

GOVERNMENT
AND
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MALAYSIA
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Houghton Mifflin Company • Boston

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PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

320.959
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PREFACE

Malaysia's government and politics have not yet been comprehensively described in any single book. The period of colonial rule has been well covered and there have been good chronological accounts of particular periods since Independence (1957). Racial questions and the civil service in Malaya have been treated at some length; so have the formation of Malaysia (1963), the separation of Singapore (1965) and Indonesian Confrontation (1963–1966). Other aspects have hardly been touched: Parliament; the Cabinet; federal-state relations including Sabah and Sarawak; local government. Certainly no single book has attempted to cover, even in outline, all these topics, in informal as well as formal aspects. The present volume tries to fill this gap, although in a modest way. It aims to provide information and to analyze and interpret it, but does not seek to advance any grand conceptual scheme. However, some comparative references to countries other than Malaysia are included. It should be added that the book in fact deals with Singapore as well as Malaysia; the fortunes of the two are in practice inextricably linked.

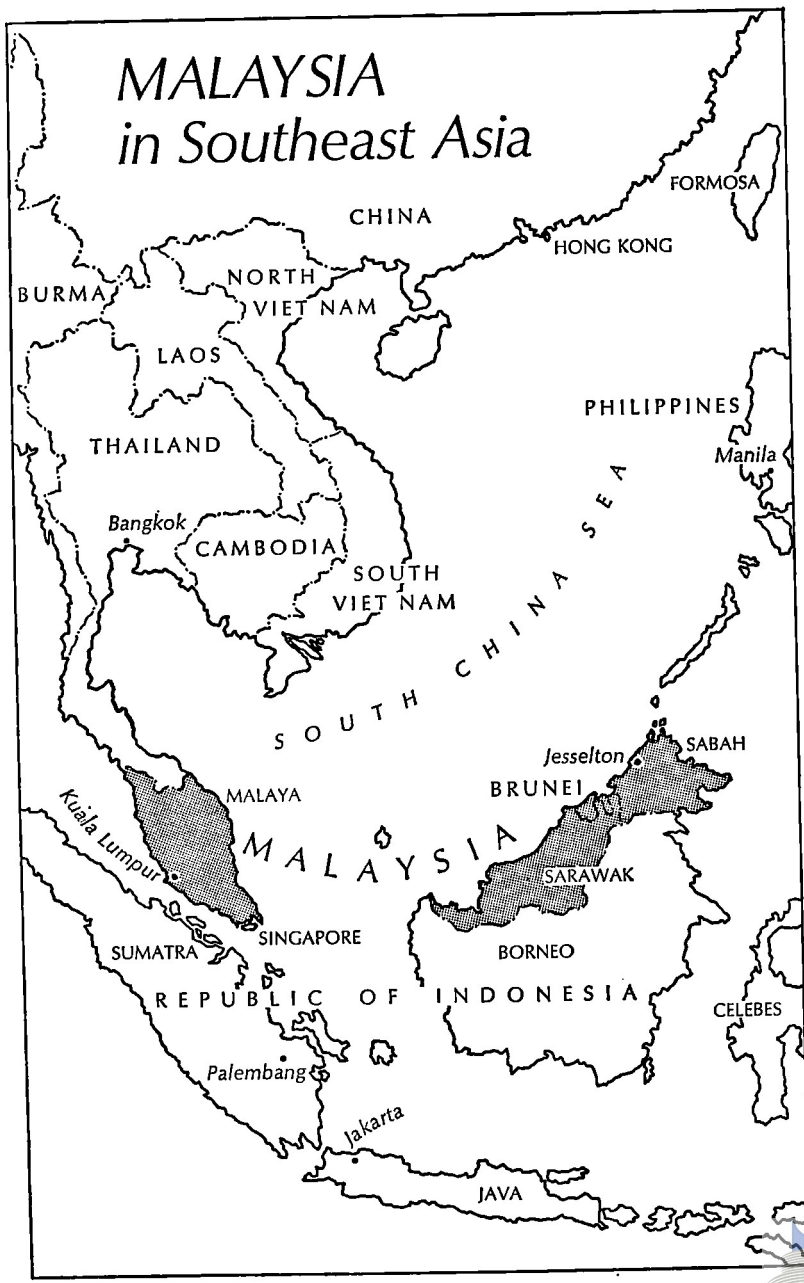
Bibliographical references, where they exist, are given at the end of each chapter. Among newspapers in English published in the area, *The Straits Times* (Kuala Lumpur), *Sarawak Tribune* (Kuching) and *Sabah Times* (Jesselton), will be found most useful.

It is not possible to thank the hundreds of people who have helped me in writing this book, particularly through interviews—politicians, civil servants, journalists, academics. I am, however, particularly indebted to Mrs. Wang Chen Hsiu Chin and Miss Manijeh Namazie of the Library of the University of Singapore for finding references, and to my friend and former colleague, Professor K. J. Ratnam, for reading the manuscript.

My thanks are also due to Dr. Dayton D. McKean, editorial adviser to Houghton Mifflin Company, and to Mr. Richard N. Clark and his associates of the Houghton Mifflin editorial staff.

The manuscript was typed, with her never-failing accuracy, by Mrs. Lilian Wong, to whom I am most grateful.

MALAYSIA *in Southeast Asia*





Introduction

Malaysia¹ consists of the peninsula which forms the most southerly portion of the land mass of Southeast Asia and of the northern quarter of the island of Borneo. It extends south nearly as far as the equator. At its tip, joined by a short narrow causeway, is the sophisticated island city of Singapore with 1¾ million people, situated at a strategic and commercial crossroads of air and sea routes. When Malaysia was formed in 1963 Singapore was included, but it ceased to be part of Malaysia in August, 1965. To the north is Thailand, formerly called Siam. To the west and south lie Sumatra, the Riau Islands, and the rest of the island of Borneo, all parts of Indonesia. To the east of Borneo are Palawan and other smaller islands, belonging to the Philippines.

The Malay peninsula has an east and a west coastal plain, with a central mountain range in between. The Borneo area consists of an alluvial, often swampy, coastal plain, hilly country further inland, and mountain ranges in the interior, in which majestic Mount Kinabalu rises to 13,500 feet. The climate is tropical; it is humid, with a range of temperature (except in a few hilly areas) from 75 degrees to 90

¹ To prevent confusion, *Malay* should be distinguished from *Malayan* and *Malaysian*. A Malay is a person of the Malay race, distinguished by use of the Malay language and belonging to the Muslim religion. A Malayan is a person who lives in Malaya; he may racially be a Malay, a Chinese, an Indian, a Eurasian, or something else. Similarly, nowadays, a Malaysian is a person of whatever racial origins, who lives in Malaysia. All these three words—Malay, Malayan, and Malaysian—may also be used as adjectives in corresponding senses. Before the formation of Malaysia, *Malaysian* was sometimes used to include persons racially akin to the Malays, who were Muslims and spoke a similar language, but who originated from a territory other than Malaya, for instance from Indonesia. But nowadays it would be ambiguous to continue to use “Malaysian” in this sense.

