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preface

THIS is the sixth issue of the Malaysia Year Book covering all the territories of Malaysia and it is our hope that this edition offers a comprehensive picture of Malaysia today. All of the chapters in this new edition have been revised maintaining our policy of providing a Year Book containing as accurate and up-to-date information as possible. We would like to thank those who have contributed so much time and effort in providing us with expert information without whose help this publication would not be possible.

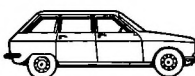
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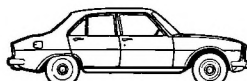
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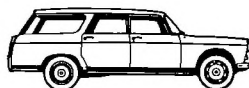
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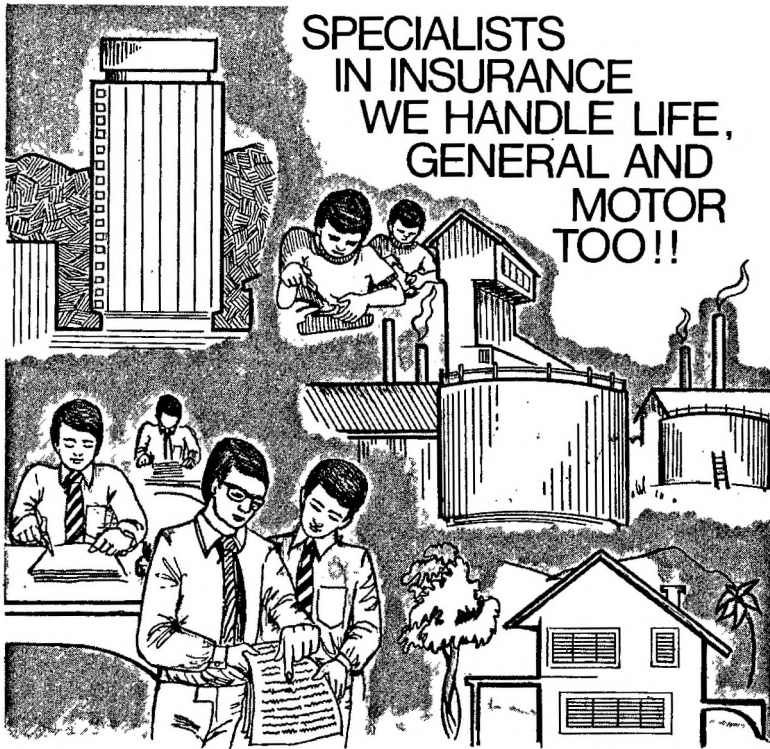
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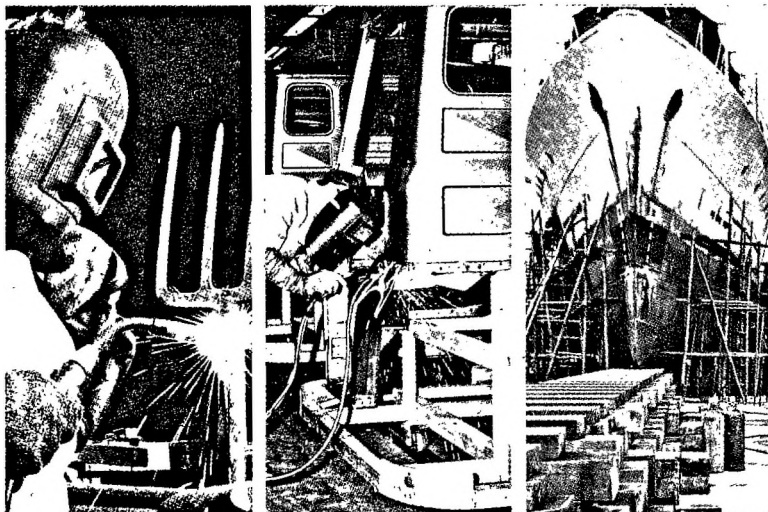
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Geography

