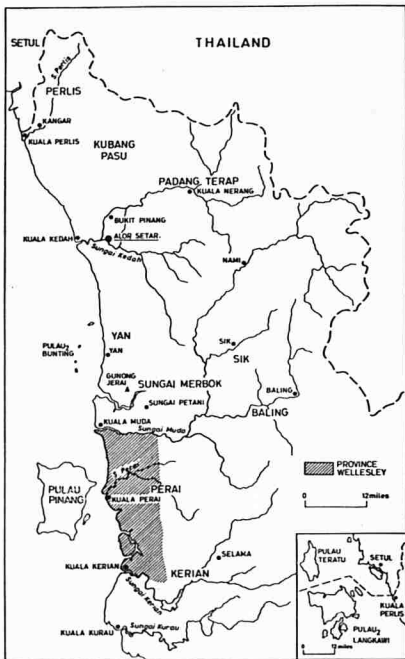


EAST ASIAN HISTORICAL MONOGRAPHS

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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