CHAPTER 11

THE STATE OF MALACCA

According to the Chinese historical record, The Overall Survey of the Ocean Shores, Malacca in earlier days was called Mamlakat. According to the Arab historical records, Malacca from the beginning had many riverside bazaars. The Arabs called the marketplace “Mamlakat.” This Arabic word was later mistakenly used as the name of the state.
MALACCA – HISTORICAL CITY

Malacca is the second smallest state in Malaysia, in terms of land area. Although it is only about 1,600 sq. km. in size, it was once a very important trading port in the past. Merchant ships from the Middle East, India and China gathered in Malacca to trade their spices, gold, silk, tea leaves, cigarettes, perfume and many other commodities. From the 16th to 18th century, it was an important stop along the major sea traffic route in Southeast Asia.

Chinese history books from the Ming Dynasty recorded that a place called “Man La Jia” was renamed Malacca after its invasion by Portugal. Malacca city is the capital of the state. It is an ancient city with a long history. The streets in Malacca city are narrow with many unique traditional buildings. The residential buildings were adorned with beautiful ceramic tiles, while the walls were plastered with traditional mosaic patterns. The lion head motif was commonly used as the door clanger. Due to its past colonization by Portugal, Holland and Britain multi-national influences are apparent even today in Malacca’s buildings and culture.

Malacca is located on the west coast of Peninsular Malaysia, facing the Straits of Malacca and situated between Negeri Sembilan and Johor. The Malacca River runs through the middle of the city. In July 2008, Malacca and George Town (Penang) were declared as
“World Heritage Sites” by UNESCO. Today, the tourism and manufacturing industries are the two main sources of income for Malacca.

**HISTORY**

In 1396, Prince Parameswara from Sumatra was exiled to Malay Peninsula and started the Empire of Malacca. In 1414, Prince Parameswara converted to Islam. From a fishing village, Malacca was transformed into the busiest trading port in the region. Merchants from Java, India, Arabia, China and many other places converged here. During the annual monsoon season, it became the berthing point for merchant ships. Unfortunately, the prosperity of Malacca attracted invasion after invasion by many different countries.

In the 15th century, the Sultan of Malacca sought help from China to resist the invasion of Siam. In a show of solidarity, Admiral Zheng He from the Ming Dynasty was assigned to lead the biggest fleet in the world at that time to the South, by crossing the “Western Ocean”. The Malay Annals (Sejarah Melayu) records that “In 1460, the Emperor of the Ming Dynasty betrothed Princess Hang Li Po to Sultan Mansur Shah from Malacca, to enhance the diplomatic
relationship of these two countries. Princess Hang Li Po brought a big troop of retinues, inclusive of 500 slave girls to Malacca.” Eventually these retinues assimilated with the locals through marriage, especially with those staying at Bukit China, Malacca. However, there is no historical evidence to confirm the identity of Puteri Hang Li Po. The Chinese who came here to do business or work eventually stayed on, married the locals and multiplied. Their descendants are today known as the “Peranakan”. The men are called Baba, while the women are known as Nyonya.

In 1511, a Portuguese, Alfonso d’Albuquerque, led his troops to conquer Malacca. And with this invasion, Christianity was introduced to Malacca. During the Portuguese occupation, many Catholic churches like St. Paul’s Church and St. Francis Xavier’s Church were built. St. Francis Xavier, who was known as the Catholic’s “Eastern Apostle”, was in Malacca to do mission work during this period.

In 1641, the Dutch defeated Portugal with the help of the Sultan of Johor, and went on to occupy Malacca for 155 years. During this period, the Dutch continued to expand Catholicism and build churches. St. Peter’s Church was built in 1710 and Christ Church in 1753, both of which were Dutch Reformed churches. At the same time, they left behind a legacy of historical sites, such as the Red Tower, the Stadthuys Building, the Dutch Graveyard and St. John’s Fort not far
MISSIONS IN MALACCA

Historians regard Malacca as the starting point of Christianity in the Far East region. From the 16th to 18th century, Malacca was a port flooded with merchants, playing a strategic role along the busiest traffic route in Southeast Asia. During the European Renaissance of the 18th and 19th centuries, many western missionaries dedicated their lives to preach the gospel to the people of the world. Numerous foreign mission agencies started sending out missionaries. Among these, William Carey travelled to India in 1793, Rev. Robert Morrison was sent by the London Missionary Society to inland China in 1807, while the British explorer cum missionary, David Livingstone, went to the remote inland regions of Africa in 1840. All these missions stirred up waves of evangelism.

