Chapter 4

Dutch Global Expansion

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter was about the Principles of Simon Stevin. This chapter will be on the global Dutch expansion of trade. It will be about the development and background of Dutch trade in general. It will specify about the development and background of trade in Melaka.

The Dutch were quite late in participating in trading in Asia as Van Goor (1994:50) mentions. The Spaniards, the Portuguese and even the English and the French had launched their operations a century before the Dutch even attempted to sail for Asia.

In the sixteenth century the Dutch operate, mainly, in the Baltic, England, France and Spain. Since the merchant houses in Antwerp had good connections in Lisbon and Seville, as Van Goor (1994:50) describes, there was no need to set sail for Asia to buy sugar, spices and other tropical goods.

Then in 1568 the Eighty Years[1] War broke out. At that time the Netherlands are ruled by Spain. War was a major cause of Dutch discontent as was the heavy level of taxation the population was required to pay, while support and guidance from the government was hampered by the size of the empire. While Spain maintained a policy of strict religious uniformity within the Roman Catholic Church, enforced by the Inquisition, a number of Protestant denominations gained ground. This led to the *Beeldenstorm*, or Iconoclastic Fury, in 1566, in which hundreds of churches were stripped of statuary and other religious decoration. This was the start for a revolt against Spain.

[1] The Eighty Years' War, or Dutch War of Independence. (1568–1648).

That the Dutch set foot so relatively late in Asia had several reasons. One of these was, according to Boxer (1965:23), the confiscatory embargoes which the Crown of Spain (and of Portugal from 1580) laid on the north Netherlands shipping in the Iberian harbours in 1585, 1595 and 1598. There for there was a need for new markets.

4.2 The Expansion of the Dutch Trade Empire

One of the most peculiar features was, as Boxer (1965:23/24) mentions, of the Eighty Years war how the way in which both sides kept going with resources provided by trading with the enemy. Contraband trade and smuggling usually feature to a greater or lesser degree in all wars, but in the years 1572-1648 they were carried by both sides to unprecedented lengths. The authorities in the Dutch Republic many of whom were ship owners and merchants deeply involved in trade with the Iberian peninsula and with lands dominated by the Spanish and Portuguese crowns, allowed (save for short intervals) this trade to continue on payment of special port-charges by those concerned therein. The receipts from this "convoy and license money" as it was called, formed the chief source of income for the five provincial admiralties or navy boards (Rotterdam, Zeeland, Amsterdam, North-Quarter, and Friesland) which maintain the Dutch warships, most of which were hired or converted merchantmen.

The Spaniards and the Portuguese, as Boxer (1965:24) describes, on their side found that they can not do without the raw and unfinished materials, particularly grain and naval stores, which the carriers brought from the Baltic and northern Europe. The confiscatory embargoes which the Iberian authorizes periodically imposed on Dutch shipping turn out to be operations in the nature of cutting off the nose to spite the face, and they could never be maintained for long. One reason for the growth, as Boxer (1965:6) mentions, of Dutch foreign trade was the geographical position of the country

by the North Sea. With easy access to Germany, France and England. The main reason, however, was that the Dutch are more hardworking and offer lower freight rates.

A characteristic feature of seaborne trade, as Boxer (1965:6) mentions, in the Northern Netherlands is known as the *redereij*. This is a highly flexible type of co-operative enterprise by which a group of people will join to buy, own, build, charter, or freight a ship and its cargo. In the second half of the 17th century the skipper or master of a vessel is very often the part-owner or directly interested in the sale of the cargo. The individual ship-owners will contribute capital in varying amounts. The contributions come from wealthy merchants or from deck-hands as well.

Due to the network, as Boxer (1965:22) describes, of Flemish and Walloon[2] merchants in Iberian and Mediterranean ports, the Dutch are able to expand their already prosperous carrying-trade to unprecedented heights in the last decade of the 16th century.

Five successive years of bad harvests, as Boxer (1965:22) mentions, in Southern Europe (1586-1590) give them the chance to seize and retain new markets behind the Straits of Gibraltar. Whereas there ships have been occasional visitors to Mediterranean and Levant[3] ports before 1585, twenty years later their trade thither is second only in importance to that with the Baltic, with which, incidentally the *Antwerpers* has also been closely connected before the fall of their city.

Another factor in the accelerated expansion, as Boxer (1965:22) describes, of Dutch sea born trade in the 1590s is the evolution of a cheaper and more efficient cargo-ship, the *fluit.* This flute or fly-boat as the English call it, was manned by relatively few hands, carried a bulky cargo, mount few or no guns, and could be built cheaply and in large

[2] Walloons are a French-speaking people who live in Belgium, principally in Wallonia.
[3] The Levant includes most of modern Lebanon, Syria, Israel, the Palestinian territories, and sometimes part of Turkey and Iraq, and corresponds roughly to the historic area of Greater Syria.

numbers.

