



# MALAYSIA and THE ANCIENT WORLD

BOOK ONE  
FOR  
FORM I

BY  
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*by*

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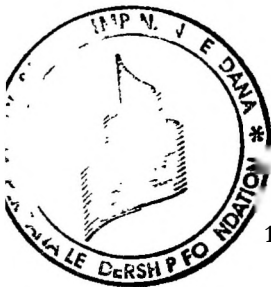
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## PREFACE

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This is the first of a series of three books which have been specially written to serve the needs of pupils in the first three forms of Malaysian Secondary Schools. Together, these three books provide a comprehensive history course leading to the examination for the Lower Certificate of Education. The present book covers the work for Form One, which includes a study of **Asia** (from the Ancient Kingdom of the Malay Peninsula to China), **Europe** (from Greece to the Roman Empire), and the **Beginning of the Great Religions** (Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam).

Although this series is suitable for general use in Malaysian schools, it has been written specially for children whose knowledge of English is weak. Every effort has been made to ensure that the facts have been presented as simply and as clearly as possible. Among the many devices which have been used to achieve this aim are the use of simple and precise English, a clear and logical presentation under numerous sub-headings, the repetition of the more important facts and dates and the inclusion of comprehensive exercises. In addition to the exercises at the end of each chapter, many short-answer questions have been gathered in three test papers, one at the end of each part of the book.

For the sake of clarity and convenience, the divisions of this book follow very closely the divisions of the official syllabus issued by the Ministry of Education of the Federation of Malaysia, January 1967. The first part of the book covers the history of Asia from the Ancient Kingdom of the Malay Peninsula up to China. The second part describes the rise of Sparta and Athens in Greece and also the Roman Empire. The final part deals with the beginnings of Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam.

A list of reference books has been added for the convenience of those teachers who may wish to find additional facts and details for their lessons.

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**Part One**

**ASIA**



**Part One**  
INTRODUCTION  
**ASIA**

In this part of the book **we** will begin by taking a brief look at the history of South East Asia. Civilisation spread to the lands of South East Asia as a result of the visits of traders and missionaries from India during the first few centuries of the Christian era. These visits led to the rise of small kingdoms which were strongly influenced by the Indian way of life. The most important of these early **Indianised Kingdoms** was **Funan** in Indo-China which was founded during the first century A.D. The other kingdoms were **Tun Sun, Chih Tu, Langkasuka** and **Kedah** in the Malay peninsula. The kingdom of Langkasuka which can be said to be the most important was founded in the second century A.D. Kedah, also founded almost at the same period, became an important Indian settlement because of its many advantages. The ancient kingdoms of the Malay peninsula will be dealt with in Chapter One. Still on South East Asia we will deal with the new empires which were created after the fall of Funan. The most important ones were the Empire of **Srivijaya**, the **Majapahit** Empire and **Tumasek**. The beginning of the Empire of Srivijaya and the reasons for the decline and fall of the empire will be examined in Chapter Two. The most important Prime Minister of the Majapahit Empire, **Gajah Mada**, will also be dealt with under the same chapter.

In India we will trace the growth of the **Maurya Dynasty** (322-185 B.C.) and the reign of one of its greatest rulers, **Asoka the Great**. The achievements of Asoka and the part he played in the spread of Buddhism will be described in Chapter Three.

The history of China is usually divided into **dynasties**. A dynasty is simply a line of rulers who all belong to the same family. Thus, for example, all the rulers of the Han Dynasty belonged to the family of the founder of the dynasty, **Liu Pang**. The first civilisation of China arose during the period of the **Shang Dynasty** in about 1500 B.C. The Shang Emperors ruled over extensive territories near the great bend of the Hwang Ho. One of their capitals-Anyang - has been investigated by archaeologists and their work has provided much information about ancient China. (Archaeologists are really historical detectives. They dig in search of the bones and implements of early men and then interpret these remains in the same way that detectives interpret clues in a murder case. Careful interpretation gives the archaeologist some idea of the way in which prehistoric men lived).

Chinese civilisation reached the height during the time of three dynasties which occupied the throne of China between 206 B.C. and 1279 A.D. - the **Han**, the **T'ang** and the **Sung**. Historians cannot agree amongst themselves on the question of which of these three dynasties saw Chinese culture at its greatest. During the **Han Period** (206 B.C. - 220 A.D.), Confucianism became the official religion of China, while Buddhism also entered the country from India. China's most famous historian, **Ssu-ma Ch'ien**, lived at this time, during the reign of the able **Emperor Wu Ti**. The **T'ang Period** (618-906 A.D.) is remarkable for many cultural achievements, but especially for the writings of the poets **Po Chu-i** and **Tu Fu**, and for the invention of printing. The **Sung Period** (960-1279) is noted for its great painters, who included **Mi Fei** and **Ma Yuan**.