Upon signing of the Anglo-Dutch Treaty in 1824, Malacca was handed over to the British. It then became a part of the Straits Settlements with Singapore and Penang in the year 1826. When Britain invalidated the Straits Settlements in 1946, Malacca and Penang became part of the Malayan Union.
In 1807, the first Protestant missionary, Rev. Robert Morrison, left Britain and crossed the oceans alone to step foot in China. This opened the door for missions in China. Rev. Morrison travelled from Britain to New York, and then to China by boat. In his travels to and from China, someone asked him, “Were you able to inspire China?” Rev. Morrison replied, “Sir, I could not. But I believe God can.” The humility and determination of Morrison brought excellent results in China and Malacca.

In his first 7 years in China, Morrison learnt Mandarin and started translating the Bible. The Manchu government of that time prohibited Chinese people from teaching Mandarin to foreigners and from producing foreign literature. Offenders would be sentenced to death. In order to survive and continue residing in China, Morrison worked as a translator for the East India Company, which was owned by the British. In 1812, the London Missionary Society sent Rev. William Milne to assist him. Morrison and his co-worker, Milne, chose Malacca as the main base for their China mission. In 1814, William and Rachel Milne brought Tsae A-Ko (a crafter), and Liang Fa from China to Malacca, as well as some woodblocks to be used to print New Testament Bibles in Chinese. They crossed the seas and reached
Malacca in 1815. Although Milne was responsible for the mission work in Malacca, Morrison was still the main leader.

In 1818, Rev. Morrison and Rev. Milne started Anglo-Chinese College (ACS) in Malacca, with Milne as the first principal. The purpose of the school was to “educate the Chinese youths with English, preach the Christian faith to them, and teach Mandarin to the missionaries”. ACS helped many missionaries to become proficient in Chinese. One of them was Rev. James Legge, the succeeding principal. In 1843, Rev. James shifted ACS to Hong Kong. By 1875, Christian missionaries had started about 350 schools with 6,000 students in China. ACS had trained up numerous missionaries by then and set the first example of mission through education.

At that time, Milne brought a printing machine with two sets of English and Malay language metal printing blocks to Malacca. However, wooden printing blocks were still needed to print Chinese Bibles. From then on, most printed materials for missions to China were produced in Malacca. Milne also established The Ultra-Ganges Missionary Union and helped to pastor the Dutch Reformed church in Malacca. He was also overseeing churches in Singapore and Penang. Besides these duties, Milne also had his hands full in helping Morrison translate the Chinese Bible and publishing Chinese and English magazines.

On 25th November 1819, Morrison and Milne finished the
Chinese translation for both the New and Old Testaments Bible. But it was only published by ACS in the year 1823. The Bible was then called “Holy Book of Heavenly God” in Chinese and it was the second Chinese Bible for the protestants. (Joshua Marshman had used a portable technique to publish a similar work in India in 1822). The printing of the Chinese Bible in Malacca enriched the local culture.

Besides completing the Chinese translation of the Bible with Milne, Morrison also published the world’s first *Chinese–English and English–Chinese lexicons*. It was a much-needed reference book for Westerners in China when learning the Chinese language. Morrison and Milne also started China’s first Chinese newspaper, the *Chinese Monthly Magazine*. It covered issues on religion, morals, astronomy, science, world news and educational information. It became very popular and was well-received by the public.

Before Morrison was transferred back to Great Britain for work commitments in 1824, he ordained Liang Fa as a pastor. Liang Fa was a reporter for the *Chinese Monthly Magazine* and was also the author of the first Chinese gospel tract, *Good Words Exhorting Mankind*. In 1832, *Good Words Exhorting Mankind* started its print in Malacca. This booklet became the trigger for Hong Xiu Quan to initiate The Taiping Rebellion.