Position and Extent

MALAYSIA OCCUPIES A CENTRAL position within the area commonly known as South-East Asia, being a part both of the Asian land mass and of the island world of the Malay Archipelago. While the term "Malaysia" has been used synonymously with the phrase "Malay Archipelago" since the 19th century, the present political concept of Malaysia comprises only the Malay Peninsula extending south-west from the narrow Kra Isthmus to the Straits of Johore, and separated by approximately 450 miles of the South China Sea at the narrowest extent, from the northern and north-western part of island of Borneo. It comprises the former Federation of Malaya and the former British colonies of North Borneo and Sarawak. The tiny enclave of Brunei between Sarawak and Sabah (as North Borneo is now known) and Singapore are, however, not within the Federation.

Malaysia extends as a rough arc, consisting of two portions bounded on one side and separated by the South China Sea. It lies entirely within the tropics, within latitudes $1\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ and 7° north, extending from longitudes 100° to $119\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ East. To the north of the Federation is Thailand, while to the south, the Republic of Indonesia maintains a land frontier of about 900 miles on the island of Borneo. Across the narrow Straits of Malacca to the west, lies the Indonesian island of Sumatra. To the north and north-east of Sabah, across the Sulu Sea, lie the islands of Palawan and Mindanao, which are part of the Republic of the Philippines.

Area: Statistics of the land area of Malaysia are as follows:—

Malaya	50,915 square miles
Sarawak	48,250 square miles
Sabah	29,388 square miles
Total	128,553 square miles

Width and Length

West or Peninsular Malaysia extends 460 miles in length from Perlis to the Straits of Johore, while the greatest length of East Malaysia is about 700 miles from Tanjong Datu in Sarawak to Hog Point on the Dent Peninsula in Sabah. The maximum width, on the other hand, is 200 miles in the case of the Malay Peninsula (between the Didings in Perak and Tanjong Penunjak in Trengganu). The Borneo territories of Malaysia have a maximum depth of 160 miles.

Coastline

The Peninsular Malaysian coastline extends to some 1,200 miles. The Malaysian Borneo coastline, not counting some minor indentations, is about 1,400 miles in length

Topography

West Malaysia

The Malay Peninsula consists of a series of mountain ranges aligned north-west to south-east with a major central spine extending from the Thai border to as far south as Tampin in Negri Sembilan. To the west of the Central Range is the Bintang Range extending from the northern border to the Taiping area, while to its east is an area of highland in Kelantan and Trengganu. where occurs Maaly's highest peak, Gunong Tahan (7,186) feet. The juxtaposition of these three mountain masses determines the major drainage lines of the Peninsula, namely the basins of the Perak, Kelantan and Pahang rivers. Between the Bintang and Central Range, the Sungai Perak flows southward into the Straits of Malacca. On the side other of the Central Range, between it and the Trengganu Highlands, the Sungai Kelantan flows north while the Sungai Pahang, Malaya's largest river, flows first south and then east. Both the Sungai Kelantan and the Sungai Pahang empty into the South China Sea. On either side of the mountainous core of the Peninsula there is a distinct coastal plain while the relief south of it, largely in the State of Johore is subdued, being undulating with occasional mountain outcrops as at Mount Ophir (4,167 feet).

The heavy and uniform rainfall gives rise to a multiplicity of rivers which are generally narrow and swift in their upper courses, often with tortuous rapids and precipitous gorges. In the lower reaches, the descent to the coastal plain is gradual and the rivers slowly meander across the broad flat plains flanking the mountains. On the west coast the lower course of the rivers sometimes lie through swampy land while on the east coast their entrance into the sea is sometimes impeded by sand bars, the result of powerful on-shore currents from the south China Sea. The rivers are still useful as a means of communications; in fact, the original settlement patterns and centres of local power were determined by them. The beds of the east coast rivers are more sandy than those of the west and more difficult of navigate.

