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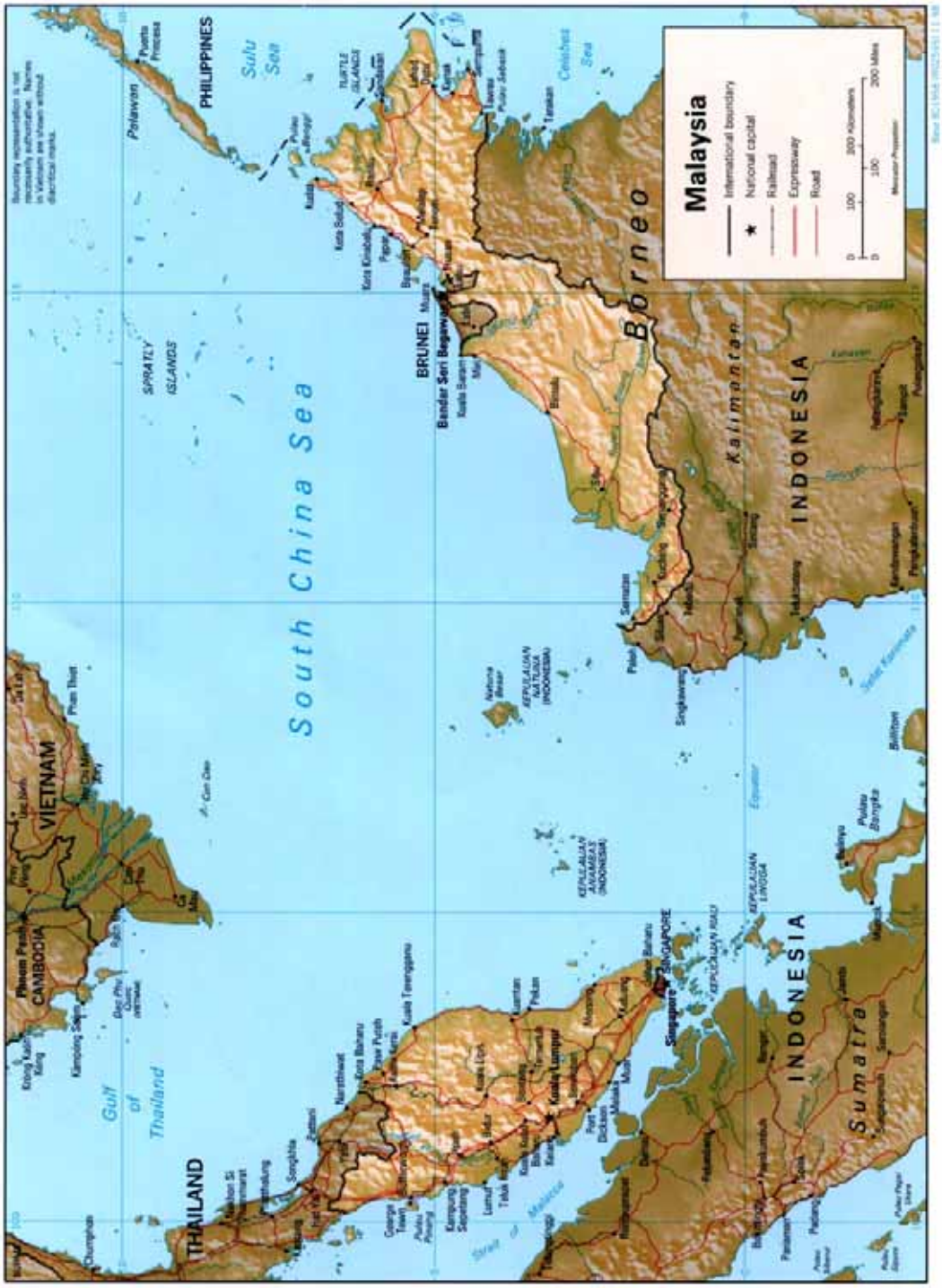
Map of Malaysia



Chapter 1 Profile

Introduction

© Ian Koh
Children at the beach

Malaysia is a small country by the standards of Southeast Asia. It is half the size of Burma, two-thirds the size of Thailand, and one-sixth the size of Indonesia.[1] Moreover, it consists of two separate land masses. Peninsular Malaysia is a narrow projection that extends from Thailand down to the Republic of Singapore, its tip. East Malaysia consists of two states, Sabah and Sarawak, on the northern coast of the island of Borneo. East Malaysia and Peninsular Malaysia do not share a common history except being colonized by the British. Prior to colonial rule, the peninsula was sparsely populated. After colonialization, immigration from China and India transformed it into a multicultural society, but one in which specific groups filled different niches in the economy. These groups had limited social interaction due to differences in ethnicity, language, religion, and race. This posed a challenge when the country became independent in 1957 and added Sarawak, Sabah, and briefly Singapore in 1963. Whereas the U.S. Declaration of Independence refers to "We the People," in Malaysia the people were not conceived of as one entity but rather the sum total of an assortment of groups in which ethnic Malays were accorded symbolic and legal primacy. Article 153 of the constitution states it "shall be the responsibility of the *Yang di-Pertuan Agong* (the paramount ruler: Sultan to safeguard the special position of the Malays and natives of any of the States of Sabah and Sarawak…"[2] As a Chinese Malay student pursuing graduate study abroad observed, "An internal contradiction arises when the nation is given certain characteristics, yet not everyone who is given membership in the nation shares those characteristics."[3]

Climate

Peninsular Malaysia and East Malaysia, though separated by the South China Sea, both lie slightly north of the equator and therefore receive the same air mass movements. They do not exhibit any significant climatic differences.[4] Because they fall within the equatorial zone, both receive the same amount of sunlight every day, averaging 12.5 hours of daylight year round. Average temperatures do not exhibit much variation either; ranging from 69–89 °F (21–32 °C) with a humidity of about 85% owing to high

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[1] *The Malaysian Economy: Spatial Perspectives*. Cho, George. "Chapter 1: Malaysia: The Socio-Economic Background [p. 5]." 1990. New York: Routledge. http://books.google.com/books?id=efANAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA5&dq=malaysian+economy+malaysia+burma+thailand+indonesia&cd=1#v=onepage&q=&f=false

[2] The Asian Pacific Journal: Japan Focus. Wade, Geoff. "The Origins and Evolution of Ethnocracy in Malaysia." 2008. http://www.japanfocus.org/-Geoff-Wade/3259

[3] Academica Sinica. Center for Asia-Pacific Area Studies Newsletter. Manickam, Sandra Khor. "Textbooks and Nation Construction in Malaysia" (paper presented at the 18th Conference of International Association of Historians of Asia, National University of Asia). 6–10 December 2000. http://www.rchss.sinica.edu.tw/capas/publication/newsletter/N28/28_01_04.pdf