## PART ONE

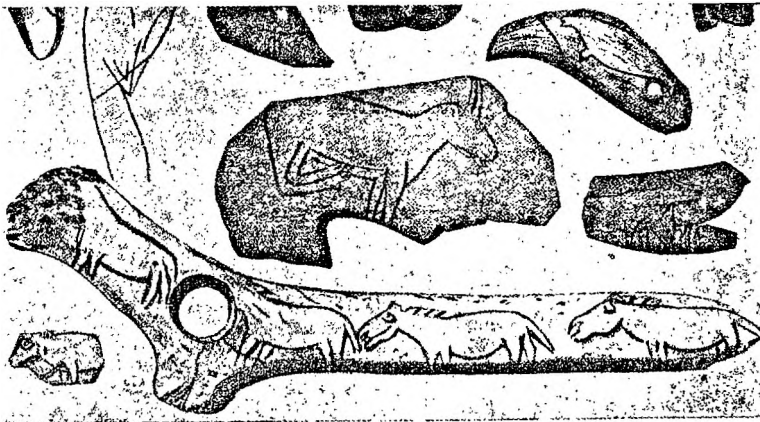
### Chapter One

# SOUTH EAST ASIA—THE ANCIENT KINGDOM OF THE MALAY PENINSULA

In very ancient times Malaya formed part of a long bridge of land which stretched from the mainland of Asia to Australia. Over the course of the centuries many different races of people used this bridge on their way southwards from China. These migrants passed down the Malay peninsula and some of them made their homes in Malaya. The first inhabitants lived in Upper Perak more than 500,000 years ago. They were followed in about 8,000 B.C. by the Bacsona-Hoabinhians who—lived in caves in Malaya's limestone lived. Finally, in about 2,500 B. C; the Proto-Malays arrived from Yunnan in southern China. The next stage in the history of Malaya was the



A neolithic skeleton with a pair of stone bracelets found at Gua Cha, Kelantan.



Drawings of the cave men on bones and walls caves.

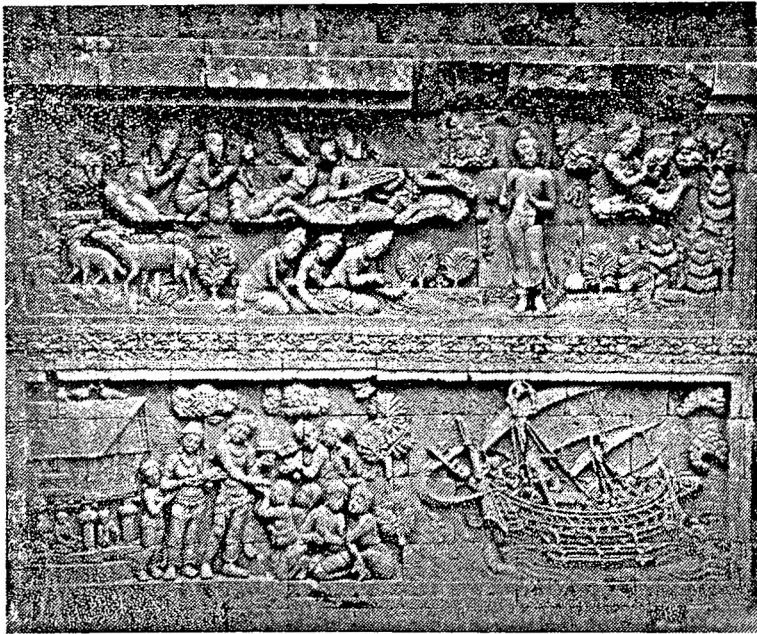
arrival of traders and adventurers from India during the last century before the birth of Christ. In this chapter we will consider the factors which led these Indians to visit Malaya and the influence which they had upon the way of life of South East Asia.

## I. THE COMING OF THE INDIANS.

The first Indian traders and adventurers to visit Malaya and other parts of South East Asia probably arrived around about the year 100 B.C. Some historians have suggested that they arrived very much earlier than this, but there is no clear evidence to prove the point. The Indians came to South East Asia for a variety of reasons, of which the most important were (a) the search for new supplies of gold, (b) the search for a new and shorter trade route to China and (c) missionary endeavour.