The coastline of western Malaya is a practically unbroken succession of mangrove swamps and mud flats, frequently indented by picturesque bays fringed with coconut palms and casuarina trees. The east coast scenery differs considerably, with long stretches of sand and surf bordered by a littoral vegetation, in which the casuarina is prominent. It possesses a charm that is unparalleled.

About four-fifths of **the** Malay peninsula is covered by forest and swamps. This is likewise a feature of East Malaysia. The inland belt between the coasts and the forested mountainous interior is the agricultural zone, especially in the west, where are to be found large stretches of rubber and oil palm estates and small-holdings. Padi cultivation, though it is to be found throughout the Peninsula, is especially prominent of the north, in Perlis, Kedah, Province Wellesley and Northern Perak and in the delta of the Kelantan River on the north-east of **the** Peninsula. There are also fairly extensive stretches in reclaimed swamp lands along **the** west coast, as for example, in the Tanjong Karang area than of Selangor. Tin mining is **the** other major activity on the landscape, being specially common in the west coasts states of Perak and Selangor.

Islands on both sides of the Peninsula are another feature perhaps of more lasting interest to holiday-makers and tourists. Of the more prominent islands on the west

coast are Pulau Langkawi off the north Kedah coast, rugged, beautiful and noted for its limestone scenery; Penang island, considered by many as one of the most picturesque islands of the East, and the Pangkor islands off the coast of Perak which were once a Dutch settlement. On the east coast, Pulau Tioman, the largest island with its beautiful scenery set against its granite peaks, ranks amongst others washed by the South China Sea.

East Malaysia.

Malaysian Borneo is crisscrossed by a variety of relatively low mountain chains which are really masses of dissected highland, with occasional peaks largely below 6,000 feet. Mount Kinabalu in Sabah, however, towers over all else and the height of 13,455 feet makes it Malaysia's highest peak. The Crocker Range in Sabah which culminates in Mount Kinabalu is the only fairly continuous mountain range, attaining a high average elevation of 2,500 to 3,000 feet, with its mountains rising to over 4,000 feet. Other high peaks are Mt. Trus Madi (8,500 feet) in Sabah and Mt. Murud (8,000 feet) which is the highest in Sarawak. Much of the interior is forested and virtually underdeveloped. Relatively level land lies interspersed among the mountain ranges. The mountainous mass is more compact and extensive in the interior, where the watershed between the rivers generally flowing north-west into the South China Sea and those flowing into the Celebes and Java Seas mark the boundary of much of Sarawak and Indonesia.

The remainder of East Malaysia comprises an alluvial coastal plain and behind it a belt of undulating though in parts extremely rugged country which is adjacent to the interior mountain ranges and runs northeast-southwest all the way through Sarawak, Brunei and western North Borneo. Much of the indigenous population, especially of Sarawak, are to be found here. The coastal lands, varying in width from less than a mile (as at Miri) at over a hundred miles, are however, low-lying. They are interrupted occasionally by low hills or even mountains, which when adjacent to the sea form sea-eroded cliffs. Much of this part of Sarawak consists primarily of swamp and alluvial deposits, including peat. Limited areas of alluvium or where the peat is shallow can be cultivated. However, much of the deep peat is unsuitable for agriculture. In contrast, coastal swamps are less extensive in Sabah where the mountain ranges lie much nearer to the coast and the coastal strip is drained by a number of relatively short streams. This coastal area is the most developed part of Sabah, cultivated largely with rubber and rice.

The rivers are swift in their earlier reaches but meander across the coastal plain to the sea. The more important rivers in Sarawak are the Sarawak (70 miles long), the Batang Lupan (142 miles), the Rejang (350 miles), the Baram (250 miles) and Limbang (122 miles). The Rejang, the largest, is navigable for small coastal steamers up to Kapit, 10 miles upriver. In Sabah, the swift streams flowing along the slopes of the Crocker Range into the South China Sea contrast with the more gentle rivers that flow into the Sulu Sea. The east coast rivers of Sabah are the Kinabatangan (350 miles long), the Sugut, the Lubuk and the Segama. The Padas River, which drains a large area of the inland lowlands, has cut into the Crocker Range to flow into Brunei Bay near Beaufort.

