

E. H. Dance and G. P. Dartford

MALAYAN AND WORLD HISTORY
BOOK I



MALAYA
AND THE OLD
WORLD



PERDANA
LEADERSHIP
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Malayan and World History

Book I

MALAYA
AND THE OLD
WORLD

BY

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*With Illustrations
and Maps*



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PREFACE

This book is the first in a series intended for Forms 1,2, and 3 in secondary schools in Malaya. Insularity in history teaching has gone the way of insularity in foreign policy, and Malaysians, who have been influenced by contacts with so many different peoples from all over the world, have a particular need for a broad knowledge of the history both of the East and the West. The main theme, therefore, is the History of the World; but, as Malaya is an Asian country, there is more about Asia than other parts.

At the end of most chapters there is a Source Reading, and it is hoped that these, as well as the illustrations, will be useful not only for their interest, but also as teaching material. The Exercises are based directly on the reading matter and the illustrations, except that the Questions in Section "B" need some independent work other than mere preparation from the text-book.

The authors would like to express their gratitude to Dr. M. A. Rauf, Principal of the Muslim College of Malaya, Klang, Selangor, who very kindly read the proofs of Chapter Six on the Prophet Muhammad and the Religion of Islam. Dr. Rauf's suggestions regarding the wording of the chapter have been accepted fully and were most helpful. We trust that it contains nothing which is either inaccurate or offensive to Muslim readers.

The book covers the suggested new syllabus for Form 1 in secondary schools in the Federation of Malaya, and provides some additional material useful as a background.

e.h.d. and g.p.d.





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CHAPTER ONE

The Dawn of History: The Golden Chersonese

If you walk through the streets of any Malayan town today you will see many different kinds of people—Malays, Chinese, Indians certainly, and, if it is a big town, probably Europeans as well. Not only do these peoples differ from each other in appearance but also they speak different languages and write them in different ways; they have different religions, and some worship in mosques, some in temples, and some in churches; they have different national dress; they eat different kinds of food and have different customs and habits of life. All these differences in the way of life of the various peoples make up what is called their *cultures*. A country like Malaya, which has many different kinds of people each with its own culture, is said to be a *cosmopolitan* country.

Some of the peoples have lived in Malaya for longer than others, but today we are all proud to call ourselves Malaysians. By living in the same country we have learnt much from each other. But, if we are to be good Malaysians, we must try to understand the cultures of the other peoples of Malaya even though we may wish to preserve and follow our own culture of which we are so proud. The reason why the different peoples have their own culture is often because of events which happened two thousand, or even three or four thousand, years ago in their homelands, either in Malaya or in lands across the seas. We are all what our history has made



In this book we will read about the Malays in their early days in Malaya, and about the Indians, Chinese, Arabs, and Europeans in their homelands, where they were learning and developing the way of life which they largely follow today. We shall see how the peoples of India, China, and Arabia had a very great influence on Malaya long before the Old World of the Middle Ages came to an end. This is as far as we shall take the story in this book, and up to that time, about 1400, the people of Europe had not yet come to Malaya. But their influence since then has been so very great that we need to know how the foundations of European civilisation were laid far away in the west.

PREHISTORIC MALAYA

If we go back in the past of any country we come to a time before writing began, and for earlier times we have to rely on information that has been discovered by digging up relics of these remote ages in the ground. This period, before written records, is called *prehistoric*. In Malaya we have only to go back about five and a half centuries before we reach prehistoric times. For most of the prehistoric period men used tools made of stone, and for this reason we speak of this as the *Stone Age*. Malaya first emerged from the Stone Age about 300 B.C. when the inhabitants began to learn about the use of metals.

The Aborigines

There are living in the jungles of Malaya today some peoples who have hardly yet changed very much from the sort of life which was lived in the Stone Age, such as the tribes of *Negritos* and *Senoi*, who seem to be relatives of the early peoples who passed through Malaya and the Indonesian islands and became the ancestors of the natives of Australia.