### (a) The Search for Gold.

Gold plays an important part in Indian religion and customs. It is used in the manufacture of sacred objects, such as the statues



Carving showing an early South East Asian ship.

of gods, and also to make personal ornaments such as rings and bracelets. In early times Indian traders obtained their gold from Siberia, but during the Second Century B.C. this source of supply was blocked by barbarian nomads. Indian merchants then turned to the Roman Empire. This arrangement worked for a while, but the export of gold from Roman provinces was finally stopped by the Emperor Vespasian (69-75 A.D.). The Indians were then compelled to search for another source of gold. They found it in South East Asia. Gold was to be found in many parts of this region, including Pahang in Malaya.

So it was the need for gold which brought the first Indian traders to the lands of South East Asia. This explains why, in early Indian books, various countries of South East Asia are described as 'Lands of Gold'. Malaya itself was given the title Suvarnabhumi or Suvarnadvipa. In about 150 A.D. a Greek geographer described

Malaya as the Golden Chersonese.

#### **(b) The Search for a New Trade Route.**

From very early times Indian merchants had traded with China along the sea route which ran south of Malaya. During the first century B.C. an alternative to this route was sought. Adventurous Indian traders visited the lands of South East Asia in search of a short overland route between the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea. Many such routes were discovered. Some stretched through Burma and Indo-China. Others were situated further south across the 'neck' of the Malay peninsula and the Isthmus of Kra. One of these southern routes crossed from Kedah in the West to Singgora or Patani on the east coast of the peninsula. Small

settlements of Indian traders grew up along the new trade routes.

#### **(c) Missionary Endeavour.**

Some historians have suggested that missionary activity played an important part in bringing the first Indians to South East Asia and that the first missionaries arrived during the reign of the Emperor Asoka in the third century B.C. There is no evidence to prove this. It is much more probable that missionaries followed the traders who brought their religion with them. Once a trading settlement had been established by Indian merchants, it was visited by Hindu and Buddhist missionaries. Religion followed trade,

In the earliest days of the Indian settlements there were probably more Buddhist missionaries than Hindus. To travel overseas means loss of caste to a Hindu, whereas the Buddhists have no caste system. Buddhist monks would have been much more ready than the Brahmins to visit the new settlements in South East Asia. But the Brahmins soon followed in their footsteps after overcoming their feelings against travel.

#### **(d) The First Settlements.**

You must not think that the Indians came to South East Asia in large numbers. They did not. Only a handful of traders and missionaries settled in Malaya and other lands. In the new trading centres which the Indians established the majority of the inhabitants would have been South East Asian people such as the Malays. But because of their wealth and prestige the few Indian traders obtained control of the new settlements. They were able to set themselves up as rulers of small kingdoms around the ports. Often they married the daughters of Malay chiefs in order to win local support.

There is another point that you should remember. The traffic between India and South East Asia was 'two-way'. Indian traders visited the ports of South East Asia and traders from Malaya, Burma and Indo-China visited ports along the eastern coast of India. This was another way in which South East Asia came under the influence of the Indian way of life.

## **2. THE MAP OF CLAUDIUS PTOLEMY.**

Malaya made its first appearance on a map of the world in about 150 A.D. The map was drawn by Claudius Ptolemy, a Greek who was living in the famous city of Alexandria in Egypt. Ptolemy collected information about the world from the many sailors who visited the port and he used this information to draw a remarkably accurate map of the world. There are some inaccuracies, of course, but Ptolemy's map was correct in all the main details.



**Ptolemy.**

On Ptolemy's map Malaya is called the Aurea Chersonnesus, or the "Golden Peninsula", which shows that our country was known to sailors as a source of gold. The Muar River is marked on the map, and this waterway may have been used by early traders as a route to the gold mines of Pahang. Several ports are marked on the map, but historians have not been able to identify them with certainty. One was situated near modern Singapore. Indian traders were visiting Malaya frequently at the time when Ptolemy drew his map, and they probably used the ports which he marks.

### 3. THE FIRST INDIANISED KINGDOMS.

You have read about the way in which the first Indian settlements grew up in South East Asia. A few Indian traders and missionaries imposed their rule on the peoples of South East Asian ports. They were able to do this on account of their wealth and prestige and by intermarrying with local families. Some of the new ports became the capitals of kingdoms. Some of these kingdoms



THE FIRST INDIANISED KINGDOMS

were so small that they have left no record of their existence, but others became large and prosperous. It is better to describe these kingdoms as 'Indianised' than as 'Indian.' Most of the people were not Indians, but they were ruled by Indians and they had adopted some aspects of the Indian way of life. The most important of the earliest Indianised kingdoms were **Funan** and **Champa** in Indo-China and **Tun Sun, Chih Tu, Langkasuka** and **Kedah** in the Malay peninsula.