Due to the decline of Antwerp, as Boxer (1965:23) mentions, as an international entrepôt and the phenomenal growth of Amsterdam. Certain factors contributed to the extension of Dutch maritime enterprise to more distant regions than the Mediterranean and the Levant. Like the influx of wealthy entrepreneurs and skilled workers into the north from the south; the resulting increase of industrial protection and the need for new markets; the confiscatory embargoes which the Crown of Spain (and of Portugal from 1580) imposed on the North Netherlands shipping in the Iberian harbours in 1585, 1595 and 1598 and the help and guidance which *Hollanders* and *Zeelanders* could often count on receiving from Flemish, Walloon, and Marrano merchants overseas. Direct trade with Brazil, for example which had been negligible factor before 1585 subsequently greatly increased, at first in co-operation with Portuguese Crypto-Jews or New Christians[4].

A Dutch skipper bound, as Boxer (1965:23) describes, for Brazil fell into the hands of the Portuguese from Sao Tome Island where he gathered much valuable information about their trade with the Gold Coast. On his return he made a successful pioneer voyage returning in 1594 with a valuable cargo of gold and ivory. Such were the vigour and persistence with which the Dutch exploited these new markets that by 1621 they had secured between half and two thirds of the carrying-trade between Brazil and Europe, while virtually the whole of the United Provinces gold coinage was minted with gold brought from New Guinea. Most of the energy of the Dutch was directed towards to the spice-trade to East Indies.

In many respects, as Boxer (1965:29) mentions, the Treaty of Munster formed the high water marks of the United Provinces golden age. By 1648 the Dutch were indisputably

[4] Crypto-Judaism is the secret adherence to Judaism while publicly professing to be of another faith; practitioners are referred to as 'Crypto-Jews' (origin from Greek kryptos - κρυπτός, 'hidden').

the greatest trading nation in the world, with commercial outposts and fortified factories scattered from Archangel to Recife and from Amsterdam to Nagasaki.

The Dutch, as Boxer (1965:30) describes, achievements were impressive. Wilson (1957:41) is quoted by Boxer (1965:30).

"They had managed to capture something like three quarters of the traffic in Baltic grain, between half and three quarters of the traffic in timber, and between a third and a half of that in Swedish metals. Three quarters of the salt from France and Portugal that went to the Baltic was carried in Dutch bottoms. More than half the cloth imported to the Baltic area was made or finished in Holland".

When they eventually sail, as Boxer (1965:30) describes, for Asia it was because of the conflict the Netherlands had with Spain. All this in addition to the fact that they were the largest importers and distributors of such varied colonial wares as spices, sugar, porcelain and trade-wind beads. This unprecedented achievement was mainly due to the dynamic energy and enterprise generated in the seaports of Holland and Zeeland, which bears the financial impact of the war against Spain and forge the spearhead of colonial expansion, thanks to the resources derived from their shipping and overseas trade, It was therefore logical that the leading merchants and ship owners of these provincial towns secured in effect the control of the new republic and that they used their dominance of the town councils and of the Provincial States to forward their own interests.

The Dutch as of 1648, as Boxer (1965:115) mentions, avoided war with a major power whenever they possibly could. It was however a very different story with weaker or supposedly weaker states. Like Portugal, Denmark, Makassar and Ternate. Then the Dutch did not hesitate to enforce the strict observance of treaties and contracts by the other party concerned even where these agreements have been negotiated under duress as was often the case.

The contracts and treaties, as Boxer (1965:115) describes, which the Dutch/VOC make with the minor East Indien princes during a period of nearly two hundred years followed much the same pattern. The contracts were drawn up by the Dutch and the local ruler had just to sign. They gave the Dutch the monopoly trading rights in the region, with the exclusion of other foreign merchants, whether European or Asian. They allowed for the establishment of Dutch forts and garrisons where necessary and often recognized the right of the VOC representative to intervene as arbitrator or mediator in local disputes. The Dutch nearly always kept jurisdiction over their own nationals who were accused of criminal offences, and usually had the right to try natives involved in disputes with them.

The territorial expansion, as (1965:116) Boxer mentions, of the VOC was limited to Ceylon, South Africa and Java. Elsewhere in Sumatra and Celebes for example the Dutch were content to secure a dominant commercial position by making treaties or contracts with the coastal sultans. Many of who become their satellites or vassals, but whose authority did not extend from the inland. The Dutch originally intervened in Ceylon (1638) to assist Raja Sinha II against the Portuguese and to conquer all or part of the cinnamon-growing districts in that island. By the time the struggle ends with the expulsion of the Portuguese in 1658. The VOC had become the controlling power in the coastal districts and Kandy is eventually deprived of an outlet to the sea.

With regard to the conquest of Java, as Boxer (1965:117) describes, this started with the reluctant intervention of Governor-General Maetsuyker in a succession dispute in the empire of Mataram, on behalf of the legitimate bur disposed Susuhanan in 1677, and it culminated in the establishment of Dutch supremacy over the island a century later.