All this happened so long ago that, as far as we are concerned, they are called *Aborigines*, which means that they were here “from the beginning.”

The Coming of the Malays

Also included among the Aborigines are some of the earliest types of the Malay race, such as the *Jakuns* and the sea-gipsies, or “*orang laut*,” who are to be found on the coast and in Singapore and the islands nearby. They were among the first of a great movement of peoples of *Malaysian* race, from what is now Yunnan in the south-west of China down the Malay peninsula, and into the islands of Indonesia. This great migration started about 2500 B.C. We know nothing about how it took place, but it must have been a very long and slow process. In the later stage came the ancestors of the present *Peninsular Malays* and the coastal Malays of Sumatra, Java, Borneo, and the other Indonesian islands.

Neolithic Culture

These Malaysian peoples still used tools made of stone when they came to Malaya, but they were better fashioned and polished than the crude instruments used by earlier inhabitants. Their culture is called *Neolithic*, which means belonging to the New Stone Age. With these better tools they were able to cut down trees and build wooden houses, raised on stilts, instead of living in caves and rock shelters. They also made boats, which must have been their main means of transport as they followed the coasts and the rivers in their wanderings.

The neolithic men still lived partly by hunting but they had made the first great step forward in civilisation by becoming farmers as well. They certainly planted various kinds of yams, and they may also have been the first to plant rice. With this more reliable food-supply they could settle in

villages on the river banks instead of in isolated family groups in the jungle like the aborigines. The villagers, living together and in touch with other settlements by means of the rivers, learnt from each other, and new arts and crafts became established now that they had more time to spare from the struggle to provide food for their families. Among other things we have discovered from sites of neolithic settlements are examples of their skill in making many different kinds of pottery.

The End of the Stone Age

The neolithic men in Malaya had progressed much and developed a way of life well fitted to their forested land, but they needed knowledge of the use of metals before they could take further steps towards civilisation. It was traders from India and Indo-China who brought the use of bronze and iron to Malaya somewhere about 300 B.C. We know very little about these early contacts, but a type of bronze drum which has been found in Malaya is very similar to those found in Indo-China and suggests that the use of this metal may have come from that region and, perhaps, originally from China.

Early civilisations

You will read in the next three chapters about the growth of great civilisations in three parts of the Old World long before Malaya began to emerge from the Stone Age. These were India, the Mediterranean region and the lands just east of it, and China. In all these parts there were open fertile plains which could produce large supplies of food as soon as men became clever enough to use the waters of the rivers to irrigate them. This then made it possible for larger numbers of people to live close together and to build cities; and with