[4] Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. "Country Profile: Malaysia [p. 9]." September 2006. http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Malaysia.pdf

evaporation rates. As a result, the passage of seasons is marked by rainfall rather than changes in temperature and hours of sunlight. This is dictated by the monsoonal wind cycle.[5] The average rainfall in peninsular Malaysia is 254 cm (100 in), most of which falls during the southwest monsoon (roughly April–October). By contrast, in East Malaysia precipitation falls mainly during the northeast monsoon (roughly October–February). The amount of precipitation in Sabah is 263 cm (104 in) while that in neighboring Sarawak is 385 cm (152 in).[6]

Major Cities

Kuala Lumpur

© Gouldy99 / flickr.com
Kuala Lumpur

Kuala Lumpur, or "KL" as the locals call it, is a capital city of relatively recent origin that has enjoyed a great deal of new construction in recent decades. The Petronas Towers, owned by the state oil company, was for a time the tallest building in the world. According to a regular visitor, "[I]f you drive in the center of KL, across from the tall skyscrapers and urban sprawl you will find whole swaths of land with homes only available to ethnic Malay citizens, a concept that simply wouldn't fly in North America, Britain or Australia."[7] Although this statement is true today, the city's pattern of racially segregated residential neighborhoods was evident during British colonial rule when some areas were deemed "European only." Chinese immigrants created self-contained Chinatowns and, as the population expanded, the city boundaries encroached on Malay agricultural communities on land which could not be sold to non-Malays. As a result, the expanding settlements simply built around restricted land.[8]

Georgetown

Georgetown on Penang Island was acquired in 1786 by Sir Francis Light on behalf of the East India Company (EIC), which had developed a thriving trade in opium with the Chinese and needed a safe harbor to repair their ships. In exchange for trade concessions,

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[5] *A History of Malaysia*. Andaya, Leonard Y. "Introduction: The Environment and Peoples of Malaysia. [p. 2]." 1984. UK: Palgrave Macmillan. http://books.google.com/books?id=5GSBCcNn1fsC&pg=PA1&lpg=PA1&dq=malaysia+geography&source=bl&ots=91AOGZPOdP&sig=qw0MhHCR_8tBhRXcJzpKdViPc8w&hl=en&ei=QpKySsWsMIXWsgOQ-qyeDQ&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=8#v=onepage&q=malaysia%20geography&f=false

[6] *Accessing Biodiversity and Sharing the Benefits: Lessons from Implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity.*. Mohamad Osman. "Chapter 11: Malaysia: Recent Initiatives to Develop Access and Benefit-Sharing Regulation [p. 243]." Carrizosa, Santiago and Stephen B. Brush, Brian D. Wright, Patrick E. McGuire, Eds. 2004. Cambridge, UK: IUCN Publications. http://books.google.com/books?id=_h7Yi3xhJrsC&pg=PA243&lpg=PA243&dq=average+rainfall+malaysia&source=bl&ots=0gilmJ5JjH&sig=aHOp_0Y36SIQZ287-9gFvwyalHo&hl=en&ei=flqxSt2-BYOkswP-ksTLCw&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=10#v=onepage&q=average%20rainfall%20malaysia&f=false

[7] eTurboNews (Global Travel Industry News). Princz, Andrew. "Has Malaysian-Style Affirmative Action as a Multicultural Model Had its Day?" 21 December 2008. http://www.eturbonews.com/6845/has-malaysian-style-affirmative-action-multicultural-model-had-it

[8] World Civic Forum. Nobaya Ahmad. "A Demographic Perspective of Ethnic Plurality in Malaysia [p.10]." 2009. http://www.wcf2009.org/program/down/050_S5-I06-3_Nobaya_Ahmad.doc

the Sultan of Kedah wanted British military support to defend his sultanate from Siamese (present-day Thailand) kingdoms. He received vague assurances from Light, who was operating largely on his own without knowledge of the crown. Moreover, the EIC was interested in protecting its maritime trade, not using Penang as a means to acquire land concessions on the peninsula. This is evident in the urban development of Georgetown, now a UNESCO World Heritage site, which did not take on the specifications of a fort.[9] In contrast to other cities that developed as a result of trade, Indian Muslim traders in Penang lived side by side with Chinese merchants, rather than segregated by ethnicity.

Kota Kinabalu

© XanderK / flickr.com
Kota Kinabalu

Kota Kinabalu was once a fishing village. In the late 1890s, the British North Borneo Company recognized its potential as a deep-sea port, and this led to the creation of a settlement. It was renamed Jesselton, after Sir Charles Jessel, a ranking official in the company. Although the city suffered extensive damage during World War II from Japanese bombings, after the war it became the new capital of British North Borneo owing to its deepwater anchorage.[10] It was renamed Kota Kinabalu in 1968, three years after North Borneo voted to join the Federation of Malaya. The Federation then became known as the Federation of Malaysia, with the inclusion of North Borneo, Sarawak, and Singapore.

Kuching

Kuching is the seventh largest city in Malaysia, capital of Sarawak state. Sarawak was originally part of the Sultanate of Brunei, but was ceded to the British in exchange for assistance in putting down a rebellion.[11] It was predominantly Malay in 1885 and was 55% Chinese by 1939. The Chinese became the commercial lifeblood of the city while the Malays sought work in government administration.[12] The pattern evident in peninsular Malaysia was replicated in Kuching; occupational specialty was highly correlated with ethnicity.

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9 The Penang Story – International Conference 2002. Huang Lan-Shiang (Academia Sinica). "A Comparison on the Urban Spatial Structures of the British Colonial Port Cities among Calcutta, George Town and Singapore" (paper presented at The Penang Story – International Conference 2002) [p. 4]." 18–21 April 2002. http://www.penangstory.net.my/docs/Abs-HuangLanShiang.doc

[10] Encyclopedia Britannica. "Malaysia – formerly Jessleton." 2010. http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/322833/Kota-Kinabalu

[11] Encyclopedia Britannica. "Brooke Raj." No date. http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9016627

[12] JSTOR. Kim Wah. Review of *From Kampung to City: A Social History of Kuching Malaysia, 1820–1970*, by Craig Alan Lockard. 1989. http://www.jstor.org/pss/20071110

History

Pre-Colonial History

© Tian Yake
Replica of the Sultan's Palace in Melaka

Long before the arrival of Europeans, Malays had established coastal settlements that served as trading posts for maritime traffic. In the words of a Malaysian historian, "the tradition of coastal pluralism evolved in island Southeast Asia, including the various states that became Malaysia, from earliest times. The port towns were conspicuous examples of cultural pluralism in the traditional milieu and were open to new and alien influences."[13] Those earliest influences were Hindu and later Islamic, introduced through Indian and Arab traders. The origins of present-day Muslim Malaysia are typically traced to the establishment of Malacca (*Melaka*) on the peninsula's west coast. Strategically located along the spice route between India and China, the kingdom was founded by the Prince Paramesvara who was forced to flee his native Java. After establishing a new kingdom in Malacca, he converted to Islam, taking the name Iskandar Shah. His subjects largely followed suit because adopting the ruler's religion conferred advantages. The Malacca Sultanate, in addition to controlling trade in the strait which made it a cosmopolitan city, became a major center for the regional diffusion of Islam. Henceforth the Malayan rajas (kings) would be known as sultans, and their kingdoms became sultanates. In 1511 the Portuguese captured Malacca. Their intrusion led to the creation of several competing sultanates on the peninsula, each seeking to dominate regional trade.