Most of the information about Funan comes from the traditional stories of the Chinese. This empire formerly covered the area where the present Cambodia and South Vietnam are situated. According to Chinese stories the Kingdom of Funan was founded

by a Brahmin called **Kaundinya** at some time in the first century A.D. Kaundinya was said to have won popular support by defeating the former inhabitants and marrying a local princess named **Willow Leaf**. The empire which he founded lasted for about five hundred years and it grew up to be very great. The rulers of this empire expanded their rule over the whole of Cambodia and Annam and also parts of north Malaya. The people of this empire slowly adapted themselves to the ways and customs of the Indians. Funan was probably the main centre of Indian trade in South-east Asia. The empire was finally brought to an end by an invasion of the Khmers, the inhabitants of Chenla, in about 539 A.D.

Champa, a smaller kingdom situated along the coast of what is now Vietnam, was founded in about 190 A.D. but it never became as large or as prosperous as Funan. The former name of Champa was Lin-yi and it was given the name Champa during the seventh century. This empire was thought to have come under the influence of the Indians as far back as the first century A.D.

#### 4. THE ANCIENT KINGDOMS OF THE MALAY PENINSULA.

We have already seen earlier that the early knowledge of the Malay Peninsula comes mainly from the map of Claudius Ptolemy. This however was not the only evidence, for the Chinese also gave some information on the Malay Peninsula, particularly after the Han Dynasty. A research was made by Professor Wheatley on the Malay Peninsula and his conclusion was that there were more than thirty states in the Malay Peninsula. The most important ancient kingdoms in the Malay Peninsula were **Tun Sun, Chih Tu, Langkasuka** and **Kedah**.

The kingdom of **Tun Sun** was situated in the northern part of the Malay peninsula, slightly near the Kra Isthmus. It was believed that Indian traders dominated this state. A ruler of the state of Funan, **Fan Shih-man** was said to have conquered this state.

Another kingdom in which Indian influence was very strong was **Chih Tu**. This kingdom was situated to the south of Tun Sun and it was likely that it had its capital somewhere along the Kelantan River. At the beginning Chih Tu was under the influence of Funan and later under the influence of Cambodia. This kingdom

was believed to have been used by Chinese traders on the way to India. Instead of using the long sea route around Singapore, goods were taken overland across the narrow part of the peninsula.

The most important kingdom in the Malay peninsula can be said to be Langkasuka. This kingdom was situated in the north-east of Malaya and was founded in the second century A.D. Langkasuka was mentioned in the records of the Chinese, Indians, Arabs and Malays. This kingdom is believed to have lasted for over a thousand years and its inhabitants were very rich. Gold was used very freely in this kingdom and it was common to find the rulers as well as the high officials to be seen wearing golden rings and using golden cups.

In the north-west portion of the Malay peninsula was the kingdom of Kedah, which may have been founded at about the same period as Langkasuka. The centre of this kingdom was the Merbok Estuary and the area around Kedah Peak. The Merbok Estuary was very much larger in those days than it is now, and it may have the main harbour for Indian ships which visited the west coast of Malaya. There was also enough flat land for settlement and well drained land for the cultivation of padi. Archaeologists have discovered the remains of several ancient Indian temples and inscriptions in various parts of Kedah and Perlis, especially in the area of Kedah Peak, which may have been looked upon as a sacred mountain. Kedah Peak also served as a landmark for Indian ships approaching the Malay peninsula. These advantages made Kedah an important Indian settlement for at least nine to ten centuries. Further north than Kedah, Tukuapa in southern Thailand was a port of call for early Indian traders.

As a result of the visits of Indian traders and the beginning of Indianised kingdoms, the Indian way of life began to influence the people of Malaya and other parts of South East Asia. Sanskrit words were adopted into the Malay language and many Indian customs became part of the Malay way of life. The 'wayang kulit,' or shadow play, of Kelantan is one example of Indian influence. Many Hindu legends found their way into Malay books such as the famous Sejarah Melayu, or Malay Annals. Some of the customs and ceremonies performed at the courts of Malay Sultans also date back to the days of the Indianised Kingdoms.

### **Questions to Answer.**

1. What brought Indian traders to Malaya in about 100 B.C.?
2. Who was Claudius Ptolemy and what is the importance of the map of the world which he drew?
3. Name the first Indianised kingdoms of South East Asia.
4. Write a brief account of the rise and fall of the kingdom of Funan.
5. What influence did the Indians have upon the way of life of Malaya and other parts of South East Asia?