By the end of the 18th century, as Boxer (1965:229) mentions, the VOC were bankrupt due to private trade and the abuse of power. Critics reinterpreted the initials as *Vergaan*

Onder Corruptie (Collapsed Through Corruption). It may very well have been one of the reasons but other reasons may have been displacements in the requirements of the European markets, changed conditions in Asia and an increasing number of competing foreign companies.

Private trade flourished, as Boxer (1965:230) describes, for some reasons such as the absolute inadequacy of the monthly pay, the uncertainty of life in the tropics, the temptingly easy opportunities to enrich oneself quickly by dishonest methods and the general conviction that there were no Ten Commandments South of the Equator. The directors of both companies (VOC and WIC) decree elaborate rules against private trade and threaten offenders with heavy penalties. These sanctions however were ineffective in Asia as in South-America. Those officers who were there to enforce the regulations are the ones who were easily bribed.

4.3 The VOC and the WIC

The Dutch were rapidly expanding, as Boxer (1965:24) mentions, their trade in the Mediterranean, the Levant, and the South Atlantic during the early 1590s. It was hardly surprising that they tried to extend it to the Indian Ocean about the same time. Dutchmen who sailed there in the Portuguese service had returned to their homeland with plenty of information to indicate that the Portuguese claim to be lords of the conquest, navigation and commerce of Ethiopia, India, Arabia and Persia was not as effective as was implied by this grandiloquent title assumed by King Manuel I in 1501. Memories of the Iberian embargo of 1585, and anticipation of that to come in 1595-6, may well have made the Dutch realize that their use of Lisbon as a spice market was becoming increasingly precarious. In March 1594 nine North Netherland merchants found sufficient inducements and funds to organize a ‘Company of Far Lands’ at Amsterdam, with the object of sending two fleets to East Indies for spices. The first

fleet had no clear-cut leadership, the voyage was badly mismanaged, and only three ships and eighty-nine men returned to Texel in August 1597, out of four sail and 249 men which had left the anchorage two years earlier. But the modest cargo they brought back from Bantam more then covered the cost of the expedition.

This pioneer voyage showed, as Boxer (1965:24/25) describes, that even a badly led fleet could reach East Indies, no fewer then twenty two ships fitted out by different, and largely rival, trading companies left Dutch ports for East Indies in 1598. One, commanded by the seafaring innkeeper, Oliver van Noort, took the South American and Pacific route to make the first Dutch voyage around the world; but the most encouraging result was achieved by the second fleet of the Amsterdam 'Far Lands Company', led by Jacob van Neck. Four of these vessels returned in July 1599, after a fifteen month absence and with a costly cargo of Spices.

"So long Holland has been Holland" an anonymous participant observes, "such rich laden ships have never been seen".

Commercial companies for trading with East Indies now sprung up like mushrooms. These companies were organized on a regional or municipal basis, and rivalry between those of Holland and Zeeland was particularly acute. As early as January 1598, The States-General suggested that the various companies should amalgate or cooperate amicably instead of engaging in cut-throat competition.

Long and difficult negotiations led eventually, as Boxer (1965:26) mentions, to the formation of one company: the Dutch East Indies Company or VOC with a capital surmounting near to 61/2 million florins. The new chamber was subdivided into six regional boards or chambers *(kamers*) which were established in the former seats of the pioneer companies in Amsterdam. These were Amsterdam, Middelburg, Delft, Rotterdam, Hoorn and Enkhuizen. Under the charter awarded by the States-General to

the VOC in 1602, the Company was given a monopoly of Dutch trade and navigation east of the Cape of Good Hope and west of the straits of Magellan for an initial period of twenty one-years.

The governing body or court of seventeen directors (was empowered to conclude treaties of peace and alliance, to wage defensive war, and to build "fortresses and strongholds" in that region. They could enlist civilian, naval, and military personnel who would take an oath of loyalty to the Company and to the States-General.

The organization of the WIC (The West India Company), as Boxer (1965:27) describes, which receives its charter from the States-General on the 3d of June 1621 was modelled in many ways on that of the VOC although the offensive role of the Western company in the war against the Iberian Atlantic empire is emphasized from the start. The WIC which was given a monopoly of all Dutch trade and navigation with America and West Africa, was likewise authorized to make war and peace with the indigenous powers, to maintain naval and military forces, and to exercise judicial and administrative powers in those regions. It was composed of five regional chambers: Amsterdam, Zeeland (Middelburg), The Maas (Rotterdam), North-Quarter and Groningen with Friesland. The WIC counterpart to the *Heeren XVII* was the central board or governing body of the *Heeren XIX*. The WIC took much longer to raise its working capital than the VOC had done, two years as against one month, but the sum finally subscribed is substantially larger, being over seven million florins. The formation of a West India Company was suggested much earlier in the 17th century but was delayed by the conclusion of the twelve-year truth between Spain and the United Provinces in 1609.