The coastline along the South China Sea is regular. This and the heavy silting is not conducive to good harbours. In contrast, that facing the Sulu and Celebes Seas in Sabah is highly irregular and has a number of excellent harbours at Kudat, Sandakan, Lahad Dato and Tawau. The only good harbour on the side facing the South China Sea is on Labuan island, about 35 miles out in Brunei Bay.

Climate

Proximity to the equator has given Malaysia a climate of high humidity and uniformly high temperature with copious rainfall. The equatorial climate is modified by the region's insularity and exposure to a monsoonal wind system that originates in the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea. The climate on the whole is pleasant and equable and the humidity is bearable though sometimes unpleasant.

The northeast and southwest monsoons divide the year into two periods. The northeast monsoon begins in October or November and lasts until February or March while the southwest monsoon blows from mid-April or May to September or mid-October. These seasons occur slightly earlier in Malaya as compared with the Borneo territories. Two inter-monsoons period each of about eight weeks duration are distinguishable. There are no prevailing winds during the intermediate seasons but daily convective rain is abundant.

In fact, the period of heaviest rain in Malaya is during the intermonsoon period, though on the east coast the period of the northeast monsoon brings the greatest amount of rain while the west coast has its wettest period during the southwest monsoon. The average rainfall in Malaya is about 100 inches a year, though varying from place to place. The east coast has an average of about 120 inches, Maxwell Hills near Taiping receives 201 inches with the Jelebu district Malaya's driest locality, sheltered from both monsoons, receiving only 65 inches per annum. A large area of Sarawak has between 120 and 160 inches of rain per year. Sabah has between 60 and 160 inches. Kuching in Sarawak has an average of 158 inches with equally heavy rain in the region of Beaufort and Labuan in Sabah. Low rainfall largely prevails in the interior of East Malaysia though the mountainous terrain can affect the amount and distribution very greatly in different parts of the country and even in localities only a few miles apart.

Thunderstorms are frequent. Malaysia is outside the typhoon belt and cyclones are almost unknown. During the southwest monsoon, sudden squalls and violent gusts are more frequent especially in the area of the Straits of Malacca where they are known as "Sumatras".

Temperatures are constant throughout the year, average monthly temperatures varying only about 4°F. However the daily temperatures show great variation the daily range at coastal locations being 10 F to 15 F (a mean daytime maximum of 85°F to 90°F and a mean minimum of 72°F to 75°F at night). Inland locations show a range of 15° to 20°F. In Malaysian Borneo night temperatures in the interior highlands of over 2,000 feet may drop to as low as 55°F. Over Malaysia as a whole the average daily temperature varies considerably from 70°F to 90°F, though in higher areas, lower temperatures obtain. Relative humidity is generally high, being higher generally in the night than during the day.

Flora

Constant high temperatures and high rainfall and the lack of definite dry seasons have provided excellent conditions for the growth of vegetation. Apart from the coastal plains of swamp forest, both mangrove and fresh-water in Malaya and Malaysian Borneo, about 70 per cent of the Federation is covered by virgin tropical rain forest up to an elevation of about 2,000 feet. At elevations higher than 3,000 feet is to be found the flora of moss forests with a dwarf vegetation, a forest in a state of perpetual dampness.

In the lowland dryland forests the vegetation is dominated by immense **trees**, the larger of which are about 150 to 200 feet or more in height with circumferences of

10 feet or more, with large cylindrical stems and massive crowns at the top which form an evergreen canopy. The trees themselves provide a home for a wide variety of plants of different habits; these include large lianas, as the rattans (climbing palms) which compete for light with the larger trees together with other climbers on the stems of trees extending to ground level. Other epiphytes, largely orchids, abound throughout the canopy.