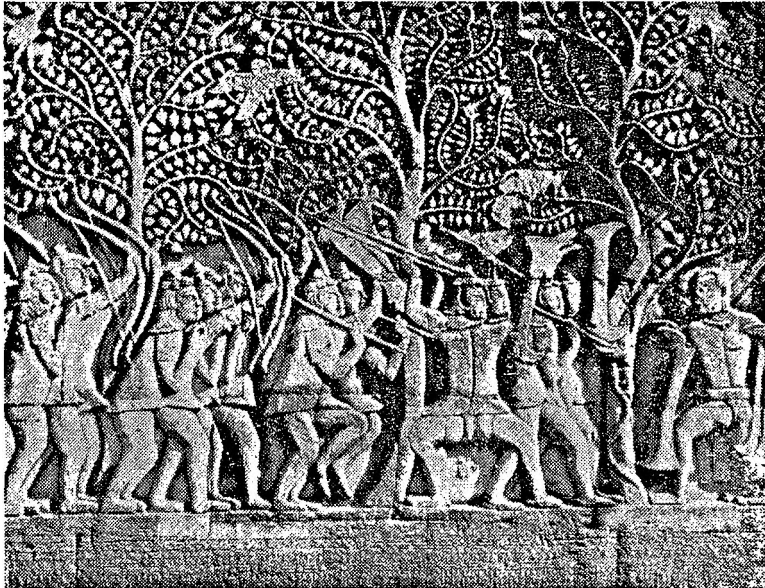
## Chapter Two

### SOUTH EAST ASIA —THE GREAT EMPIRES

In Chapter One we read about the arrival of Indian traders and the rise of the first Indianised kingdoms. The largest of these early kingdoms — Funan — was destroyed by Khmer invaders in about 539 A.D. This chapter carries the history of South East Asia from the fall of Funan into the fifteenth century. During this time new empires arose to take the place of Funan. The most important of these were the **Khmer Empire of Angkor** in Cambodia and the Empires of **Srivijaya** and **Majapahit** in Indonesia and Tumasek. The history of these great states is extremely complicated and uncertain, and here we can only give a brief and simplified outline.

#### I. THE EMPIRE OF ANGKOR.

The Khmer people who destroyed the great kingdom of Funan soon built up a state of their own to replace it. This new state

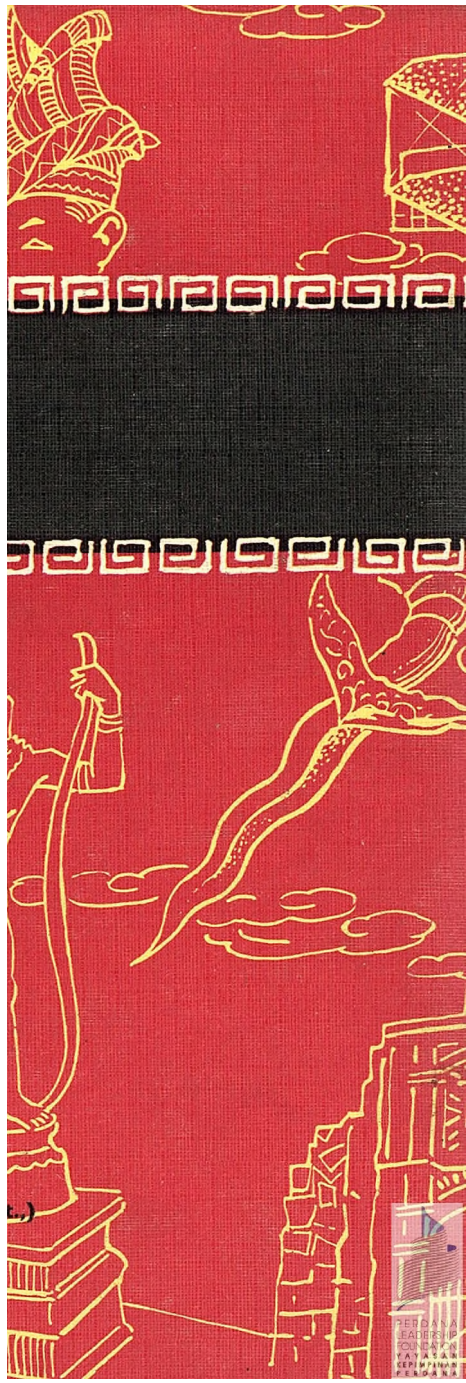


Carving from Angkor Wat.

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