Although Spain was the hereditary foe, as Boxer (1965:28) describes, in neighbouring Spanish Netherlands the Dutch attack on the Iberian colonial world was far more directed against the Portuguese than against those of Spain. From the time when the

men of the VOC pass to the offensive with the capture of Amboina 1n 1605, they concentrated on Portuguese strongholds and settlements in the tropics whether in the Moluccas, Malaya, Ceylon or India. When they did venture to attack the Spaniards in the Philippines they are uniformly unsuccessful. The pertinacious and rewarding Dutch blockades of Malacca (1635-40) and Goa (1638-44) contrast strongly with the humiliating fiascos of their expeditions to the Philippines in 1610, 1617 and 1747-8. The Dutch could not drive the Spaniards from their positions on Ternate and Tidore where the latter remained for over a decade after the treaty of Munster, and whence they only withdrew when Manila was threatened with invasion by Coxinga, the Chinese conqueror of Dutch Formosa in 1661-1662.

On the other side of the world, as Boxer (1965:28) mentions, the WIC, through founded largely with an eye on Spanish America and the silver of Mexico and Peru, actually concentrated on the sugar of Portuguese Brazil and on the gold, ivory and slaves of Portuguese West Africa.

The WIC did not have too many successes, as Boxer (1965:28) describes, against the Spaniards. They had more success against the Portuguese in the South Atlantic. The majority of losses, according to Boxer (1965:29), were inflicted on the possessions and shipping of Portugal the years 1636-1648 the attacks against Spanish-America were less significant, save for Brouwer's expedition against Chile, and that proved abortive. At one time the Dutch had deprived Portugal of half of Brazil and Angola, to say nothing of the Gold coast and Cape Verde, but their only noteworthy conquest was the capture of Curacao in 1634. In comparison with the great efforts it put forth in the South Atlantic, the West India Company's attempts to found a New Netherlands on Manhattan Island and on the banks of the Hudson River made only a modest showing.

4.4 The conquest and influences of the Portuguese empire

Coen and his contemporaries, as Van Goor (1994:58) mentions, aimed at conquering the Portuguese empire, their strategy influences by what they considered to be the Portuguese strong point: mastery of the seas. As early as 1614, Coen had outlined a programme to oust the Spaniards from the Philippines and conquer Macau and Malacca to secure the trade from India to the China Sea. Coen was also the founder of the Dutch intra-Asian trade system, one of the pillars of the VOC's formidable success in the seventeenth century. When the Dutch conquered the Portuguese empire they also took over a complete Asian trade network, which they extend by interlinking various parts of Asia. The Company initiated the Portuguese *cartaz* system by distributing passes which allow non Dutch traders to sail on specific routes and which give access to certain ports[5]. At this point, reference had to be made to the controversy between Grotius[6] and Freitas[7] on the control of the seas: contrary to his Portuguese counterpart, Grotius maintained that the Dutch could not be barred from sailing the Asian seas. The importance of their debate, which was often seen as an important step towards the development of international law, did not become truly apparent until the nineteenth century.

The majority of Dutch factories, as Van Goor (1994:59) describes, were former Portuguese establishments. Thus, the Dutch inherited Portuguese governmental institutions and tax systems, as well as religious organizations. Initially they did have to rely on information from Portuguese archives, as could be seen in Ambon and Ceylon.
In the Moluccas, the Portuguese did learn from local sultans how to navigate the *hongi*, a fleet of rowing boats, called *kora kora*, and had it introduced to Ambon. Directly after the Dutch conquered the island, it was arranged that the population transfers its

[5] Cartaz was a naval trade license or pass issued by the Portuguese in the Indian ocean during the sixteenth century (circa 1502-1750), under the rule of the Portuguese empire.
[6] Hugo Grotius (1583-1645).A lawyer in the Dutch Republic. With others he laid the foundation for international law, based on natural law. He was also a philosopher, theologian, Christian apologist, playwright and poet.
[7] Franciscus Serphahim de Freitas (17th century). Professor at the University of Vallodid.

obligations to the Company, including the duty of each village, or group of hamlets, to crew one *kora kora* for a specified number of days per year. The Ternatean title of *gnato hoedi,* leader of the first *kora kora,* reached the Dutch language via Portuguese. Many village headmen who rowed in these boats had Portuguese names, such as Coelho, Thomas de Sousa, or Duarte de Si1va. Another Dutch institution of possible Portuguese origin is the *Landraad,* a local judicial council, whose members were called *orang kaya kamara.* In 1631, all members of the *Landraad* had Portuguese names.

Various customs were exchanged, as Van Goor (1994:59) mentions, as part of acculturation. Certain Asian groups fully adopted European dress, whereas others mix it with their traditional style of clothing. Many Sinhalese took Portuguese names at baptism. Under Dutch rule, titles like Don continued to be honoured, and were even acknowledged and conferred by the Company. The Portuguese influence was the strongest among those headmen and people upon whom the Portuguese depended to implement their policy. In an attempt to reduce their dependence on Portuguese speaking, Catholic chiefs, the Dutch tried to find a different local group they can work with. However, in the end they were obliged to seek their contact people among the very group that has undergone the most profound Portuguese influence, and which had converted to Catholicism into the bargain.