The sultanates were highly stratified societies in which ordinary people believed in the supernatural power (*daulat*) of royalty who answered to God. In turn, it was the divine duty of their subjects never to be disloyal to the monarch. Commoners could only look at their feet, not address sultans directly. The sultans did not eat and bathe like other people. Instead they feasted on savory, delectable morsels (*bersantap*) and were gently showered (*bersiram*) by water to clean themselves. [14] Royalty was accorded similar treatment in neighboring Buddhist Thailand, reflecting the enduring influence of the Hindu-style court system on societies that subsequently adopted different religions.[15]

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[13] The Pluralism Project, Harvard University. Yeoh, Christopher. "Malaysia, Truly Asia? Religious Pluralism in Malaysia. No date.. http://pluralism.org/research/reports/yeoh/Pluralism_Malaysia.doc
[14] New York Times. Erlanger, Steven. "New King of Malaysia May Become More Assertive." 5 March 1989. http://www.nytimes.com/1989/03/05/world/new-king-of-malaysia-may-assert-more-influence.html
[15] *Sari*. Vol. 19. Lopez, Carolina. "The British Presence in the Malay World: A Meeting of Civilizational Traditions. 2001. http://pkukmweb.ukm.my/~penerbit/jsari19-01.pdf

British Colonial Rule

© Htgoon / wikipedia.org
Colonial architecture in Penang

The Dutch replaced the Portuguese and briefly controlled trade on both sides of the Malacca Strait until forced to accommodate the British, who developed superior naval power. The British incrementally colonized Malaysia, carefully weighing the expense to ensure the benefits remained greater. British interest in natural resources, especially tin, and later rubber, created an incentive to establish a governance to protect their economic interests. They relied on a model of "indirect rule" in which traditional leaders, sultans and local aristocrats, maintained their status and authority over religious matters. The sultans accepted the arrangement and did little to challenge it as the British remade the peninsula into an export economy. This required high levels of Chinese and Indian immigration to ensure sufficient labor. On the peninsula, the emerging division of labor was captured in the following designations: "Malay farmer," "Chinese trader," and "Indian plantation laborer."[16] While Malays were economically marginal in this scheme, their way of life, based on subsistence agriculture, was not threatened by plantation agriculture. A series of land preservation schemes and other measures protected them.[17] By contrast, the expanding market economy presented ethnic Chinese with many opportunities to move out of mining and into towns where they established businesses as shop-keepers and money lenders. They came to control local commerce on both the peninsula and Borneo.

The Japanese occupation of peninsular Malaysia during World War II spurred a growing sense of nationalism. The British introduced the European concept of "race" via population censuses carried out by colonial administrators.[18] The Japanese slogan "Asia for Asians" found a receptive audience among ethnic Malays. Yet no resistance movement representing all groups emerged. Instead the Malays supported the Japanese while the Chinese backed the British due to the brutal Japanese occupation of their homeland. The Chinese sent large sums of money to support homeland resistance and organized an army on the Malay Peninsula. After the Japanese defeat, the Chinese-organized Malay People's Anti-Japanese Army took power in some places on the peninsula until Allied control was restored. The degree of group coordination exhibited

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[16] UN Research Institute for Social Development. Teik, Khoo Boo. "Ethnic Structure, Inequality and Governance in the Public Sector: Malaysian Experiences." Abstract. 15 December 2005. http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/(httpPublications)/19309421DF6D65D3C12570FA00392E12?OpenDocument

[17] *Malaysian Development: A Retrospective.* Rudner, Martin. "Chapter 3: Agricultural Policy and Peasant Social Transformation in Late Colonial Malaya [p.58]." 1994. Ottawa: Carleton University Press. http://books.google.com/books?id=IhrwflT-koMC&pg=RA1-PA49-IA9&dq=Malaysian+Development:+a+Retrospective+subsistence+agriculture+kampung&cd=1#v=onepage&q=&f=false

[18] *The Population of Malaysia.* Saw, Swee-Hock. "Chapter 1: Introduction: Demographic Data [p. 8]." 2007. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies. http://books.google.com/books?id=GF67WW8oTUwC&pg=PA8&dq=british+census+malaysia+results+classified+by+sex+and+race&cd=2#v=onepage&q=british%20census%20malaysia%20results%20classified%20by%20sex%20and%20race&f=false

by the Chinese led some Malays to worry they might end up like the Native Americans in the face of European immigration.[19] While it was clear the country could not return to colonialism, the future remained hazy.

Transition to Independence

© Mohd N. A. Abdul
Malaysian Independence Monument

In January 1946, the British proposed the Malayan Union, a unification of the nine Malay states plus the two Crown Straits settlements of Malacca and Penang under a central government for the first time. Easy naturalization requirements would enable immigrants to enjoy equal status with the indigenous Malays, who were presumably stripped of any special dispensation as a result of their support for the Japanese during the war. Opposition to losing their special status caused the Malays, who had identified themselves as subjects of a specific sultanate rather than as a group, to unite for the first time.[20] They organized a political party, the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) that successfully pushed for significant modifications. The new plan, which named the independent state the Federation of Malaya, reflected British acceptance of the UMNO's position that this was "the land of the Malays" (*Tanah Melayu*).[21] The Malays recaptured their special status, and the nine sultans received a role in governance. Also, citizenship requirements for immigrants became stricter. Applicants had to demonstrate residency for 15 of the preceding 25 years and proficiency in either English or Malay along with a declaration of permanent residence and an oath of loyalty to the federation. Malay distrust of the Chinese stemmed not only from their ability to amass wealth and mobilize resources, but also to uncertainty about where their allegiance lay. Chinese immigrants traditionally aspired to be buried in their ancestral villages.[22] Nonetheless, most Chinese residents became naturalized

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[19] *After Independence: Making and Protecting the Nation in Postcolonial and Postcommunist States*. Mauzy, Diane "Chapter 3: From Malay Nationalism to Malay Nation? [p. 48]." Lowell Barrington, Ed. 2006. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. http://www.press.umich.edu/pdf/0472098985-ch3.pdf

[20] *Malaysia, State and Civil Society in Transition*. Vermu, Vidhu. "Chapter 2: Nationalism and Nation-building [p. 22]." 2002. Boulder, CO: Lynne Reiner. http://books.google.com/books?id=YofWYcrE3_oC&pg=PA1&lpg=PA1&dq=Malaysia,+State+and+Civil+Society+in+Transition&source=bl&ots=hIjL6qFa1Q&sig=aiVMa55H5Ts7uIgpevexRuroJJc&hl=en&ei=NiwYS828NIn-sQO3oKyuDg&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=2&ved=0CA4Q6AEwAQ#v=onepage&q=&f=false

