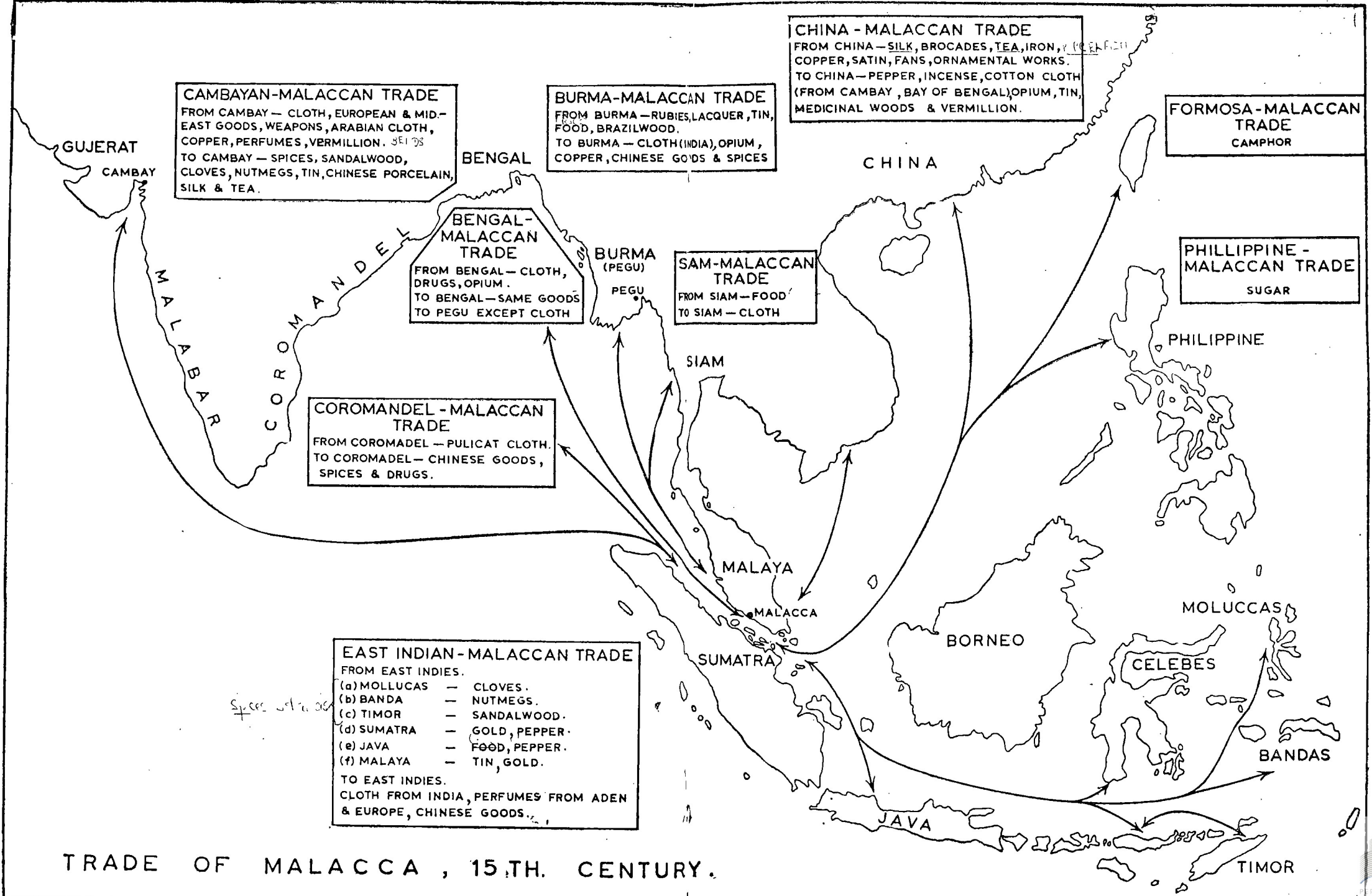


HISTORY
OF
MALAYA
(1400—1959)

Joginder Singh Jessy
(B.A. Hons. : Diploma-in-Education)

Malayan Education Service



Spices etc. etc.