In Ceylon, the Portuguese cultural and administrative influence, as Van Goor (1994:59) describes, was even stronger because they had been the first Europeans to come into contact with Sri Lankans on a significant scale. In order to exercise their authority, the Dutch, like the Portuguese before them, left the existing power structure intact and brought about changes mainly in the field of personnel. The administration's structure was build up like a pyramid, with the local people comprising its base; the next stratum was formed by the *majoraals* or village elders; the colonizers form the apex; between

the latter and the *majoraals* came a group of higher chiefs who acted as middlemen, and who were all appointed by the *disave,* the head of a *disavany* or province. After 1621, the Portuguese gradually replaced these Sinhalese functionaries. The Dutch left the Portuguese organization intact, but add another administrative layer above the *disavanies* through the institution of the commandment.

In particular, once the Dutch had discovered that Portuguese power, as Van Goor (1994: 57) mentions, on the Asian seas was not absolute, they studied the Portuguese positions intently, as was demonstrated by two discourses on the Dutch state in Asia written by two prominent Company men, Cornelis Matelief[8] and Jan Pieterszoon Coen[9], in 1608 and 1614 respectively. After summing up the Netherlands' enemies and competitors, Matelief debated what would be the best location for a Dutch control centre in Asia. He pointed out that "the town of Malacca, apart from the difficulty in conquering it, is situated rather inconveniently, because it cannot easily be reached all year round, especially by large and bulky ships that are in poor condition and do not sail well after a long voyage." He therefore proposed Jayakarta *(Batavia),* remarking that arrangements should be made with the town's ruler, just as the Portuguese did in Cochin. As many Dutchmen as possible should be brought in from the Netherlands and offered the opportunity of earning a living as artisans or small traders.

The example of the Portuguese, who in the beginning had used forced exiles to populate their conquests but later made it voluntary, even handing out premiums as encouragemint, should be considered carefully. Coen, too, stressed the need to populate the Dutch settlements. "Owing to their colonies in India, the Portuguese have maintained themselves against the great force of mighty enemies, thus setting a good example for us."

[8] Cornelis Matelief (de Jonge) (1569-1632).A Dutch admiral who was active in establishing Dutch power in Southeast Asia during the beginning of the 17th century (1606).

[9] Jan Pieterszoon Coen (1587-1629). An Officer of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in the early seventeenth century, holding two terms as its Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies.

In his later career, the idea of populating overseas possessions, as Van Goor (1994:58) describes, remained a cornerstone of Coen's great plans for a Dutch Asia. During his second term of office as Governor General (1627-1629), he tried in vain to introduce a scheme to populate the colony, but the Dutch system of marriage never thrived due to opposition of Gentlemen XVII at home.

The Directors preference for a Company of unmarried professionals, as Van Goor (1994:58) mentions, also had its impact on the organization of social life in the Dutch communities, and left little room for civil institutions such as the *camara* (city council) or the *misericordia* (charity) With the exception of Jayakarta (*Batavia),* which Coen founded with the intention of promoting a vigorous civilian society, not a single Company settlement or factory in Asia was endowed with a city council or town hall. After Coen's death, the Batavia council was never taken very seriously. Under the Dutch, relief for the poor is administered, partly by deacons of the Dutch reformed Church, and partly by the Company who paid a small allowance to retired members with insufficient means.

4.5 Trade in East Indies, India and Sri Lanka

The Portuguese forts and factory were not built, as Boxer (1965:209) describes, to conquer territory but merely to protect the merchandise on the sea-shore. The Dutch *factorijen* fortified or not were directly descended from the Portuguese from the Portuguese trading agencies.

The unfortified *factory* in Asia, as Boxer (1965:209/210) mentions, were not a novelty or an innovation in so far as Asian rulers and potentates were concerned.

The Portuguese introduced the precedents of the fortified *factorijen* and fortified town, as Boxer **(**1965:210) describes, for the greater security of their persons and their mer-

chandise in an actual or hostile environment.

The Dutch, as Boxer (1965:210) mentions, very quickly followed the Portuguese precedents and for the same reasons. Not only were they apt to feel insecure in an Asian environment which they did not understand and amongst peoples whose languages few of them could speak and whose religions they regarded with horror or contempt but they needed some ports where their persons and their goods would not be liable to arbitrary seizure and where they can provision and repair their ships in complete security. From 1605 on they were determined to enforce a spice-monopoly in the Moluccas and later a pepper monopoly elsewhere. For this they need naval and military bases. Furthermore they felt the need for a general port where their homeward- and outward bound ships could load and unload their cargoes and where goods from the interport trade for Asia could be collected, stored or transshipped. The forts which they took from the Portuguese are inconveniently located and they realized that such a general port would have to be located in the area of the Straits of Malacca or the Straits of Sunda where the trade routes and the monsoon-winds came together. One of the convenient locations was Malacca which the Dutch almost conquered in 1606 but instead they took Jayakarta *(Batavia)* on the 30 May 1619.