[21] *Malaysia: The Making of a Nation.* Cheah, Boon Kheng. "Chapter 1: 1945–57 Malay Dominance and the Making of a Malay 'Nation-State' [p. 3]." 2002. Singapore: Southeast Asian Studies Publishing. http://books.google.com/books?id=NOtXcEmHdjoC&pg=PA6&lpg=PA6&dq=japanese+occupation+nationalism+malaysia&source=bl&ots=ScZp8g7FyD&sig=yZ1kFg1zhDE5ecQ7zDCOxjkQve0&hl=en&ei=5s4eS9jmBYXUtgOQnfn7CQ&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=9&ved=0CCwQ6AEwCA#v=onepage&q=japanese%20occupation%20nationalism%20malaysia&f=false

[22] BBC News. Kent, Jonathan. "Chinese Diaspora: Malaysia." 3 March 2005. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/4308241.stm

citizens within a few years.[23] By contrast, the less educated and more recent arrivals from southern India had greater difficulty fulfilling the requirements.

© Lan Rasso
Malay family in Sarawak

In the constitution ratified in 1957, Islam was recognized as the national religion while "Malay" refers to a person who practices the Muslim faith, speaks the Malay language as his or her mother tongue, and conforms to Malay custom (*adat*). In effect, the constitution shaped the boundaries of Malay identity and legally defined who could claim the privileges accorded to *Bumiputera* (sons of the soil).[24] Paradoxically, while such categories are perceived as fixed and beyond the control of the individual, they are also socially constructed and reflect the changing nature of group alignment and identification over time.[25] For example, Mahathir Mohamad, the first commoner to become Prime Minister, grew up in a Malay community and identifies himself as a Malay. Yet his father was an Indian Muslim immigrant, and only his mother was an ethnic Malay. Non-Muslim tribal peoples found primarily on Borneo Island and designated "Other" by the British were excluded from the privileges of *Bumiputera* status. This is despite the fact they may claim deeper roots in Malay soil than those on the peninsula who had received *Bumiputera* status. Ethnic identity could never again be taken for granted because it had acquired political and economic implications.

Interethnic Tensions Erupt

The UMNO was able to form an Alliance with two parties, the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) and the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC). All three groups, each representing their respective communities, oversaw the transition to the Federation of Malaya in 1957. Through 1963, when the Federation was renamed Malaysia, the UMNO successfully held the coalition together. While members of the new political elite had successfully brokered political independence (*merdeka*) from Britain, they did not push for economic independence. As a result, British companies continued to own large rubber plantations and tin mining operations, and expatriates continued to head major firms through the 1960s.[26] The ethnic Chinese bought some of the British businesses and

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[23] Peace Studies Program, Cornell University. Kreuzer, Peter. "Democracy, Diversity, and Conflict: Managing Ethnic Divisions in the Philippines and Malaysia [p. 12]." 2006. http://www.einaudi.cornell.edu/peaceprogram/publications/occasional_papers/Kreuzer-final.pdf

[24] *Building Cultural Nationalism in Malaysia: Identity, Representation and Citizenship*. Daniels, Timothy. "Chapter 2: Melaka Past and Present, Cultural Citizenship and Race Making [pp. 40–41]." 2004. New York: Routledge. http://books.google.com/books?id=VTQ3jPoxwHMC&pg=PA42&lpg=PA42&dq=Building+Cultural+Nationalism+in+Malaysia:+Identity,+Representation+and+Citizenship&source=bl&ots=wAiwNvkmMs&sig=FiylLJSzQwbWS3Zhtj-0Fo9eLlg&hl=en&ei=cUsdS7ugMoaQsgO-5pn3Bw&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CA4Q6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=&f=false

[25] College of Law, University of Illinois. Ginsberg, Thomas. "Book Review: Democracy, Markets and Doomsaying: Is Ethnic Conflict Inevitable?" [p. 18.] 2004. http://law.bepress.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1002&context=uiuclwps

[26] *British Business in Post-Colonial Malaysia, 1957–1970: Neo-Colonialism or Disengagement?* "Introduction [p. 4]." 2004. New York: Routledge.

created many new ones as well. Little was done to improve the lot of the largely rural Malays. Income gaps between the groups continued to increase, reflecting social barriers. Due to growing dissatisfaction, the prospect of heavy Alliance losses in the 1969 elections emboldened critics of the government. Political parties representing Chinese who rejected the political status quo made electoral gains. This outcome threatened the social contract Malaysia had been governed by since independence.

Courtesy of Singapore Ministry of Education
Race riots in Singapore, 1964

The riots that followed on May 13th lasted two weeks, claiming the lives of several hundred with thousands more wounded. Private property in Kuala Lumpur was also significantly damaged. There were overtones of ethnic cleansing because primarily Chinese-owned property was destroyed. A declared state of emergency was quickly extended to the entire country. A National Operations Council (NOC) took charge for the next 21 months in a manner resembling martial law. The NOC introduced a number of restrictions on political participation and freedom of speech, which subsequently became permanent through constitutional amendments.[27] Among the most important was the prohibition on non-Malays questioning the constitutionally enshrined special status of *Bumiputera*.

The Malay Dilemma

Mahathir Mohamad, a rising presence in the UMNO, criticized the incumbent prime minister's handling of the situation and was expelled until new leadership was installed. During his expulsion, Mahathir wrote *The Malay Dilemma*, a book that addressed the plight of the *Bumiputera*. Initially banned at the time of publication in 1971 given the sensitivity of the subject, he set out to examine the reasons behind the Malays' lack of material wealth in contrast to the Chinese, whose entrepreneurial skill and ability to accumulate capital were widely acknowledged.[28] Mahathir, a medical doctor by training—not a social scientist—attributed their success to well honed survival skills developed over the course of China's tumultuous history. Life on the Malay Peninsula was much easier by comparison. Moreover, he identified certain elements of Malay culture as obstacles to betterment. Two keys elements were adherence to form as prescribed by customary law (*adat*) and fatalism which led individuals to believe they had little control over their lives. Property meant land, and money was simply necessary

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http://books.google.com/books?id=mj1_lEuqjAgC&pg=PA3&lpg=PA3&dq=british+colonialism+malaysia&source=bl&ots=Px_zwI0ZyP&sig=-XtSVBJmi0dKK8F4gt3ectXIkFM&hl=en&ei=ByQdS9qgJYrQtgPDhaWRBw&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=8&ved=0CBgQ6AEwBzgU#v=onepage&q=&f=false

[27] *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization*. Brownlee, Jason. "Chapter 3: Institutional Legacies and Coalitional Tensions [p. 95]." 2007. New York: Cambridge University Press. http://books.google.com/books?id=Trpol93amUQC&pg=PT109&dq=authoritarianism+in+an+age+of+democratization+noc's+ten+members+were+the+government&cd=1#v=onepage&q=&f=false

