

# Parameswara



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

The Malay Annals relate that Parameswara was a fourteenth-century Palembang prince who, fleeing from a Japanese enemy, escaped to the island of Temasik (present-day Singapore) and quickly established himself as its king. Shortly afterward, however, Parameswara was driven out of Temasik by an invasion, and with a small band of followers set out along the west coast of the Malay peninsula in search of a new refuge. Parameswara was driven out of Temasik as he murdered Temagi (ruler of Temasik) because he thought he would build a new empire there. The refugees settled first at Muar, but they were quickly driven away by a vast and implacable horde of monitor lizards; the second spot chosen seemed equally inauspicious, as the fortress that the refugees began to build fell to ruins immediately.

Parameswara moved on. Soon afterward, during a hunt near the mouth of a river called Bertam, he saw a white mouse-deer kick one of his hunting dogs. So impressed was he by the deer's defiant gesture that he decided immediately to build a city on the spot. He asked one of his servants the name of the tree under which he was standing and, being informed that the tree was called a Malaka, gave that name to the city. The year was 1400.

After the foundation of the new settlement in Malacca, Parameswara initiated the development of the place and ordered his men to cultivate the lands with banana, sugar cane, yam and other crops for food. Parameswara was a dynamic leader as he was able to foresee how Melaka was about to prosper and he took advantage of it. Since Melaka was protected by natural geography such as the paya bakau which protects Melaka from strong waves, erosion, ambushes and the hilly surroundings which protects Melaka from monsoon winds, Melaka grew strongly. The deep coves also allow the businessmen (pedagang) to port safely. Taking the advantage of the harbour

that protected by a hill and sheltered ships well from the danger of strong tides, Parameswara laid the foundation of a trade port by building the storage and market facilities to serve as a meeting point to exchange goods. The indigenous inhabitants of Malacca and the strait, the Orang Lauts, who were also known as the loyal servants of Malay rulers since the time of Singapura and Srivijaya, were said to have been employed by Parameswara to patrol the adjacent sea areas, to repel other petty pirates, and to direct traders to their Malay overlords' port. Ironically, Orang Lauts themselves were known as ferocious pirates in history.