The Dutch were soon involved in Javanese local politics, as Boxer (1965:212) describes, at a time where the kingdom of Mataram was not only trying to impose itself on Java but on the whole of the Malay archipelago. The *Heeren XVII* gave only reluctant approval to do so when they gave it all. The respective Governor-Generals did so anyway. Java was essentially an agrarian country.

Java was as such important, as Boxer (1965:213) mentions, to the VOC for the supply of rice. The Susuhunan or Sultan (Amankurat I) was not interested in trade and commerce nor in the economic welfare of his subjects. But only in keeping his own

position at home and in other regions on the Malay Archipelago. The peasantry lived on the products of the soil. The aristocracy on the taxes levied and on forced labour by their subjects.

The policies of intimidation, as Boxer (1965:216) describes, by Amangkurat I eventually alienated the nobility and government officials from him. A rebellion led by the Madurese Prince Tranajaya lead to the flight of the Susuhunan. He was forced to flee from his palace and died on his flight after appealing to the VOC for support in 1677. The late Susuhunan's was restored by the Dutch to the throne of Mataram and in return they demanded more territory and commercial privileges. From there on the relations between the Dutch and Mataram was on a different footing. From there on the Susuhunan addressed the Governor-General as protector, father or even grandfather as before envoys were sent with costly presents tot the court of the Susuhunan.

The weakened central authority in the 18th century, as Boxer (1965:216/217) mentions, eventually led to a renewal of the succession disputes which lead to the creation of two separate states Surakarta and Jokjakarta in 1755 By this time the VOC imposed its authority over the whole island and reduced all the Javanese sultanates to the position of client or vassal states.

The VOC becomes a territorial power in Java, Ceylon and the Moluccas, as Boxer (1965:217) describes, it never really integrates in the Asiatic society. This was even more so the case in countries like China and Japan, where the VOC had simple trading agencies. And even in southern India where they had at one time exercised jurisdiction over districts and inhabitants close to the forts and factories. Asian society whether East Indien, Chinese, Japanese, Indian, Persian or Malay did not wish to be changed into a European lifestyle but wanted to keep its traditional and static forms. The basic social

economic and religious factors which determined the structure of Asian society remained unchanged until the 19th and even into 20th century.

Through discoveries and innovations the VOC established a trade monopoly, as Boxer (1965:219) mentions, as for example in the spice-trade in the Moluccas. But outside the East Indien waters they were not able to do so. They tried to bring pressure upon Indian rulers with whom they had trade disputes, by seizing their shipping or otherwise interfering with their seaborn trade. These measures had no strong effect since the VOC had no strong base in India.

Dutch forts on the coast of Malabar and Coromandel, as Boxer (1965:220) describes, were liable to the risks of reprisals by Indian rulers whose inland capitals were not threatened by the ships of the VOC as are those of the coastal sultanates in Indonesia. In Ceylon their policy of blockading the coast did work since here they could cut off the kingdom of Kandy from the sea.

The capital brought into the country by the VOC, as Boxer (1965:220) mentions, for the purchase of textiles which were exported to Indonesia led to the participation of the richer Indian merchants to take part in the overseas trade themselves which by the year 1600 were confined to the Bay of Bengal and the Malay peninsula. It had extended by the end of the 17th century to Java, Borneo, Celebes and the Philippines.

The plans of the VOC to monopolize the pepper-trade led, as Boxer (1965:222) describes, to nothing since the English East Indies Company imported in 1713 as much pepper London as the VOC was receiving from the entire Indo-Malayan archipelago.

The VOC was found primarily, as Boxer (1965:222) mentions, to trade in pepper and spices. And these two formed for the first half of the 17th century the most valuable part of their homeward bound cargoes. By 1700 the demand for Indian textiles and cotton-

piece goods, as Boxer (1965:223) describes, as well as for Chinese, Bengal and Persian silks and silk-stuffs led to these goods taken over priority. In the 18th century the trade in tea and coffee became even more important than the growth of the trade in textiles. Large scale cultivation of coffee and sugar in Java became increasingly important during the 18th century. In 1791, 90% of the coffee imported into the Europe by the VOC came from Mocha and only 19% from Java, but five years later it was the direct opposite.

In addition to pepper, spices, textiles, tea, coffee and porcelain, as Boxer (1965:224/225) mentions, there are other commodities which were traded via the VOC. Indigo and saltpeter from India; lacquered goods from Japan; elephants from Ceylon; slaves from Arakan, Buton and Bali.

4.6 Exercise of Crafts in East Indies, India and Sri Lanka

There was not much information, as Boxer (1965:239) describes, of a group of servants: skilled craftsmen and manual workers. These were mostly ship's-carpenters, caulkers, rig- gers and dockyard-mateys. Almost every industrial craft was represented in the craftsmen's quarter, *Ambachtskwartier,* in Jayakarta (*Batavia*) from 1682 onward. Carpenters, woodworkers, furniture-makers, blacksmiths, locksmiths, armourers, gunsmiths, gun-founders, type-founders and cutters, masons, bricklayers, glaziers, cobblers, tailors, dyers and jewelers. All these and many more craftsmen were to be found there. Each craft lives, works and socialize together under its own foreman of overseer, who supervised the European workmen and the Company's slaves who were trained by them and lived alongside them.

