

Traditional Landscapes

of the Malays
of the Peninsula
Zaharah Haji Mahmud



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Foreward

“A landscape at its most elemental is simply the face of the land”. So says the writer of this volume, Datin Zaharah bt. Haji Mahmud. But the face of the land, firm as the Earth may be, is never static. Changes take place all the time; on the one hand as the product of natural forces such as denudation, erosion, sedimentation and deposition, on the other by human activities.

In this book Datin Zaharah takes us through the traditional landscapes of Peninsula Malaysia, not just through space but through time as well. Reading this book we have become better informed of the milieu that we are in, and of the factors that have caused the changes in the landscapes and those that remain to allow us to recognise the “traditional” elements in the landscapes of the Malay Peninsula.

Datin Zaharah has succeeded in producing a most valuable contribution in this aspect of Malay civilisation: the human geography of the Malay Peninsula. In this book she has been able to link the human and the physical factors that have given rise to the traditional landscapes of the Malays. And through the approach that she has adopted, we will be able to predict the directions of landscape changes in the future.

I take this opportunity to congratulate Datin Zaharah for her work, and the Institute of Malay Civilisation of the university for having initiated the project whose end-product is this book, *Traditional Landscapes of the Malays of the Peninsula*.

Datuk Muhammad Rais bin Abdul Karim
Vice-Chancellor
Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris

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And last but not the least, this book is for my late father who "taught" me so much and so early in my childhood about the Malay peasant world, of the agonies and ecstasies of kampung life, of the names and uses of plants, of traditional foods and customs, agricultural practices and taboos; things I never realised I had stored in my memory bank until I started to write this book. May God shelter him in eternal peace.