With increased light, often as a result of felling and man-made clearings or as the aftermath of the slash and burn shifting cultivation practised by the indigenous tribes, especially in Sarawak, a dense undergrowth, called belukar in Malaya, rapidly springs up. Perhaps the density of this belukar might have given rise to the misconception of the impenetrability of the tropical jungle, for so few persevere to break this tangled undergrowth into the true rain forest beyond where the undergrowth is minimal due to the lack of light which is unable to penetrate the forest canopy.

Parasitical vegetation too is to be found within the rain forest, through not in the abundance in which they are supposed to occur. The few that are to be found include members of the mistletoe family and a species of *Rafflesia* in Sarawak which produce the largest flowers in the world, which may measure up to a yard across. The well-known pitcher plant (*Nepenthes*) is often abundant on poor soils where they obtain some of their nutrient and digesting insects.

Forestry

The lowland rain forest comprises a multitude of species of trees, though the majority are of the family Dipterocarpaceas. It is estimated that over 2,500 species occur. There are many naturally durable hardwoods available such as Chengal (*Balanocarpus Leimic*) Balan (*Shorea Spp.*) and Merbau (*Intsia palembanica*). Medium hardwoods include Keruing (*Dipterocarpus spp.*) Kapur (*Dryobalanops Spp.*) and Kempas (*Koompassia Malaconsis*). Of the light hardwoods, Meranti and Jelutong are important.

Forestry Policy

There is legislation to safeguard the economic exploitation of timber resources. In Malay, Forest Reservation now extends to over 8,000 square miles of productive forest and 4,500 square miles of protective forest, totalling 26% of the total land area.

MAP

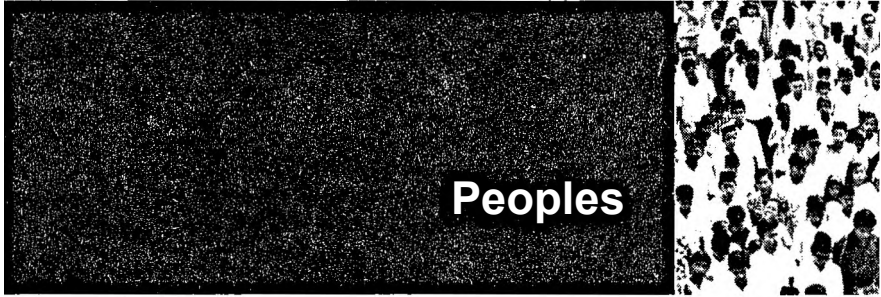


OF MALAYSIA

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MALAYSIA HAS A DIVERSITY of races and cultures in a population of just over 10 million. There are the indigenous peoples of Sarawak and Sabah, who besides Malays, comprise Sea Dayaks or Ibans, the Land Dayaks, the Melanans, Dusuns Kadazan, Punan and other minor groups whose way of life varies from the sedimentary wet rice cultivation of the coastal strip to the slash-and-burn dry rice shifting agriculture and hunting economy of the interior. In Malaya, the indigenous people are practically all Malays who lead a predominantly rural life. Malaya, too, has an aboriginal population of about 50,000. Against this indigenous background are the immigrant peoples, largely Chinese, who together with Indians, Pakistanis, Arabs and others dominate the urban scene. The Chinese are largely occupied in the tin and rubber industries and in business and commerce. The Indians, largely Tamils from South India, work as labourers in the rubber plantations. Increasing numbers of people of all races are now engaged in professional activities and in the civil services. The Europeans, mainly British, continue their role in rubber tin, commerce and the professions. The Eurasians, large numbers of whom are of part-Portuguese extraction from Malacca, add further to Malaysia's racial complexity.