[28] For a discussion of "market dominant minorities" see *World on Fire: How Exporting Free Market Democracy Breeds Ethnic Hatred and Global Instability*. Chua, Amy. 2002. New York: Doubleday.

to buy things a farmer could not grow himself, not an object to be multiplied. Such a view rendered Malays very poor businessmen.[29]

© M. Afif
Mahathir in 2009

Under these circumstances, putting the Malays on equal footing with the Chinese would subject them to a competition in which only the fittest would prevail. "If this is done," Mahathir warned, "it would perhaps be possible to breed a hardy and resourceful race capable of competing against all comers. Unfortunately, we do not have four thousand years to play around with."[30] Nonetheless he felt the government could accelerate the process of modernizing Malay culture through policy levers to reconfigure the playing field. Specifically, if *Bumiputera* were offered incentives to migrate to the cities, the wider range of cultural, political, and economic opportunities offered would help them develop the ability to compete in business against other groups.[31] This conclusion provided the rationale for an interventionist state to oversee implementation of a sweeping set of policy initiatives known as the New Economic Policy (NEP).

New Economic Policy

While the NEP took the eradication of poverty as its mandate, the intended beneficiaries were ethnic Malays. Toward this end, quotas ensured ethnic Malays got a disproportionate share of new jobs. The NEP set an ambitious goal of achieving 30% *Bumiputera* stake in commerce and industry by 1991.[32] To meet this target, *Bumiputera* status was expanded to include some tribal peoples in East Malaysia. This also enabled the Alliance, later renamed the National Front (*Barisan Nasional*), to count on their electoral support.[33] This goal was not to be achieved by nationalizing Chinese businesses; rather, the state would assume an expanded economic role. As a scholar observed, "Here we see one working principle of the ruling inter-ethnic Alliance in practice: no single ethnic group is allowed to come out of any deal as a clear-cut loser. Profits might be

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[29] *Malaysia: Mahathirism, Hegemony and the New Opposition*. Hilley, John. "Chapter 2: Constructing the Vision: State-Class Relations, the Power Bloc and the Origins of the Crisis [p. 47]." 2001. London: Zed Books. http://books.google.com/books?id=weHHJWARhncC&pg=PA47&dq=malay+dilemma+and+the+challenge+of+modernity+Malaysia:+Mahathirism,+Hegemony+and+the+New+Opposition&cd=1#v=onepage&q=&f=false

[30] *The Malaysian Insider*. Buruma, Ian. "The Malay Dilemma." 15 May 2009. http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/index.php/features/26608-the-malay-dilemma

[31] American Diplomacy, Commentary & Analysis. Palmer, Ronald. "Malaysian Identity." November 2006. http://www.unc.edu/depts/diplomat/item/2006/1012/palm/palmer_malaysia.html

[32] *Constitutionalism and Democracy: Transitions in the Contemporary World*. Lev, Daniel "Chapter 8: Social Movements, Constitutionalism and Human Rights: Comments from the Malaysian and Indonesian Experiences [p. 149]." Douglas Greenberg, Ed. 1993. New York: Oxford University Press. http://books.google.com/books?id=7WM03dd95jYC&pg=PA149&lpg=PA149&dq=malay+redistributive&source=bl&ots=dq6kGb-gF-&sig=AYsKOukHp7L0DTp8UqTdAEaZBbw&hl=en&ei=oyecStmvJ6rlnQfvy4yWCA&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=10#v=onepage&q=malay%20redistributive&f=false

[33] Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, U.S. Department of State. "Background Note: Malaysia." July 2009. http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2777.htm

partitioned unevenly, but all parties have to share in the profit."[34] Nonetheless, this form of government led to an exodus of foreign business owners, principally British, who were replaced by a public sector employing Malays. It also laid the foundation for crony capitalism: rather than benefiting Malays as a whole specific individuals with *Bumiputera* status were selected to receive sweetheart deals as a reward for their loyalty to the UMNO. Moreover, they remained reliant on government patronage for continued access to concessions, licenses, monopoly distribution rights, waivers of requirements, etc., which were often necessary for their businesses to turn a profit.

The Mahathir Era (1981–2003)

© Azidi AlBukhary
Mahathir Mohamad

In 1981 Mahathir Mohamad became prime minister. He immediately set about cleaning house by marginalizing Malay aristocrats who had, up to that point, dominated the upper echelons of the UMNO.[35] During his 22-year rule, Malaysia racked up enviable growth rates by exporting palm oil, tin, rubber, crude oil, and electronic components. This transition from raw materials to manufactured goods was accomplished under the heavy hand of the state, dubbed "Malaysia, Inc.".[36] On Mahathir's watch, the political imperatives of ethnic wealth redistribution were linked to Malaysia's quest to achieve "newly industrialized country" status.[37] Other Asian countries industrialized by identifying emerging sectors and promising businessmen access to cheap credit if they successfully met government-set production benchmarks.[38] Toward this end, Mahathir sought to create a Malay entrepreneur class through a program that privatized state assets without competitive bidding. One associate of Mahathir's became a multimillionaire by acquiring mines, palm oil plantations, hotels, and container

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[34] Peace Studies Program, Cornell University. Kreuzer, Peter. "Democracy, Diversity, and Conflict: Managing Ethnic Divisions in the Philippines and Malaysia [p. 16]." 2006. http://www.einaudi.cornell.edu/peaceprogram/publications/occasional_papers/Kreuzer-final.pdf

[35] *The Politics of Multiculturalism: Pluralism and Citizenship in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia*. Hefner, Robert. "Introduction: Multiculturalism and Citizenship in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia [p. 28]." 2001. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press. http://books.google.com/books?id=mhgzRW8NlfoC&pg=PA28&lpg=PA28&dq=%E2%80%9Cethnically+differentiated+citizenship%E2%80%9D&source=bl&ots=xu9fZScBMY&sig=i_RDZqIa9HQ6LOUJCJhTUq7KMe0&hl=en&ei=TNgeS86UEYuiswPp65nuCQ&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=5&ved=0CBsQ6AEwBA#v=onepage&q=%E2%80%9Cethnically%20differentiated%20citizenship%E2%80%9D&f=false

[36] *Malaysia: Mahathirism, Hegemony and the New Opposition*. Hilley, John. "Chapter 3: Mahathirism and the Politics of the Power Bloc [p. 83]." 2001. London: Zed Books. http://books.google.com/books?id=weHHJWARhncC&pg=PA83&dq=Malaysia+Inc.+Bangsa+Malaysia+laisser-faire+Malaysia:+Mahathirism,+Hegemony+and+the+New+Opposition&cd=1#v=onepage&q=&f=false

[37] Asia Sentinel. Berthelsen, John. "Book Review: *Malaysian Maverick: Mahathir Mohamad in Turbulent Times*." 4 December 2009. http://www.asiasentinel.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2177&Itemid=189

