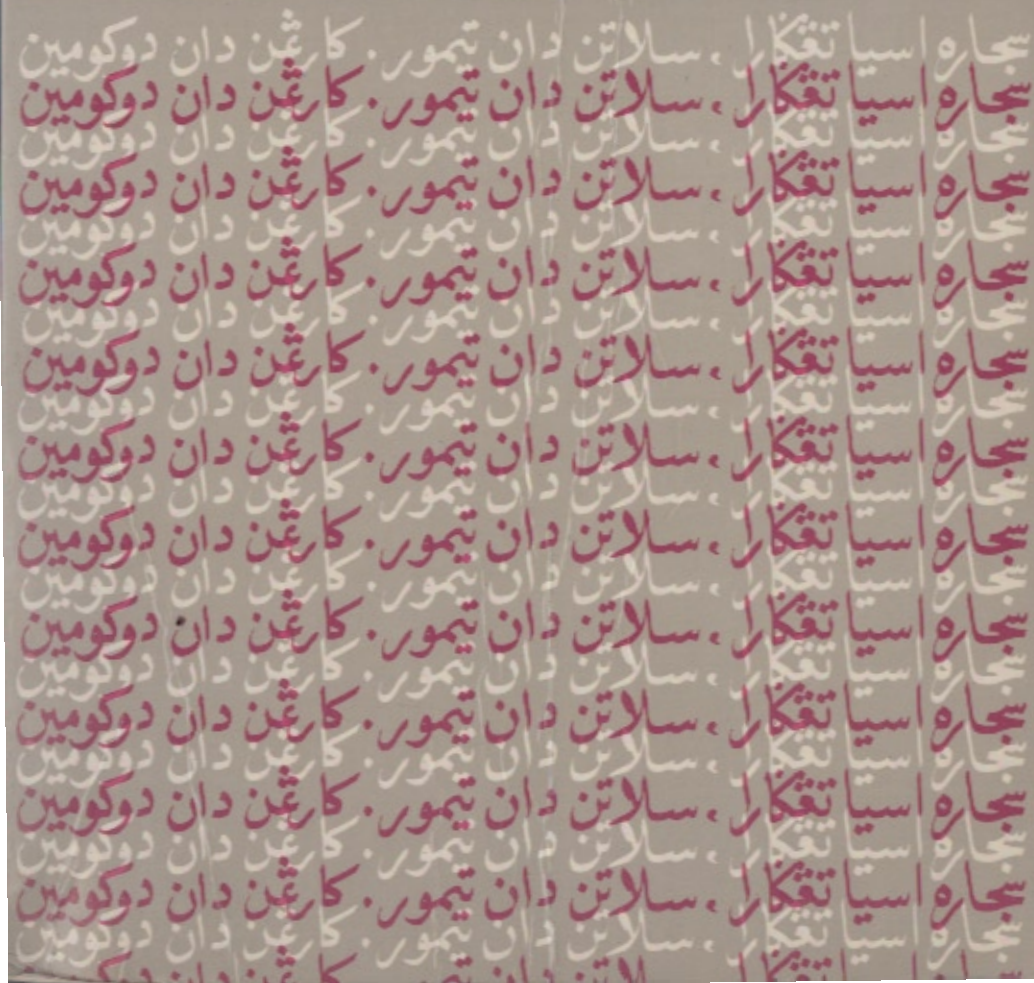


OXFORD IN ASIA COLLEGE TEXTS

THE HISTORY OF SOUTH-EAST, SOUTH AND EAST ASIA

Essays and Documents

Edited by
KHOO KAY KIM



INTRODUCTION

It may seem unduly ambitious to produce a book which purports to deal with the history of three of the major regions of Asia. But the present volume is the result of a definite need. Year after year a very large number of pre-university students in Malaysia have been taking a paper which requires them to know the history of South-East, South and East Asia (1824-1954). Undeniably there is no dearth of reading material. There are nonetheless two major problems faced by history students. Firstly, the more accessible reading materials are often in the form of aids to examinations. Academically, these are of poor quality. There are, of course, numerous authoritative books dealing with each of the three regions under discussion. However, many of these could prove to be a little too advanced for pre-university students. Secondly, and this represents a more serious problem, is the fact that few students are well informed about the reading materials available to them. The reading list provided by the examination authority, unfortunately, has not been up-dated for some time. Placed in a quandary, the majority of the students tend to rely on notes provided by their teachers. But history is one subject which does not lend itself to this type of study. Unlike the positive sciences, in the case of history, no single text is by itself adequate for an understanding of the complex historical processes experienced by a particular society.