POPULATION

The estimated population of Malaysia, according to Censes and population estimated figures, 1970 as follows

	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
West Malaysia	4,431,311	4,370,088	8,801,399
State of Sabah	339,727	315,895	655,622
State of Sarawak	492,009	485,004	977,013
			10,034,434

Malays

The Malays are believed to have originated in the region of Yunan in China. There have been some fairly recent Malay immigrants into Malaysia from Indonesia, especially from Sumatra and the Celebes. Being co-religionists, these have now been rapidly assimilated with the older inhabitants.

The Malays are a predominantly agricultural people: they cultivate the bulk of the padi land of Malaysia. Many of them are smallholders. Fishing is important

especially on the coasts. Some are wage earners in rubber or oil-palm estates while increasing numbers are becoming urban dwellers, many in the professions in government service and as industrial workers.

Religion

The Malay is an orthodox Muslim of the Shafi'ite school, the basic principles of the Malay religion as a Muslim are the declaration of faith in the aweness of Allah and in the divine messengership of the Prophet Muhammad; prayer five times a day; distribution of Zakat or poor rate; fasting in the month of Ramadan and pilgrimage to Mecca for the performance of the Haj. Islam is the state religion of Malaysia. In the various states, the Sultan is the religious head. All Muslim religious matters, observances or ceremonies which apply to the country as a whole are now decided by the Conference of Rulers.

Social Systems and Customs

Two systems of social organizations are to be found, namely that associated with 'adat temenggong' which is patrilineal and the other the "adat perpatih" which is matrilineal. It is the "Adat Temenggong" which is the more pervasive. However, it is the "Adat Perpatih" which is the more cohesive in its rules and is confined to the state of Negri Sembilan and part of Malacca.

Malay 'adat istiadat' (customs and traditions) include the 'adat resam' observed by birth and death and the other major events of life and the 'adat istiadat di-raja or royal customs and traditions applying to the royal courts, of significance largely on ceremonial occasions. Obligations of respect and obedience demanded of children towards parents, community attitudes of mutual neighbourly help and co-operation, known commonly as bergotong rayong, the maintenance of law and order through co-operation and respect for the ketua kampung or penghulu (village headmen) are all part of the 'adat resam' to which the Malay is subject and which serves to bind Malay society together. The piercing of ear-lobes of girls between the age of 5 and 10 (a custom of pre-Islamic origin), the bersunat or circumcision of boys (which is required of all Muslim males) and the ceremonies of engagement and marriage, the various customary practices associated with childbirth are among the many and varied activities in Malay social life. Each has its distinctive prescribed pattern. Invariably, ceremonial occasions are not complete without kenduris (feasts). Over all activities, however, is the overtone of Islam for ceremonies are accompanied by the utterance of doa (prayers) in Arabic. Marriages have to be conducted in accordance with the Islamic law and in the presence of witnesses. Islam, too, permits its adherents to marry four wives.

Burial

Burial customs of the Malays also conform to Islamic practice, the body being shrouded in cotton cloth and buried on its side, facing Mecca.

Festivals

The two most important festivals of the year are Hari Raya Haji, celebrating the successful conclusion of the Pilgrimage, and Hari Raya Puasa, the celebration marking the end of the fasting period. The birthday of the Prophet Muhammad is celebrated on a grand scale with processions, prayers and feasting. The Muslim New Year falls on the first of Muharam.

Dress

The men usually wear European clothing, but on ceremonial occasions wear full Malay dress consisting of "Baju" and a pair of long loose trousers, with sarong around the waist, over the trousers. Head-dress consists of a black songkok, or "Tanjak" or

"Tongkokloh" for more ceremonial occasions. The women usually wear baju kurong, consisting of a loosely fitting blouse over sarong, or baju kebaya, a tightly fitting blouse over sarong.