[38] *Governing the Market: Economic Theory and the Role of Government in East Asian Industrialization*. Wade, Robert. "Introduction: Creating Capitalisms [p. xxi.]." 1990. Princeton: Princeton University Press. http://books.google.com/books?id=4a8VCZaX1iEC&printsec=frontcover&dq=Governing+the+Market:+Economic+Theory+and+the+Role+of+Government+in+East+Asian+Industrialization&cd=1#v=onepage&q=&f=false

ports.[39] Yet these favored friends were seen as skimming off the country's wealth by those left out of the circle. In short, while the NEP overturned an earlier ethnic division of labor that started under British colonial rule, it ushered in a new type of ethnically divided labor controlled by the government.[40]

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Anwar Ibrahim

In the 1997–1998 East Asian financial crisis, foreign investors rapidly withdrew their money from a series of Asian countries. These successive withdrawals created a domino effect, causing the value of regional currencies, including the Malaysian ringgit, to plummet. Fingers pointed in both directions; outsiders typically identified government corruption, the shortcomings of state-managed capitalism, and a lack of transparency in corporate governance as causes for the economic collapse. The leadership of affected countries, however, blamed the unregulated international financial system. Mahathir specifically identified hedge fund manager George Soros. The unforeseen chain of events clearly threatened to erase several decades of economic growth, calling into question the political future of regional leaders, including Mahathir, who sacked his presumed successor and deputy, Anwar Ibrahim. Anwar favored market reforms in response to the crisis, and his leadership was seen as preferable to that of the increasingly combative Mahathir in many capitals.[41] The IMF imposed tough conditions for a bail-out. Indonesia was required to raise prices and interest rates and reduce government spending, including the elimination of food and fuel subsidies. These conditions were felt hardest by the poor, who had no hand in creating the crisis, and led to riots—a factor in the fall of Indonesian President Suharto.[42] Malaysia, which passed on an IMF bailout, instead took the controversial step of imposing short-term controls on capital until its economy stabilized.

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[39] Time. Elegant, Simon. "Malaysia's Chosen One." 17 June 2002. http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,263048,00.html

[40] UN Research Institute for Social Development. Teik, Khoo Boo. "Ethnic Structure, Inequality and Governance in the Public Sector: Malaysian Experiences." Abstract. 15 December 2005. http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/(httpPublications)/19309421DF6D65D3C12570FA00392E12?OpenDocument

[41] Heritage Foundation. Fisher, Richard. "Malaysia After the Crackdown: A Poor Venue For the Asian Summit." 15 October 1998. http://www.heritage.org/research/asiaandthepacific/em557.cfm

[42] BBC News. "Indonesia Rejects IMF Help." 21 January 2003. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/2679915.stm

One Nation, One People?

© Wazari Wazir
Malay mother and child

The NEP expired in 1991, although many of its provisions have been extended by the National Development Policy. It is thought to have succeeded in meeting its quantitative benchmarks; Malay ownership is concentrated in large, privatized corporations while Chinese companies remain small to "fly below the radar."[43] Mahathir expressed disappointment with the results of his social engineering project before leaving office in 2003, claiming it created a class of Malays interested in easy money rather than risk-taking entrepreneurs. Yet he continued to defend the policy as necessary for the country.[44] Others have defended NEP provisions and Malay privilege on the grounds that they constitute less sweeping restrictions than those placed on entrepreneurial minority groups in other countries. While that may be so, ethnically differentiated citizenship remains inconsistent with the principle of equal treatment under the law.[45] This holds true particularly if the country is to become the *Bangsa Malaysia* (United Malay Nation) and join the ranks of the industrialized world as Mahathir outlined in his Vision 2020, which he introduced in 1991.[46]

Within Malaysia, people continue to identify themselves by their ethnicity, regardless of generation. However, when outside the country self-identification customarily places country of residence/citizenship ahead of ethnicity. When speaking with Malaysian nationals, they identify themselves as Malaysian, not Malay, Chinese, or Indian. National identity and ethnic identity therefore function as two separate identities depending upon who the person is addressing and where they are.[47]

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[43] Straits Times. Ho, Andy. "Reviving NEP, UMNO's Race Card, Again?"6 August 2005. http://cpps.org.my/resource_centre/RevivingNEP_STI_article_1.pdf

[44] Asian Political News. "Mahathir Warns Malays to Brace for End to Privileges." 24 June 2002. http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0WDQ/is_2002_June_24/ai_87697126/

[45] *Peoples versus States: Minorities at Risk in the New Century*. Khosla, Deepa "Chapter 4: Chinese in Malaysia: Balancing Communal Inequalities [p. 136]." Ted Robert Gurr, Ed. 2000. Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace. http://books.google.com/books?id=6-hEA_wWpyMC&pg=PA136&dq=%22PEOPLES+VERSUS+STATES%22+Chinese+minorities+in+Vietnam+and+Indonesia&cd=1#v=onepage&q=&f=false

[46] Malaysian Management Journal Vol. 6, No. 1 & 2. Ishak, Mohamed Mustafa. "Managing Ethnicity and Constructing the 'Bangsa Malaysia' (A United Malaysian Nation)." 2002. http://eprints.uum.edu.my/981/1/MANAGING_ETHNICITY_AND_CONSTRUCTIONG_THE_BANGSA_MALAYSIA.pdf

[47] *The Asia-Pacific: A Region in Transition.* Leigh, Michael and Belinda Lip "Chapter 18: Transitions in Malaysian Society and Politics: Toward Centralizing Power [p. 303]." Jim Rolfe, Ed. 2004. Honolulu: Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies. http://www.apcss.org/Publications/Edited%20Volumes/RegionalFinal%20chapters/Chapter18Leigh.pdf

Government

© Ben Beiske
Government building in Sarawak

The Malaysian government, a constitutional monarchy, is modeled on the Westminster type of parliamentary democracy, a legacy of British colonial rule.[48] The country is divided into 13 states and 3 federal territories: the city of Kuala Lumpur, the island of Labuan, and the Putrajaya federal administrative center. Nine of these states have hereditary rulers, and the remaining four have appointed governors in counterpart positions.[49] There is a bicameral legislature consisting of two houses. The Senate (*Dewan Negara*) has 70 seats, 44 of which are filled by the sultan and 26 by state legislators to 3-year terms with a limit of one reappointment. The House of Representatives (*Dewan Rakyat*) has 222 seats filled by direct election for 5-year terms.[50] The house appoints the prime minister. The 1957 constitution grants real political power to the federal legislature and provides for a monarch who mainly performs ceremonial duties. This position rotates every five years among the nine hereditary rulers, the peninsular sultans. Mahathir unsuccessfully attempted to revoke the constitutional right of the sultan to veto legislation in 1983, two years after he became prime minister. A compromise was reached whereby the sultan could delay legislation by sending it back to parliament with his objections attached. If it passed again after review, however, it would become law as the legislature intended. This is similar to the way the House of Lords functions in the United Kingdom.[51]