Although the present work is intended to help pre-university students, it is not specifically aimed at preparing students for examinations. It would be foolish, admittedly, to say that examinations are not important; they still form the main basis upon which the relative ability of a student is determined. However, even assuming that examinations should be given the highest priority, it is contended here that the student who understands his subject and adopts a more sophisticated approach to the study of history is also the student most likely to do

well in examinations. To that end this book of essays is produced but with a certain difference. Its primary intention, unlike many of the revision courses and aids to examinations, is not to reduce the burden of the history student; on the contrary, it seeks to provoke the student to work more conscientiously and to think more deeply and critically about his subject. History is a highly intellectual subject. If it is taught in an exceedingly simple manner at the lower level in school, it is because children who are less mature cannot cope with the abstruse nature of the subject. But the approach to history should be increasingly sophisticated as the children move towards tertiary education. By the time students are preparing for university education they must be aware that in history there are no simple answers to complex questions. History deals primarily with human experiences which can neither be measured nor quantified. Ascertaining the facts in history is, in reality, a very mechanical process which can be accomplished, except under examination conditions, by a quick visit to the library. Once given the facts comes the more important exercise—that of observing patterns, making deductions and drawing conclusions. Ideally, if a history student is to be tested at all, this is what he should be tested on, not his ability to commit to memory names, dates and clauses of treaties.

Before discussing some of the basic features of the present book of essays, it is pertinent to look at the existing 'syllabus'. There is, properly speaking, no syllabus as such. Candidates are merely told that the questions set will cover the period 1824 to 1954. There can be no convincing reason given, of course, why the History of South-East Asia, let alone that of South and East Asia, should have 1824 as the all important watershed and, for that matter, 1954. But there is no need to split hairs here. Of more fundamental importance to the candidate taking the examination is what aspects of the subject he should concentrate on since so much happened between 1824 and 1954. An examination of the past questions reveals that the emphasis is approximately as follows:

Malaysia—Singapore

British activities in the Straits of Malacca: the early nineteenth century
Anglo-Dutch relations and the Treaty of 1824
Anglo-Siamese relations and the treaties of 1826

The Straits Settlements to 1867
Civil wars in the Malay states: the mid-nineteenth century
The development of tin-mining and Chinese immigration
The extension of British influence: the Pangkor Engagement and the Residential System
Administrative and constitutional change: Federation, Anglo-Siamese Treaty of 1909, Federal Council and Decentralization
Development in transport and communication
Social services and education
Rubber and Indian immigration
The war years 1942-1945
Post-war developments: Economy, Malayan Union, Federation and the Emergency

Indonesia

Dutch administration in Java in the nineteenth century
The formation of cultural and political associations in the early twentieth century
The Revolution of 1926
Anti-Dutch activities 1926-1941
The effects of the Japanese Occupation
The struggle for Independence since 1945

Burma

The Anglo-Burmese wars
Buddhism and the youth of Burma
Constitutional and political development until 1941
Burmese-Japanese co-operation
The final struggle for Independence after 1945

Thailand

Thailand's relations with the West up to the mid-nineteenth century
Internal reforms under Mongkut, Chulalongkorn and Vajiravudh
The Revolution of 1932 and its aftermath
Thailand during 1941-1945
The early post-war years

Philippines

Spanish rule and the beginnings of the revolutionary struggle

Under American tutelage: education and constitutional change
The Japanese Occupation
The achievement of independence and domestic politics

Indochina

French conquest and administration of Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos
The growth of anti-French activities
The war years
The struggle for independence under communist leadership

India and Pakistan

British policies in the mid-nineteenth century
The Mutiny and subsequent constitutional change
The founding of the Indian Congress
The founding of the Muslim League
Gandhi and Jinnah
The achievement of Independence for India and the birth of Pakistan

China

China's contact with the West in the early nineteenth century
The Taiping Rebellion
The decline of the Manchu dynasty and its consequences
Attempts at industrial and constitutional reforms
The Boxer Rebellion
The Revolution of 1911
The Kuomintang under Sun Yat-sen
The founding of the Communist Party
The first United Front
The KMT-CCP cleavage
The second United Front
The Sino-Japanese War
The final victory of the CCP

Japan

Japan's contact with the West in the mid-nineteenth century
The Meiji Restoration
Japan's emergence as a world power