Food

Malay food consists of a staple diet of rice together with spiced curries of meat, fish vegetables and other delicacies. The coconut is an essential ingredient in Malay curry, apart from the use of coconut oil, the whitish coconut milk, squeezed out of grated coconut, is an essential ingredient in virtually all preparations. In food habits, too, religion has its influence. Islam forbids the partaking of pork and the flesh of predatory animals and birds, rodents, reptiles, worms and flesh of dead animals or that offered as sacrifice to idols. Even the partaking of lawful animals is limited to that which is slaughtered as prescribed in Islam.

Language

The Malay language spoken in Malaysia has the same roots as "Bahasa Indonesia" or Indonesian, the official language of Indonesia. It belongs to the Malay Polynesian family of languages which extended from Formosa to New Zealand and from Madagascar to Easter Island in the Pacific Ocean. The standard pronunciation is that of Johore and the Riau archipelago, though it is spoken with dialectal variation throughout the region. Malay is the national language of Malaysia. Already, both in Malaya and in Sarawak and Sabah, Malay is widely used as a lingua franca among all peoples. Currently, the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (Language Agency) is engaged in developing and enriching the national language.

There are two forms of Malay script in use today. The Jawi script employs the Arabic alphabet, augmented by five letters. The Roman script, known also as Rumi, is also now being popularised. Much of the literature in the Malay language is in the Jawi script.

Chinese

About 42 per cent of the population of Malaysia is Chinese. Their concentrations vary: in Malaya, 37 per cent, in Sarawak 31 per cent and Sabah 23 per cent. In Malaya, the Chinese are more concentrated in the west coast States, particularly in the towns and industrial areas. The same pattern of heavy concentrations in urban areas also obtain in East Malaysia. Nevertheless, they are to be found throughout the whole area of Malaysia for they have penetrated even into remote districts. They are usually the shopkeepers or tradesmen in practically every village and their economic role far outweighs their numbers.

The Chinese arrived in the country at a very early date, but it was not until 1786 when British influence was established, and particularly from the mid-1800's onwards with the need of British colonial enterprise for a larger and more willing labour force, that Chinese immigration became large-scale. In Malaya, the Chinese were mostly recruited to develop the tin deposits while in East Malaysia they were brought in to work on the tobacco and rubber plantations and in other economic activities. These immigrant streams were fed by successive groups of relatives and friends. However, the Chinese immigrants were not prepared to remain as contract labourers. Large numbers of them struck out as farmers, small planters and, most significantly, as traders and middlemen.

Today, the majority of the Chinese in Malaysia are local born but virtually all of them have their origins in the south-eastern provinces of China and the island of Hainan. Their main dialects are Cantonese, Hokkien, Teochew, Hakka and Hailam.

They are largely Buddhists although a sizable number are recent converts to Christianity. They have brought to Malaysia not only their native skills and industries but also their culture. Hardworking and thrifty, they have contributed considerably to Malaysia's economic rise.

Religion

There are three main Chinese beliefs — Confucianism, Toaism and Buddhism, the first linking and strengthening family life, the second seeking freedom from materialism, and the third preaching a doctrine of reincarnation and purgatory, and obligations of ancestral worship.

Language

There are numerous dialects, differing widely but stemming from a common stock but the written word is universal. While the Cantonese dialect is believed to be the nearest approach to the ancient primitive language, Kuo Yu is the official spoken language today.

Customs — Dress

There are many types of Chinese costumes of varied styles. The poorer labouring classes wear loosely fitting jackets with wide trousers with conical shaped rattan hats. The wealthier classes, especially the men, have adopted the fashions of the West, but the women mostly wear either the Cheongsam, meaning 'long dress in Cantonese, and which is cut in one piece with high collar, or Samfoo, similar to the pyjama style of the West, but with the high collar of the Cheongsam. The old traditional costumes are usually worn at marriages ceremonies.