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Yeah Ai gzak

This book is dedicated
to my tutors in the
University of Malaya



PREFACE

This book owes its existence in the first place to the inspiration I got from a Conference of Senior History teachers of the Federation of Malaya and Singapore, organized by Professor K. G. Tregonning at the University of Malaya in 1958. During the discussions, delegate after delegate expressed great concern over the absence of suitable text books to meet the requirements of the new syllabus on Malayan History. I have written this book, therefore, to cater mainly for the Cambridge School and Higher School Certificate classes.

Though the Cambridge School Certificate (covers a period dating from the Malacca Sultanate to the end of the Second World War in 1945,) I have (attempted to include the important Constitutional steps that were taken during the post-war period, which led finally to the achievement of Merdeka in the Federation of Malaya and the establishment of the State of Singapore.) To meet the requirements of those taking the Higher School Certificate, the period from 1786 to 1939 is dealt with in greater detail.

This is a rather lengthy period to include in a book of this size and views are bound to differ as to what should have been included or left out and the manner in which certain topics should have been dealt with. This I think is unavoidable in any published work. I have tried my best to present the facts that I have considered important from a Malayan's point of view. To make what follows more readable to members of the general public, who might be interested in the history of this country, footnotes and questions have been removed to the end of the book. It is left now to the reader to judge how far I have been successful in doing this.

Much of what follows is written mainly from secondary sources, both published and unpublished. The published works include those of such scholars like Sir Richard Winstedt, Sir Frank Swettenham, L. A. Mills, R. J. Wilkinson and the more recent contributions that have been made prominent by such names as D. G. E. Hall, C. N. Parkinson, B. Harrison, P. Wheatley and C. D. Cowan. The other published works that I have consulted include those of F. J. Moorhead, N. J. Ryan, J. P. Dartford, R. N. Jackson and other books connected with Malayan History, too numerous to mention here. In addition to the above-mentioned sources, the learned articles in the Journals of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, have also provided me with a flood of information.

The unpublished sources include the Theses and Academic Exercises submitted by graduates of the University of Malaya, for their Honours and Higher Degrees in History. What I owe to these original thinkers will be apparent on nearly every page of this book and I wish to take this opportunity of sincerely and gratefully acknowledging my indebtedness to them.

I have also to thank the following :-

Professor K. G. Tregonning for his encouragement, advice and permission to use the Academic Exercises and Theses, in the Department of History, University of Malaya in Singapore, without which this book could not have been written :

Dr. C. A. Gibson-Hill, Director of the National Museum, Singapore, for his illuminating discussions and permission to reproduce maps and photographs from the Museum Archives.

Mr. G. A. Hodgeson, Secretary of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, for allowing me to freely use, quote and reproduce pictures from the Journals.

the publishers and authors of the various books mentioned in the Bibliography, for their kind permission to use and quote from their publications: the Keeper of Public Records and the Director of Information Services, Federation of Malaya, and the Ministry of Culture, Singapore for supplying me with photographs and allowing me to reproduce them.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge Mrs. S. Dyne, who has put me deeply in her debt by the long hours she spent in reading and correcting the manuscript; my colleagues at the Sultan Abdul Hamid College, Alor Star, for their general encouragement;

Mr. Chiang Hai Ding, who originally planned this book with me, but had to leave for Australia for further research; the staff of the United Printing Works, who have been so co-operative and helpful in the printing.

Last but not least, I am grateful to my wife and children, who have encouraged me greatly in my work and at the same time shown so much patience during these two and a half years, when my after-school hours and holidays were almost all spent on this book.

Joginder Singh Jessy

Alor Star, Kedah

1st. December, 1961.

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INTRODUCTION

Since the end of the Second World War in 1945, the British Empire has experienced great changes. Many of the countries that were once a part of this world-wide Empire have gained their independence. All of these countries are members of the United Nations Organization and, with the exception of Burma, have retained their ties with England by becoming members of the Commonwealth of Nations. One of these countries is Malaya.