Several of the larger Dutch settlements, as Boxer (1965:240) mentions, particularly the factories in Coromandel and Ceylon, also had their own *Ambachtskwartier,* where

European and Asian craftsmen worked together under the supervision of European foremen. There were also European craftsmen and artisans in the tropical forts of the Dutch West Indies Companies but they were never as numerous as they were in the East and the range of their skill was not nearly so wide.

Chinese artisans were active, especially, in Jayakarta (Batavia) where, as Boxer (1965:240) describes, they had good reputation as cabinet-makers. The best work in this respect was one by Sinhalese and Tamil craftsmen from Ceylon and on the Coromandel Coast, where the finely carved Indo-Dutch baroque furniture was produced.

4.7 The conquest of Melaka

In 1640 the VOC decided to take Melaka from the Portuguese who had taken the port in 1511. Melaka lies on the Straits of Malacca it had become an important route by the second century AD after the land route has been disrupted by warfare. It helped that Melaka had a strategic position at the Straits. A consideration was that it would be an addition to the Trade Empire of the VOC. It would deal the Portuguese a heavy blow and threaten their trade in the Malay Peninsula and East Asia. As it would be separated from their headquarters at the west of Melaka. The Portuguese who were already trading in Asia as from 1498. As from the beginning of the 16th century the Portuguese could be found on all the important Asian coasts. The capture of Melaka would give the VOC an important trading post where goods would be brought in from the Malay Peninsula, Bengal, Coromandel and countries in the West. For the VOC Melaka was not important as a trading post of any importance. It already had that in Jayakarta (Batavia). The VOC also guarded this position of Batavia with great care. The VOC settled at the south shore of the Melaka river in the castle which the Portuguese left. The castle was strengthened and a moat is made around.

4.8 Trade in Melaka

The Straits provided, as Kathirithamby-Wells (1977:1) mentions, a safe route between China and India. The passage through the Straits was not swift but it was certain. The monsoon winds can be relied upon for both the outward and the homeward leg of the voyage to the east or the west alternate in half's of the year.

Over the centuries harbours emerge along the Straits and some acquire great wealth. This wealth is used to make increasingly sophisticated societies and forge extensive political connections. Thus the port city becomes the basic structure of the Malay world. The main assets of such a city are its position, its population and its ruler. The most important is the ruler: he has to retain and attract followers. The town of Melaka becomes the site of an entrepôt and a trading station, which provides a shelter and provisions for ships, assembled goods for exchange and offered navigational facilities for trade further east.

Shipping comes from Siam (Thailand), Indo-China, Japan and the Philippines. With foodstuffs[10], jungle products and a variety of other items. Within the Peninsula, from the Straits, notably from Siak and Kedah, foodstuffs, jungle products and poor quality gold. From the coast of Northern Sumatra, especially the towns of Pasai and Pedir, tin, gold products and pepper in return for cloth, opium and probably foodstuffs.

The Dutch consider themselves the inheritors, as Kathirithamby-Wells (1977:8) describes, of all the rights of sovereignty of the Melaka Sultanate and acted likewise.

The Dutch became increasingly involved in the area, as shown by Lewis (1995:1), and monopolized all trade and this undermined the delicate relationships that had developed in the region between the various states and their proper trade positions. For a century

[10] Any material, substance that can be used as food.

Malacca was the most important trading center of the world. Merchandise was traded from Arabia, Persia, India, China, Portugal and Japan and even goods from Portugal and Japan were traded here.

The VOC tried to impose its authority by concluding treaties with its neighbours and the states it had commercial dealings with. However the local rulers accept those but did not think them permanently binding. Treaties were unknown in the traditional Malay world. They were more considered as guidelines.

The VOC thought they would be able to cover the costs which were inexplicitly connected to the functions of Melaka as a fort by optimizing the commercial activities of the town. On the one hand to make use of Melaka as a staple market. The Dutch therefore put taxes on the native trade. These were export-and import duties, anchorage duties or weigh duties. The VOC-officials also hoped to encourage the local trade by implying special rules and regulations for the indigenous traders. On the other hand they hoped to develop more activities to get more income out of their own trade. This meant they were going to participate in the tin trade.

The dual approach of the trade in the region was, as Jacobs (2000:154/155) mentions, not going to be a great success. If Melaka had been a flourishing market the VOC would have taken in quite a lot of money on all the levies they imposed. On the other hand if the native trade would have been doing very well the VOC could not develop their own trade. In the native tin trade results could only be achieved if the competition was to be curtailed. And then Melaka, again, would not make a lot of money on imposed levies. It took about a half a century for the VOC to solve the problem with this dual approach.

Huge profits could be made in Melaka. The Boom farm or customs house, as Nordin Hussin (2007:21) mentions, levied 15 Spanish dollars per chest on opium, 1.25 Spanish

dollars per picul[11] on tin and 1.25 Spanish dollars per picul on pepper. It was given power to collect taxes for all piece goods (clothes) that entered Melaka either from the east or the west. Raw silk was levied at 7 per cent of its value at the time of import.

