

Danish India

The British, French, Dutch and the Portuguese had huge impact on India, not only for a trade point of view but also through military expeditions and conquest. In comparison, The Danish in India did not have the same effect or influence as its European counterparts though the Danish did rule certain parts for over 225 years. Their main centres were in Tranquebar in present day Tamil Nadu, Serampore in West Bengal and the Nicobar Islands which is now a part of India's union territories. Due to the growing influence of the East India Company and The VOC of its trade with the east and specially with India, the Danish Monarch King Christian IV showed interest in having trade relations with the East. In 1615, two Dutch merchants, Jan de Willem of Amsterdam and Herman Rosenkrantz of Rotterdam, brought before King Christian IV a proposal for the foundation of a Danish trading company that might compete with the EIC and VOC, and in the process enrich both king and shareholders. The king was very receptive to the proposal to mark the role of Denmark-Norway as a major player in contemporary European trade and politics.

On March 17, 1616 King Christian IV issued a charter giving monopoly right to the Danish East India company to carry out trade in the east for a period of 12 years. The Danish East India Company is also



Fort Dansborg Built by Ove Gjedde

Image Source: <http://www.tierratravels.com/travelblog/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/tranquebar.jpg>

known as Ostindisk Kompagni. Gjedde (who became Grand Admiral Gjedde of the Royal Danish navy) was in charge of the first expedition which took more than 2 years to reach Ceylon by which time the Portuguese had already laid claim to the island. Trade



Old Map of Tranquebar

Image Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Danish_colonial_empire#/media/File:A_view_of_Tranquebar_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg

director, Robert Crappe had already left in a scouting vessel named Oresund where he encountered the Portuguese off the Karaikkal coast where the Portuguese sunk the ship and most of the crew were taken prisoners. But Crappe and 13 of his crew members escaped and when they came ashore were captured by Indians. They were taken to the Nayaks of Tanjore who became interested in the trade propositions laid down by Crappe. Crappe negotiated with the Nayaks of Tanjore and the resulting treaty ensured them the village of Tranquebar and the right to construct the future fort of Dansborg.

Administration

The Company had poor investment and administration in its early days. The total investment done by the company never really reaped the kind of profits that the company hoped for in comparison to the British or the Portuguese. From that perspective the Danish East India company always struggled with its profit and loss accounts and were never able to gain huge profits like the Dutch VOC and many of the company stockholders were weary of this expensive venture into the east. As a result many stockholders wanted to withdraw from the trade completely had it not been for the strong resolve of Christian IV. Even the coastline witnessed a lot of tidal waves and other natural phenomenon which kept the maintenance of the colony difficult for whatever was built by the local population would be destroyed by natural

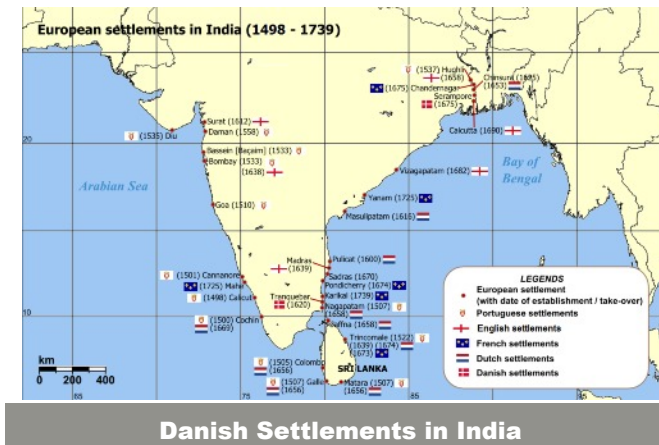


Image Source: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/32/European_settlements_in_India_1501-1739.png

elements in due time be it roads, houses, administrative buildings, markets etc. Between 1640 and 1669 the Danes had to follow a policy of abandonment and isolation because of various factors like political or commercial. In this period the Danes tried to sell Fort Dansborg but that didn't materialize. The Nayak besieges Fort Dansborg for lack of tribute payments, the local population supports Kongsbakke who erects a wall around the town of Tranquebar to keep it safe from external forces. Fort Dansborg had been isolated for 29 years and when the Danish government sent Captain Adelaer. Even after years of isolation the Danish flag flew over Fort Dansborg and the garrison was intact. The Danish East India company also established, managed and controlled several commercial outpost like Oddeway Torre on the Malabar Coast, Dannemarksnagore at Gondalpara, at Serampore in what is now West Bengal, Balasore and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The purpose for colonizing Nicobar islands was for planting of pepper, sugarcane, cotton, coffee, cinnamon and other spices which could enhance the company's trade activities as well as their profits.

The Danish East India company India's trade was devastated because of attacks by the British on Danish Shipping during the Napoleonic Wars. At one point the British also occupied Dansborg and Fredrikshagore. The decline of the Danish power within resulted in the relinquishing all colonies either

through war or by selling them to the British. The Danes never had a chance to compete with it more powerful European competitors namely the British who eventually took over Danish settlements and incorporated them into the Raj.

The Coinage of Danish India

Tranquebar was a town and former Danish colony on the southeast coast of India. In Danish times, 1620-1845, it was a factory site and seaport operated by the Danish Asiatic Company. Tranquebar and the other Danish settlements in India were sold to the British East India Company in 1845.

ADMINISTRATION OF TRANQUEBAR

Danish East India Company (DOC) 1620-(1650)

Danish Crown ca.1630-1670

Christian IV, 1588-1648

Danish East India Company (DOC) 1670-1729

MONETARY SYSTEM

80 Kas (Cash) = Royaliner (Fano)

8 Royaliner = 1 Rupee

18 Royaliner = 1 Speciesdaler

The lead cash (Kas) of Danish India were struck in many varieties such as Cast Coinage and hammered coinage.



Christian VII Royaliner (Fano)

Image Source : <http://www.worldofcoins.eu/forum/index.php?topic=22148.0>

Obv: Crowned C7 monogram

Rev: Arms divides date, value above



Frederick III Coinage

Image Source: <http://www.forumancientcoins.com/gallery/albums/userpics/36484/UBJ-111.jpg>

Obverse: Crown over F 3

Reverse: Lion facing right.



Christian IV (1588-1648) Pb Cash

Image Source: <http://www.worldofcoins.eu/forum/index.php?topic=28838.0>

Obv: DAN/NISB/ORG in three lines

Rev: KE/DA in two lines, unknown source of "KEDA", without leaf to right of reverse legend

Bibliography

1. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Danish_India
2. Lach, Donald (1993). Trade, missions, literature, Volume 3. University of Chicago Press. p. 92. ISBN 9780226467535.
3. Rasmussen, Peter Ravn (1996). "Tranquebar: The Danish East India Company 1616 -1669". University of Copenhagen.

Disclaimer

All the information in this article is published in good faith and for general information purposes only. We do not make any warranties about the completeness, reliability and accuracy of this information. Images and Text material courtesy is given to the respective persons or links and we do not take credit for the same.