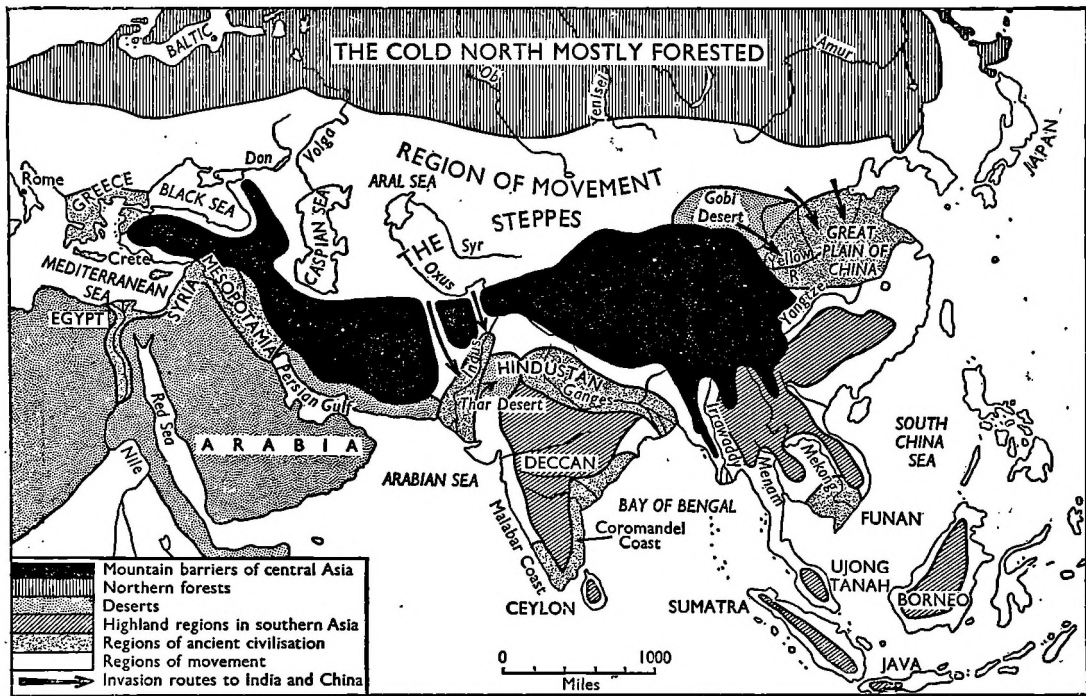


Fig. 1. Ancient Civilisations in the Old World.

cities came the higher stages of civilised life.¹ These conditions existed on the banks of the Nile in Egypt, by the Tigris and Euphrates in Mesopotamia (modern Iraq), in the Indus Valley, and where the Yellow River winds across the Great Plain of China. In all these areas early civilisations arose more than two thousand years before the birth of Christ.

Malaya's Position in the Old World

The more civilised men become, the more does their life depend upon the exchange of goods which we call commerce. So as soon as the civilised areas of the Old World became aware of each other's existence they wished to develop communications and trade with one another. By land this could be done by way of central Asia, where the open grasslands of the steppes made movement easy, but there were many obstacles in the mountains which must be climbed, and the deserts which barred the way to the steppes, especially from India, Trade by caravan did develop along this land route but it was slow and dangerous to those who travelled along it, For this reason men turned their attention to sea routes instead, and as soon as they did this Malaya was bound to become more important. A glance at the map on page 7 will tell you why. Any route from east to west or from west to east must either go round the Malay peninsula or connect with the short routes across the narrowest part of .it between the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea. This simple geographical fact is the key to the history of the peninsula for the last two thousand years. In early times it brought to Malayan shores peoples from all the countries round the Indian Ocean from Arabia to Burma, from all the islands of Indonesia, and from Indo-China and China. In later times it was to bring the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the English.

¹ "Civilised" really means "townified."