The ruling coalition has used its two-thirds parliamentary majority to amend the constitution 34 times in ways that enhanced UMNO power in general and the executive branch of government in particular.[52] The first prime minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, himself a royal prince, decided in 1962 that the election commissioner was too independent. He used the then Alliance's two-thirds majority to transfer the power to draw electoral districts to parliament. The redrawn districts favored rural Malays, the UMNO's core constituency, over urban voters where opposition strength is concentrated.[53] Ironically, the 1969 race riots strengthened the UMNO's position in the Alliance since the unrest prompted it to bring smaller parties in East Malaysia under its umbrella. This expanded membership enabled it to extract greater concessions from its

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[48] AustralianPolitics.com. "Key Terms: Westminister System." No date. http://www.australianpolitics.com/democracy/terms/westminster-system.shtml
[49] Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, U.S. Department of State. "Background Note: Malaysia." July 2009. http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2777.htm
[50] CIA World Fact Book. "Malaysia-Government." 27 November 2009. https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/my.html
[51] New York Times. Erlanger, Steven. "New King of Malaysia May Become More Assertive." 5 March 1989. http://www.nytimes.com/1989/03/05/world/new-king-of-malaysia-may-assert-more-influence.html
[52] Nautilus Institute, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. Jones, David Martin. "Malaysia's Dilemma." 21 February 2008. http://www.globalcollab.org/Nautilus/australia/apsnet/policy-forum/2008/dilemma/
[53] East Asian Forum. Lopez, Greg. "Malaysia's Democratic Deficit." 22 November 2009. http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2009/11/22/malaysias-democratic-deficit/

partner parties.[54] The leadership nominates a single candidate for each district so their candidates do not draw votes from each other and enable an opposition party candidate to win. In effect, it acts like a single multi-ethnic party.[55] In 2008, the coalition lost its two-thirds majority for the first time. Although the prime minister does not have to call another election until 2013, his rival Anwar Ibrahim is working to persuade lawmakers to switch parties, which would give the opposition control of parliament.[56]

Media

© Mindy McAdams
Newsstand in Malaysia

The Ministry of Information controls both the print and broadcast media through licensing. The ministry can revoke a license without giving a reason. As a result, the mainstream media is risk averse in what it reports. Typically, in the run-up to an election, coalition party candidates receive favorable press while opposition candidates are routinely denigrated. Major parties have newspapers affiliated with them. When Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim was arrested in 1998 and subsequently charged with corruption and sodomy, sensationalist coverage led some to question whether he could get a fair trial.[57] The internet has provided a public space the state has found more difficult to control despite the fact that in-country internet access is through the Malaysian Institute of Microelectronic System (MIMOS), a government enterprise. Some people attribute the opposition's gains in the 2008 elections to its ability to make their case to voters online as well as to raise money.[58] There is evidence that bloggers detailing cases of political interference in the judiciary and corruption helped turn voters against *Barisan Nasional* (BN) candidates. This has become a major governmental concern as broadband internet access expands. While expansion is necessary to meet the government's 2020 modernization goals, it could result in further coalition losses as news of official wrong-doing reaches more voters.[59]

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[54] *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization*. Brownlee, Jason. "Chapter 3: Institutional Legacies and Coalitional Tensions [p. 96]." 2007. New York: Cambridge University Press. http://books.google.com/books?id=Trpol93amUQC&pg=PT110&dq=Authoritarianism+in+an+Age+of+Democratization+UMNO+leaders+could+now+concede+less&cd=1#v=onepage&q=&f=false

[55] Peace Studies Program, Cornell University. Kreuzer, Peter. "Democracy, Diversity, and Conflict: Managing Ethnic Divisions in the Philippines and Malaysia [p. 14]." 2006. http://www.einaudi.cornell.edu/peaceprogram/publications/occasional_papers/Kreuzer-final.pdf

[56] Wall Street Journal. Hookway, James. "Malaysia Coalition Loses Election." 19 January 2009. http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123226939980293843.html

[57] The Public. Wang Lay Kim. "Media and Democracy in Malaysia." 2001. http://www.javnost-thepublic.org/media/datoteke/2001-2-kim.pdf

[58] South-South Information Gateway. Banerjee, Indrajit. "Trends & Future of the Malaysian Mass Media [p. 2]." 30 October 2008. http://www.ssig.gov.my/ssig/kcent/material/Indrajit%20Banerjee.pdf

[59] Dawn.com. "Malaysia Govt Seeks Tools to Control Internet." 11 August 2009. http://www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/news/sci-tech/09-malaysia-govt-seeks-tools-to-control-the-internet--szh-08

Economy

© Yun Huang Yong
Rubber trees in Malaysia

Before independence, the Malay economy was developed to export raw materials to the world market. Cash crops, including rubber and minerals (particularly tin), figured prominently in Malay exports. After independence, the government maintained an export orientation as they expanded into manufactured goods as well. As a result, Malaysia's economy is heavily dependent on the fortunes of the world economy. When global demand drops in a recession, Malay production shrinks regardless of whether the product is a cash crop or a manufactured good. Moreover, the government's effort to equalize wealth between Malays and Chinese has a number of distortionary effects that reduce growth. The requirement that businesses be 30% Malay owned, for example, forces non-Malay business owners to employ Malays to fulfill the requirement rather than for any expertise or knowledge they bring to the business.[60] Similarly, the government's preferential treatment of *Bumiputera* encourages close relations between elected officials and those seeking favors, which invariably leads to corruption. Yet Malaysia also enjoyed solid growth for decades. Thus, "[i]ndicting crony capitalism for the [financial] crash of 1997 is like blaming the Roman empire for its fall: in that case, you should also praise it for its long success."[61]

[60] Euro Monitor International. Hodgson, An. "Malaysia – Wealth Gap Along Ethnic Lines." 16 April 2007. http://www.euromonitor.com/Malaysia_wealth_gap_along_ethnic_lines

[61] E-International Relations. Muzaffar, Pia. "To What Extent is 'Crony Capitalism' a Reasonable Explanation for Recent Experiences of the East Asian 'Developmental State'?" 1 February 2008. http://www.e-ir.info/?p=310

Ethnic Groups

Malay

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Malay men at a wedding ceremony

Malays are the dominant group in Malaysia. Malay is believed to be a Sanskrit word meaning "mountains." This refers to the people who lived on the mountainous Malay Archipelago, which includes the Philippines, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand. Other than speaking the same mother tongue, which has many dialects, Malays claim a common cultural heritage that includes adherence to *adat* (customary law) and unconditional loyalty (*kerajaan*) to the sultan.[62] Malays are accorded the status of an ethnicity in Indonesia but are recognized as a race in Malaysia.[63] It has been argued that the concept of a "Malay race" is rooted in the colonial era when the British sought to classify other peoples for scientific as well as census purposes.[64] Though the Malays refer to themselves as *Bumiputera* (sons of the soil), in fact even relatively recent arrivals from Java or those of Middle Eastern ancestry also identify themselves as Malay, perhaps in part to gain the advantages being an ethnic Malay confers.[65] In the Malay language (*bahasa melayu*) the expression *masak malay* has two meanings: 1) to become a Muslim; 2) to become a Malay, reflecting the importance of the Islamic faith to the Malay identity.[66]