As far as Malaya is concerned, a great step forward in the constitutional development of the country was taken when the Federation was granted its independence in an atmosphere of greatest cordiality in 1957. Though Singapore has not gained the same political status as yet, it has also advanced greatly on the road towards Merdeka, with the establishment of the State of Singapore.

As a reaction to the political changes that have taken place since 1957, the educational system of the country has undergone a lot of upheaval in keeping with its independent status. Of the school curriculum, the syllabus for History has experienced the greatest change. This is only natural. Malaya's historical past, which received so little attention in pre-1957 days, has assumed great importance and the stress in future will be laid on Malaya (as the centre) in relation to the world around it.

It was during the 15th century that Malaya's fame spread to all the corners of the known world. This was the period of the historic Malacca Sultanate. It is therefore very fitting that the School Certificate syllabus for Malayan History should begin with an account of this important period. This is an attempt to trace the history of this country from the Malacca Sultanate to 1959.

To promote a better grasp of what follows in the book, it is desirable, at this juncture, to write shortly about a few general points. The first of these is *sources*.

Archaeology in Malaya is a very new subject and not much has been achieved in this field as yet. The very nature of the climate of Malaya has been very unkind to the archaeologist. Rain has led to great erosion and this in its turn has resulted in much of the material being buried too deep.

From archaeological excavations made so far, it is clearly evident that though Malaya has had contacts with India from the very earliest period, even before Cambodia and Java, it does not have the good fortune to house such wonders like the Angkor Wat in Cambodia or the Borobodur of Java. It is strange that such monuments, which would have delighted the heart of an archaeologist, are conspicuously absent from this country. Even so, the value of archaeological surveys which have so far been conducted cannot be belittled. Though faced with numerous handicaps, the Museums Departments of the Federation of Malaya and Singapore and the Archaeological Society of the University of Malaya, have made notable contributions to the pre-history of Malaya.

In the absence of this aid to historical research, the historian has to rely on written records. The most important of these are the Dynastic Histories of China. It must be remembered that from the very beginning, China had tried to exert political control over the states in South-East Asia and many of these states came under Chinese suzerainty. That is why the chronologers of the Dynastic Histories have left us accounts of the states that sent their tribute to the Middle Kingdom (as China was called). Though much material is available in these Dynastic Histories, translation and interpretation have been great stumbling blocks in the path of the historian.

Apart from the Chinese, are accounts of Greek, Arabic, Portuguese, Javanese, Indian, Malay and other writers which make references to the Malay Peninsula. The earliest of these references of the West, were made by Claudius Ptolemy. Ptolemy was an Alexandrian Greek who lived in the 2nd century A.D. A great astronomer, he was also a geographer. Ptolemy is credited with having drawn the earliest map

in which reference is made to the Malay Peninsula. As he was living so far away and as he was drawing his maps from the stories told to him by sailors and traders, Ptolemy made some glaring errors, but credit must be given to him when we consider the yarns that sailors are capable of spinning. In his maps, Ptolemy drew a peninsula, which has a remarkable resemblance to the country. He called it the Golden Peninsula. In his writings, Ptolemy went ahead to describe the country and the people that inhabited it. His accounts are one of the sources we have to turn to for a description of Malaya in the 2nd century A.D. However, even in this, we are handicapped because it has not been possible to trace the locations of most of the names mentioned by the great geographer.

In chronological order, our next source is the great Venecian traveller Marco Polo. Accompanying his father and uncle, Marco left Venice in 1271, to reach Peking after a terrible voyage through Central Asia. Kublai Khan was greatly attracted by Marco who had learnt Chinese, and sent him on several missions which took him to Mongolia, Karakorum and Burma. After 17 years, he was allowed to return to his country and at the same time escort a Chinese princess who was to be married to the Khan of Persia. On the return voyage, Marco Polo reached Perlak, in Sumatra, in 1292, waited for the wind to change and left for Ceylon and then Ormuz. Three years after his arrival at Venice, Marco was taken prisoner in a war between Venice and Genoa. It was during his imprisonment that Marco dictated an account of his travels. Much of our information of Malaya and South-East Asia during the end of the 13th century comes to us from this acute source.