With Morrison back in Great Britain, a young man with a heart for China mission and who had been learning Mandarin came
to the fore. He was Samuel Dyer, father-in-law of Rev. Hudson Taylor, the founder of China Inland Mission and OMF. Because of the prohibition of gospel preaching in China, Samuel and Maria Dyer went to Penang in 1827 and subsequently served in Malaya for the rest of their lives. In the development of Chinese printing, Dyer’s contribution was undeniable. While serving with Liang Fa in Malacca, he pioneered the development of portable steel printing blocks with Ming font. He brought Chinese printing into a new era.

Morrison passed away in Guangzhou in 1834 and was buried in Macau. Morrison dedicated his whole life for the gospel, with an emphasis on writing, printing, translating and publishing the Bible. He contributed greatly in the bridging of Western and Eastern culture. And in areas of preaching the gospel and teaching the Truth, Milne left a remarkable legacy.

MISSION AFTER MORRISON

During the colonisation of Malacca by the British in the 19th century, different denominations of Christianity started their gospel works in Malacca.

The Anglican Bishop consecrated the Holland Church as the Malacca Christ Church for the English congregation. In 1869,
Chaplain George Frederick Hose started to serve among the Malacca Chinese with the help of Chinese catechists. Anglicans contributed much to Malacca through social work and education. By 1911, the Anglican church has set up its first hospital named the St. David ‘s Hospital. In the same year, St. Nicholas’ Home was set up for the physically-challenged. St. David’s School was established in 1960 and the first Anglican kindergarten in 1970. Today, Anglican services cater to speakers of different languages such as English, Chinese, Tamil and Malay.

Besides the Anglicans, the Brethren Church also reached Malacca very early. Missionaries of the Brethren Church founded the second Gospel Hall in Peninsular Malaya in 1866. It still exists today.

In 1898, Chou-Xin-En (spelled name), a member of the Singapore Methodist Church, started a pioneering work while selling the Bible in Malacca. Rev. and Mrs. Shellabear reached Malacca in 1904 and started on the Malay Bible translation. The Malacca Methodist Church was the only parish using the Malay language during that period. While reaching out to the English and the Malay-speaking locals, the Shellabears were concerned about the Chinese work. The following year, they set up the Methodist Girls’ School and eventually purchased a piece of land to build the Methodist English School and a church (the Tamil Methodist Church today). From 1921 onwards, the Methodists built up more churches in the districts of
Malacca.

The Presbyterian Church reached Malacca in the year 1925 and a local church was soon set up. However, its service was disrupted during the Second World War. It was only revived in the year 1968.

Today, Malacca boasts of many churches such as Anglican, Brethren, Methodist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Evangelical Free, Baptist, Calvary, Gateway, Assembly of God and other independence churches. However, the relationship between the different denominations can be improved and strengthened. Spiritually, anyone can feel the superstitious nature of the population with its many temples. The unreached people (mostly Chinese) number in the tens of thousands. Hopefully and prayerfully, all the churches will be able to pool their resources and creativity together to preach the gospel effectively, as well as having a united representation to dialogue with the government when necessary.
William Milne was born in Scotland in 1785. His father died when he was six-year-old and he was brought up by his mother. While young, he had to shepherd the sheep and was inadvertently exposed to vulgar language. Thankfully God prepared three good mentors for him. They taught him to pray and to understand the Word of God, besides teaching him the skills to weave baskets and to manage his business. After his conversion at age 16, he prayed fervently and dedicated himself to be used by God.

In 1809, at age 24, Milne applied to the London Missionary Society to preach the gospel in foreign lands. He attended the interview dressed as a shepherd. The interviewing committee commented that he was more suitable to be a mechanic than a missionary. Milne responded immediately saying “I am willing to do any work, as long as it is related to mission. I am willing to chop logs and fetch water for the work of God.” With that attitude, he was accepted by the London Missionary Society for training and eventually was ordained as a pastor in 1812. In August that same year, he married Rachel Cowie. After a month of marriage, they boarded a ship and travelled to China.

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William and Rachel Milne reached Macau in July 1813. They
were the second missionaries to China. In the diary by Morrison, who was serving alone in China, he wrote “The dream to have a co-worker is fulfilled today after seven years.”

