



## MEDIA INFO

### MELAKA, THIS IS WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

Although Melaka bustles with urbanization and sophistication, she still beholds the beauty and luster of a by-gone era.

Melaka owed its origin and foundation to a young Hindu Prince from Palembang, Sumatra. Sometime in 1402, while taking a breather under a tree by the river mouth, he witnessed an extraordinary spectacle where a pack of ferocious dogs attacked a lonely white mousedeer (*kanchil* in Malay). To his amazement, this small mousedeer had the courage and strength to kick the advancing dogs into the river. Taking this as a good omen, Parameswara then gazed up at the tree and decided to name his newly acclaimed state – Melaka, after the tree.

Parameswara had a vision and decided to build adequate infrastructure that would compliment the port and the state. Melaka port brought good fortunes with merchant ships from all over the world took berth at the port. From their travel books, Marco Polo and

Tom Pires referred to Melaka as the “Venice of the East” and whosoever holds control on Melaka holds Venice by the throat. In 1414, at the age of 72, Parameswara married a Pasai Princess. Parameswara had moulded this little obscure, unimportant little fishing village into a powerful trading centre in the East.



The state of Melaka is named after this tree

From that time on, seven sultans ruled Melaka for a period of 110 years, spanning the empire’s influence on both sides of the straits. Naturally, like the sweetness of sugar to ants, foreign powers soon began knocking at her door. Among the first to come ashore were the Chinese (1403) followed by the Portuguese (1509), Dutch (1641) and the English (1789). Consequently, these visits introduced an interaction of cultures, customs and other values.

If you were to take a stroll along Melaka town today, you will notice many beautiful buildings taking after Chinese, Portuguese, English and Dutch architecture. Today, the State still attracts trade and commerce as she did 600 years ago. New opportunities are opened as the State “wakes up from her sleepy hollow”. It was not until decades ago that tourism began to move up the notch as one of the top priorities allocated by the State. As such, Melaka’s historical heritage has been preserved over the years, thus attracting tourists from near and far.

---

Issued by: Communications Division, Tourism Malaysia  
Date 6 November 2003  
For more info call: (03) 2693 5188

---