Tax also applied to opium, betel leaf (sirih), pork, arak[12], gaming houses and fish markets. Goods, both imported and exported, that were not listed as taxable products were not taxed. Goods not displayed for sale but loaded on ships for export were required to have a certificate attached to them from the customs house, declaring that they were for re-export and not for sale in Melaka. If goods were offered for disposal, then the usual duties on imports are charged.

4.9 The Tin trade in Melaka

Important to the Dutch is the extension of the tin trade. Tin-goods had an important place in European and Asian households. Together with a certain percentage of copper or lead, tin was the very material to make all kinds of objects for the daily use. Like: eat-; drink;-and kitchenware, chandeliers, mirrors, urinals, soap trays but also toys like dolls houses or soldiers. Iron pots and copper pots and kettles, of which the inside had a layer of tin, are safe to use for the preparation of food, because tin was resistant to certain acids and does not affect the taste of certain dishes.

The Dutch only participated (in the 17th century) in the tin trade to cover the costs of keeping Melaka up as a depôt. Officials got the directive to keep away from any conflicts. Military operations only could make the upkeep of Melaka higher. In that way the tin trade differentiated from the pepper or spices trade for which the VOC was prepared to do anything. The tin trade was therefore not a great success. The native

[11] The picul (spelt pikul) is a traditional Asian unit of weight. A major problem with traditional measurement units is regional variance in definition.

[12] Arak or Araq (Arabic: عرق pronounced [araq], is a highly alcoholic spirit (50%-63% Alc. Vol.). It is a clear, colourless, unsweetened anise-flavoured distilled alcoholic drink (also labelled as an Aperitif). It is the traditional alcoholic beverage of Lebanon and Syria, and is also produced and consumed in many Eastern Mediterranean and North African countries.

rulers had nothing to fear and could deal with whomever they wished and made the best price for their tin. The company was not allowed to put any military pressure upon the native rulers to have them follow the treaties. On the other hand the VOC could not raise the price of tin to outdo the native traders. So by this the VOC was very much dependant on the developments in the region.

4.10 Social Life in the Dutch territories

A feature of life in the East and West Indies, as Boxer (1965:235) describes, was the excessive preoccupation of the senior employees with official rank and status. Class-consciousness was highly developed among the Dutch in their home country. Until recent times a married woman was addressed as Mevrouw, Juffrouw or Vrouw according to the status of her husband. If he was a doctor, grocer or a labourer. In the overseas possessions and in Batavia in particular, class distinction and social graduations were carried to grotesque lengths more especially during the second half of the eighteenth century.

The Dutch East Indies Company official hierarchy, as Boxer (1965:236) mentions, was as strictly regulated as in the Roman Catholic Church. Rank and precedence was the breath of life of the European citizens of Jayakarta (*Batavia)*. The dress of the Company's servants, the number of coaches or vehicles which they could have and the degree of decoration they were allowed. These and a hundred other personal matters were all regulated in the greatest detail. As was the lengthy toast list at official and private parties. The order of precedence at receptions, dinners and funerals were laid down with the minutest detail. Giving rise to bitter quarrels and lawsuits whenever some real or fancied breach of the regulations occurred. It was the ladies who insisted upon each and every prerogative attached to the rank of their respective husbands. They were generally not of any really social mentionable background.

Another feature of live in Jayakarta (*Batavia)*, as Boxer (1965:237) describes, and for that matter in all the principal European settlements in the tropics to a greater or lesser degree was the importance attached to a display of pomp and circumstance largely with the idea of impressing the indigenous population with the White Man's wealth and power.

This kind of life was, as Boxer (1965:238) mentions, restricted to a few hundred merchants and officials of the company. It was not shared by servants like: junior clerks, soldiers and sailors. One of the reasons was that the punishments inflicted on soldiers were as harsh as those inflicted on sailors and could leave someone injured for life. Life for soldiers was a harsh one and some travellers comment that life for them was equally harsh as it was for Negro slaves.

4.11 Conclusion

The Dutch were successful in their trade enterprises overseas. The reason that they expanded their trade interests was due to the Eighty Years War. One of the factors was the geographical position of the Netherlands. A second factor was that the Dutch were industrious and their prices were lower than those of their competitors. A third factor was that people are personally involved in the trade process because they bought, owned, build, charter or freight a ship and its cargo.

In 1640 the Dutch took over Melaka from the Portuguese. It was an addition to the trade empire of the VOC but it was mainly taken because the Dutch made Jayakarta (*Batavia*) into the centre of their trade empire.

Social life in the principle European settlements was quite different from that in Europe: class consciousness was highly developed; class distinction and social graduations were

carried to grotesque lengths more especially during the second half of the eighteenth century.

There was an importance attached to a display of pomp and circumstance largely with the idea of impressing the indigenous population with the White Mans's wealth and power.

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