Unfortunately, the Macau government under the Portuguese did not allow Milne to settle down. After staying in Macau for 16 days, he took a ship to Guangzhou. He learned Chinese secretly for four months. Morrison had encouraged him to learn Chinese, so that they could translate the Old Testament Bible to Chinese. It was a hard learning process for Milne. He said, “If a person wants to learn Chinese well, he must have a bronze body, a steel lung, a rubber head, spring hands, eagle eyes, apostle’s heart, memory like angels and the age of Methuselah.”

Milne did not reside in Guangzhou as a translator like Morrison. The Portuguese government, being Roman Catholic, did not welcome the presence of Protestant missionaries in Macau. Without much option, Morrison sent Milne to Peninsular Malaya to scout for a suitable mission base. After seven months, Milne was back in Guangzhou to report to Morrison. From their discussion, it was decided that Malacca was to serve as their mission base.

In April 1815, Milne brought his family and Liang Fa to Malacca. The Chinese government prohibited the spreading of religions and restricted the publication of Chinese gospel writings. Due to this restriction, Milne started a printing office in Malacca. With the assistance of Liang Fa, Milne printed many Chinese Bibles,
evangelistic books and gospel tracts. They also published the first Chinese magazine, *Chinese Monthly Magazine* and also English publications. Milne said, "When one person cannot share the gospel individually, his responsibility is to send out a substitute (gospel publication). Who can be sure that these peace messages are not able to straighten the path for the Lord, and not able to prepare a community for the Lord?" Liang Fa started reading the Bible and books by Milne. He was convicted of the Truth and accepted Christ. He was baptised by Milne in 1816.

Morrison and Milne started Anglo-Chinese College together, with Milne being appointed as the first principal. The following year, Milne’s wife gave birth to a baby boy. But tragically, she contracted dysentery, fell ill and passed away at age 35. She left behind four young children. Milne was devastated and very depressed and his diary recorded his pains and tears. Milne himself was a sickly person and with the added responsibilities of being a mother, he went through terribly difficult times.

Despite the death of his wife, Milne continued to serve God faithfully. And his great sacrifice and achievement culminated in the presentation of an Honourary Doctorate of Theology by the University of Glasgow. A big private company then invited him to work for them. But Milne knew deep inside his heart of God’s purpose for him in China. So he rejected the offer and continued his
work in Malacca. He was called to the Lord at the age of 37 in June 1822 due to exhaustion.

Although Milne had passed away, his passionate heart for the Chinese influenced his spiritual son, Liang Fa. Liang Fa not only grew to be a good helper to Morrison in China, he also became an excellent co-worker to many missionaries from different denominations. This resulted in many Chinese hearing the gospel. One of Milne’s son, William Charles Milne, joined the London Missionary Society in 1839. At age 20, he went back to Malaya to continue his father’s mission work. He only left the London Missionary Society in the year 1856.
Chronology of Morrison-Milne's Translation
"Holy Book of Heavenly God"

1806  An anonymous translation (presumably by a Jesuit missionary) of the Gospels into Chinese entitled Evangelia Quatuor Sinice was discovered amongst the books of the British Museum. Morrison determined to put this fortuitous discovery to his advantage, going with Yong Sam-tak to the Reading Room each day to study and transcribe this rare treasure.

1810  Morrison completes translation of the Acts of the Apostles, which he then published in a locally-produced woodblock edition. 1,000 copies were printed at a cost of £100.


1812-1813  Morrison completes his translation of the New Testament. The gospels are largely based on the anonymous translation that Morrison had studied in the British Museum five years previously.

1814  Morrison completes translation of Genesis.

1819  Morrison completes his translation of the Bible on the 25th November 1819. Milne translated the book of Job and the historical books of the Old Testament, whilst Morrison was responsible for the translation of 26 books of the Old Testament and 13 books of the New Testament (the remaining New Testament books were based on the British Museum manuscript).

1823  Morrison's translation of the Holy Bible is finally published, under the title “The Holy Book of Heavenly God (Chinese Bible)”, by the Anglo-Chinese College in Malacca.
Prayer for Malacca

1. Pray for the government to be righteous, clean and fair in treating all races and religions.

2. Pray for the churches to have the right vision and mission to bring people to the Truth.

3. Pray for the spiritual needs of the people in rural areas, that they will receive the grace of salvation soon.