

01/08/2001

## Exhibition on Islamic Art in China

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - Many of us may not know that there are 10 Muslim Chinese minority groups in China, each with a distinct identity, language, legends, cultural practices and traditional costumes.

All this started with the introduction of Islam in China as early as the seventh century and developed through trade, travel and territorial expansion.

If you wish to know more, visit the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia here where one would be able to get more details on this and other aspects of Islam in China through the "Six Centuries of Islamic Art in China" exhibition.

The exhibition offers a glimpse into the long history of the development of Islam in the Far East, and introduces the 10 minority groups and the material aspects of their culture.

Some of the interesting items among the 180 artifacts on display are a leaf from a Qing dynasty Quran, three-legged incense burner with Arabic calligraphic inscriptions, Uyghur polychrome leather boots and Hui scroll paintings.

The exhibition was opened by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad last Saturday.

Visitors to the exhibition will be able to see the development of their art, the exchanges between East and West Asia resulting in significant developments in both techniques of production, as well as decorative motifs and design.

The various types of robes, dresses and headgear are eye-catching and the fashion-conscious may even pick up some tips here.

Museum public relations and advertising executive Azmi Yaakob said the exhibition attracted more than 500 visitors daily and was popular among Malaysian Chinese.

"Usually there are very few visitors from among the Chinese, but surprisingly more Chinese are visiting the museum since the start of the exhibition."

He said many did not realise the significance of the place.

"It actually deals with art and not religion. This exhibition is a great example of what we have here."

The exhibition will be on until Oct 28. Opening hours are from 10am to 6pm from Tuesday to Sunday.

(END)