Nearly nine years after the return of Marco Polo, was born at Tangier an Arab boy who was to be the most well-known traveller of the 14th century. He was Ibn Battuta. When he grew up, Ibn Battuta left his home and was one of the very few men of his age who travelled from Spain to Peking. He also visited Timbuktu, the Black Sea area, Mecca and entered India by the overland route, which took him through the Central Asian cities of Samarkand and Kabul. It would not be

wrong to say that he was the most widely travelled person during his days. What is more important to the historian are the accounts of his travels that Ibn Battuta has left. These have been declared as reasonably accurate and have helped greatly in historical research.

Of the Javanese accounts, we have the *Nagarakertagama*. This epic poem was composed by the head of the Javanese Buddhist clergy, Prapanca, in 1365. In addition to giving an account of life in the Javanese kingdoms at that time, it describes the exploits of Kartanagara, King of the Javanese kingdom of Singasari. According to the poem, Kartanagara invaded the Malay Peninsula and brought a number of kingdoms which were under Sri Vijaya under his control.

Next we came to Portuguese writers amongst whom the writings of Tomé Pires and Emmanuel Godinho de Eredia are the most important. Tomé Pires came to Malacca in 1512, one year after its capture and stayed there for another year. He was sent as Ambassador to the Court of Peking. Whilst he was waiting at Canton for permission from Peking to proceed to the capital, a quarrel arose between the Portuguese and the Chinese. In this encounter, the Portuguese commander, Antonio d'Abreu opened fire on Chinese ships in which the latter sustained some losses. The result of the unwise move was the imprisonment of Tomé Pires. It was during his internment in Canton that Tomé Pires wrote an account of his travels. This is the *Suma Oriental* and was written between 1513 and 1515. It gives us the early history of Malacca from the Portuguese point of view, and is "remarkable for its trustworthiness".

The other Portuguese writer, d'Eredia, wrote nearly a century after Tomé Pires. He was born in Malacca, educated at Goa and was the son of a Bugis princess and Juan d'Eredia, a Portuguese missionary. He was originally commissioned to look for the Southern Continent. This was, however, not possible because of the attacks of the Dutch.

So d'Eredia began to explore the hinterland of Malacca. As he was a trained explorer, his maps provide us with an accurate knowledge of Malaya in the early 17th century. In addition, we have his "Description of Malacca" written in 1613.

Among the local sources, the Malay Annals (Sejarah Melayu) are the most popular. In addition, mention has also been made of the Mesa Melayu, a contemporary Perak history. The Malay Annals apparently were written for the most part before 1536 by Tun Seri Lanang. These are an account of Malay tradition. From the historical point of view, the Annals suffer from two defects – the absence of dates and the difficulty of separating fact and fiction. Though the Annals suffer from these handicaps, these are still a very valuable source material for the study of early Malayan history, especially of the Malacca Sultanate.

Apart from the Sejarah Melayu, mention has also been made of Abdullah Munshi. His name is linked with that of Raffles as he was "Raffles' greatest biographer." In his "Hikayat Abdullah" and the "Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah," he describes events and places as he saw them, in Malacca, Singapore and the East Coast of the Peninsula.

In addition to the various sources which have been described above, it is necessary to know something of the conditions of trade that existed in the days of the sailing vessel. It is only then that the importance of the Peninsula in the trade between the East and West can be better appreciated.

Direct trade between China, India and the West, as we know it today, did not exist in the days of the sailing ship. Travel was slow and dangerous and much time was spent in waiting for the winds to change. It would have taken nearly three years for a Chinese trader, travelling with the wind, to reach India and return home. As he could not afford to be absent from his home for such a long period of time,