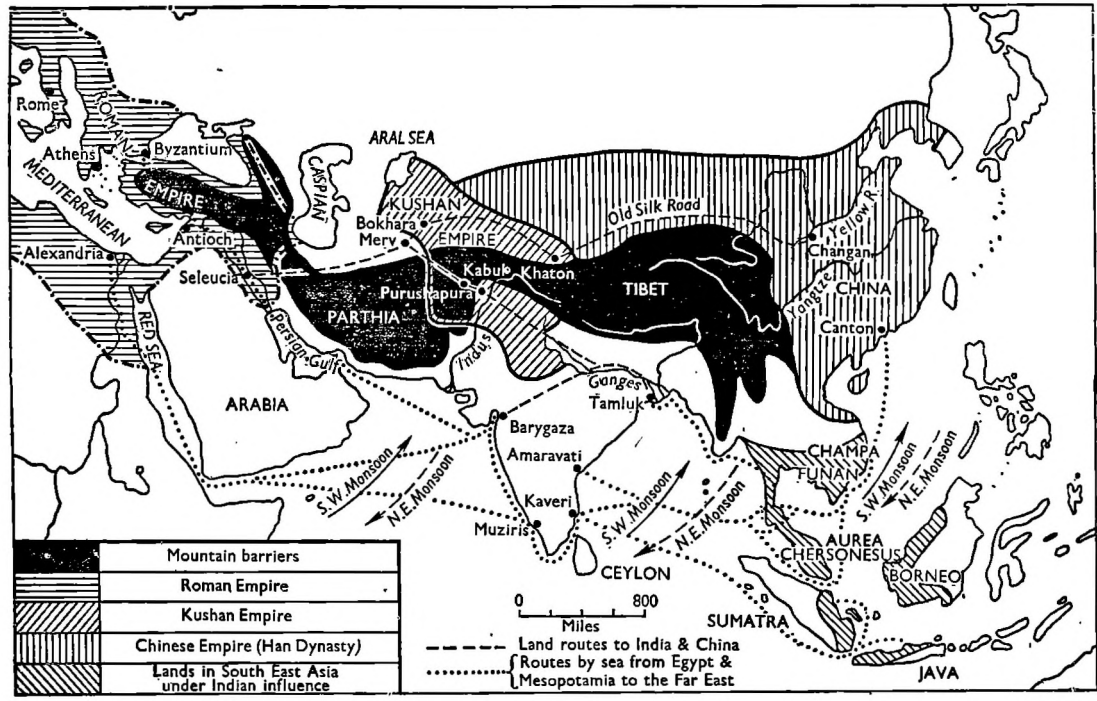


Fig 2. Trade Routes of the Old World in the time of Ptolemy (2nd Century A.D.).

The Monsoons

The development of the sea routes in the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea was helped by the fact that the winds blow at one season from one direction and at the other season from the opposite direction. This is what we call the *Monsoons*. From May to October the south-west monsoon could be relied on to move ships eastwards—from the Red Sea or Persian Gulf to India, from India to the Straits of Malacca or to Java, from Malaya to Indo-China and China. From November to April the north-east monsoon would drive them westwards—from China and Indo-China to Malaya, from Malaya to India, and from India to the Red Sea or the Persian Gulf. Usually the small slow ships of these early times could only manage to sail one of the stages during one monsoon, for instance from the Red Sea to India, or from China to Malaya. The traders then exchanged their goods and waited for the next monsoon to take them back, because they did not like to go too far from home. There was therefore a need for ports near the Straits of Malacca where goods could be exchanged.

First News of Malaya

What did these sailors have to say about Malaya? We should very much like to know; but they have left few records. From Malaya itself it is certain that they got tin from very early times but the most valuable export was gold which probably came from where it is found today, in Pahang. The Malays called the peninsula *Ujong Tanah* or “Land’s End” but Indian writings mention a country called *Suvarna-dvipa* which in Sanscrit (the ancient classical language of India) means the Golden Peninsula.

Claudius Ptolemy

In the first century A.D. the Greek and Egyptian sailors, whose lands were then a part of the Roman Empire, learnt about the



monsoons and began to use them. At this time there was a great demand in the cities of the Roman world for the products of the East, such as Chinese silk and spices from the islands, and the traffic along the sea routes increased very much. The city of Alexandria in Egypt became a great market for these goods, and its people got to know more about the east than they had ever done before. Living in Alexandria in the second century A.D. there was a Greek called *Claudius Ptolemy*, who collected together this information and wrote a description of the then-known world and drew a map of it. This was the most accurate idea of the east before the days of Marco Polo eleven centuries later. On page 10 you can see the part of Ptolemy's map which shows Malaya clearly as a peninsula between India and China. The name he gave it is shown in Latin, *Aurea Chersonesus*, which means the *Golden Chersonese* (*Chersonese* is Greek for *peninsula*).

GENERAL EXERCISES ON CHAPTER ONE

Make a time chart for the years 1000 to 1 B.C. Divide it into three columns headed Malaya, India, and China. In the column for Malaya mark the end of the Stone Age and write Neolithic Age on the part before it.

Questions

A

1. What is the meaning of the following: culture; cosmopolitan; prehistoric; neolithic; aborigines; ujong tanah?
2. What do you know about the following: Negritos; Jakuns; Mesopotamia; Claudius Ptolemy?
3. How many centuries (roughly) did the Neolithic Age last in Malaya? How many centuries have there been since it ended?