Marriages

Betrothal and wedding customs of the Chinese vary slightly according to the clans. The formal betrothal takes place ten days before the date fixed for the wedding, when the bridegroom sends presents of gold and food. These serve as an indication of the forthcoming wedding to friends and relatives. The transfer of the bride and her chattels to the house of the bridegroom signifies the completion of the marriage, which, apart from the civil ceremony, is not celebrated with any religious rites.

Festivals

Festivals are numerous but the most important is the Chinese New Year, with festivities beginning on the 24th of the 12th Moon. Sacrifices are made to Tsao Wong — the Kitchen God, whose image is to be seen in most Chinese homes. The Feast of the Lanterns, which dates back to the Han Dynasty (206 B.C. — A.D. 220) takes place on the 15th Night of the First Moon.

Ch'ing Ming or Cheng Beng is the time when all graves must be repaired and cleaned, and offerings are made to appease the local God of the Soil, T'u Shen. Various other festivals to commemorate ancestral worship are celebrated during the year.

The Dragon Boat Festival, Moon Cake Festival, Festival of the Seven Sisters, Birthday of the Jade Emperor and many other Chinese festivals the framework of which still survive in a modified manner, illustrate how tenaciously the Chinese adhere to the ancestral and religious observances, all of which tend to bind the Chinese community together.

Burial

Actual burial customs vary from place to place. The body having been washed, is swathed in wadding, and then fully clothed, complete with socks and shoes. The coffin

lies in state for all to mourn. On the eve of the funeral, paper offerings representing objects with which the deceased was familiar in life, are buried. The coffin on the day of burial is escorted by mourners, women following in precedence behind the coffin and men in front, plus an impressive procession of banners, lanterns, paper flowers, accompanied by bands playing funeral music, the size of the procession depending on the wealth and status of the deceased. At the cemetery, the coffin is lowered into the grave and the burning of the paper articles marks the end of the ceremony. Chinese customs on politeness differ from the West. The principal guest is seated on the left, instead of the right; instead of a handshake, the Chinese clasps his hands before him, and moves them up and down — as high as the forehead, accompanied by a deep bow when acknowledging a superior. Both hands are used to pass an object, and the recipient should use both in accepting an object, thus showing respect. Most entertaining is done at restaurants, and according to the old custom, with men and women eating at separate tables, or, women being excluded from the invitation. Politeness and the small rules of etiquette are deeply ingrained in every Chinese.

Food

The Chinese are connoisseurs of food and their dishes can be reckoned in the thousands, with four different styles of cooking which are outstanding — Peking, Shantung, Canton and Szechuan. An enormous variety of food is used in recipes, and the number of courses served at a dinner depends on the circumstances of the occasion and wealth of the host.

Indians

Religion

the majority of Indians are Hindus. The most obvious characteristics of the ordinary Hindu are that he worships a plurality of Gods. Hinduism is not a religion established by a single person. It is a growth of ideas, rituals and beliefs, so comprehensive as to include anything between atheism and pantheism. Puranic Hinduism i.e. the orthodox Hinduism of the present day is divided into six sects. Vaishnavas, Shivas, Saktas, Ganapatyas, Saurapathas and Sinarthas.

Language

The common languages spoken by Indians in Malaya are: Gujarati, Hindi, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu. These are but a few of the many Indian languages.

Customs — Dress

Most Indian women wear a sari and choli. The sari is a straight piece of material six yards long which is wrapped around the lower part of the body to form a skirt and draped up over one shoulder. The choli is a plain fitted blouse. The national dress for an Indian man is a dhoti — a straight piece of material approximately four yards long — and on ceremonial occasions he wears a long fitted coat and turban.

Marriages

There are two forms of marriage among the Indians, the Brahma, nominally a gift of the bride by her father to the bridegroom, and among the lower castes, the Asura, nominally a purchase of a bride by the bridegroom. Marriage between close relatives is forbidden, but the marriage must be within the caste. A Hindu man may marry any number of wives and may have any number concurrently, there is no divorce in Hindu law, but divorce is sometimes practiced by members of the lower castes.



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