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[62] Nautilus Institute, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. Jones, David Martin. "Malaysia's Dilemma." 21 February 2008. http://www.globalcollab.org/Nautilus/australia/apsnet/policy-forum/2008/dilemma/

[63] *Southeast Asia: A Historical Encyclopedia from Angkor Wat to East Timor*. Keat Gin Ooi. "Malays [p. 843]." 2004. Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio Books. http://books.google.com/books?id=QKgraWbb7yoC&pg=PA843&dq=malay+ethnicity+indonesia+bangsa+Southeast+Asia+historical+encyclopedia#v=onepage&q=&f=false

[64] *Contesting Malayness: Malay Identity Across Borders*. Timothy Barnard, Ed. "Chapter 1: Understanding Malayu (Malay) As a Source of Diverse Modern Identities [p. 10]." Reid, Anthony. 2004. Singapore: Singapore University Press. http://books.google.com/books?id=IB-cY6Nh6tUC&dq=Contesting+Malayness+-+Malay+Identity+Across+Boundaries&printsec=frontcover&source=bn&hl=en&ei=xd4KS5-RKITSsQO-9JnACQ&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=5&ved=0CBQQ6AEwBA#v=onepage&q=&f=false

[65] *Islam in Malaysia: From Revivalism to Islamic State?* Mutalib, Hussin. "Chapter 2: Islamic Revivalism in Malaysia [p. 18]." 1993. Singapore: Singapore University Press. http://books.google.com/books?id=pDzqZoWS1soC&pg=PA17&lpg=PA17&dq=traditional+society+malaysia&source=bl&ots=D29ZmZJTyH&sig=3y8R2uYuuI862UiBvvzN37r3xPc&hl=en&ei=N6QrS97QB4b-sgOjzoG-BA&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=10&ved=0CCgQ6AEwCTgK#v=onepage&q=traditional%20society%20malaysia&f=false

[66] *Malay Muslims: The History and Challenge of Resurgent Islam in Southeast Asia*. McAmis, Robert Day. "Chapter 5: Islamic Resurgence Among Malay Muslims [p. 85]." 2002. Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Company.

Chinese

© C.K. Koay
Chinese family in Malaysia

The Chinese are the second largest ethnic group after the Malays and immigrated in response to job opportunities. Most of the major population centers on the Malay Peninsula, including Kuala Lumpur, where Chinese mining towns originated. The Chinese maintained their own culture through schools, financed in part by the Chinese Nationalist government (1911–1949). Most immigrants maintained an allegiance to the motherland as well as to their native place associations. Developments beyond Malaya aided the emergence of a collective ethnic Chinese identity. The Japanese occupation of the peninsula during World War II spurred a Chinese resistance. After the war, some of those who fought felt betrayed when their sacrifices were not recognized by the British who bowed to Malay demands that immigrants have fewer rights than *Bumiputera*. This was exploited by the Chinese-led Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) to garner support. While certainly not all ethnic Chinese supported the communists, almost all its supporters were Chinese. Many senior members of the communist movement were trained guerrilla fighters who had cut their teeth in the Malay People's Anti-Japanese Army.[67]

They waged a campaign of terror and violence so expatriate mine and rubber plantation managers would flee. The resulting loss of income would force the British to leave Malaya, enabling the communists to establish an independent government.[68] Instead the British mounted a successful counterinsurgency effort. It targeted Chinese miners and those living in squatter settlements who did not have strong communist sympathies, but were willing to provide support in ethnic solidarity. They were relocated to village settlements under British control, and the insurgency was pushed back into the jungle along the Malay-Thai border. While the 12-year state of emergency was declared over in 1960, the Malaysian government did not sign a peace accord with the remaining guerrillas until 1989. Several leaders who spent decades in Thailand have been repeatedly denied the right to return to their country origin.[69] This chapter of Malay history remains controversial owing to disagreement over how much support the insurgency had from the Chinese Communist Party as well as the CPM's contribution to gaining independence. It has only recently received dispassionate analysis.[70] But it left a stigma on the ethnic

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[67] *Malaysia, State and Civil Society in Transition*. Vermu, Vidhu. "Chapter 2: Nationalism and Nation-building [p.28]." 2002. Boulder, CO: Lynne Reiner. http://books.google.com/books?id=YofWYcrE3_oC&pg=PA28&dq=Malaysia,+State+and+Civil+Society+in+Transition+Chinese+Japanese+nationalist+anticolonial+guerrilla&cd=1#v=onepage&q=&f=false

[68] *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam*. Nagl, John. "Chapter 4: British Army Counterinsurgency Learning During the Malayan Emergency, 1948–1951 [p. 63]." 2002. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

[69] New York Times. Bowring, Philip. "Meanwhile: A Communist Guerrilla Looks Back at 80." 1 October 2003. http://www.nytimes.com/2003/10/01/opinion/01iht-edbowring_ed3_.html

[70] Film and Television Studies, Monash University. Wan Aida Wan Yahaya (Monash University). "Questioning the Myths of Origin: Amir Muhammad's Historical Film about the Communist Party of Malaya and Malaysian Independence" (paper presented at the 17th Biennial Conference of the Asian Studies Association of Australia). 1–3 July 2008.

Chinese community despite the fact they form the backbone of the capitalist class in Malaysia today. In addition, the measures adopted by the government to combat the insurgency, in particular the Internal Security Act (ISA) allowing for the detention of anyone deemed a threat to public safety, remain in place and have been used to quell peaceful dissent.[71]

Indians

© Trey Ratcliff
Indian woman in Kuala Lumpur

Tamil Indians make up the majority of the Indian community in Malaysia. Many were members of the untouchable class who had endured wretched conditions in India. This made them attractive recruits for labor-intensive plantation agriculture. Viewed as docile by the British, the Tamils did the repetitive tasks and back breaking work entailed in cultivating cash crops.[72] Moreover, they had less ability to organize and had less pronounced ambitions than other Indians or the Chinese who the British found difficult to manage. After independence, Tamil status was unclear because many did not qualify for citizenship. As the economy shifted from a plantation based model to manufacturing, quotas allocated factory jobs to ethnic Malays and Tamil lost ground. Rubber plantation land was rezoned, putting their communities at risk of being razed for redevelopment schemes. The destruction of several Hindu temples became flashpoints for public anger in the Tamil community.[73] An organization known as the Hindu Rights Action Force (HINDRAF) advocated for Indians' rights. In November 2007, HINDRAF organized a protest march through Kuala Lumpur. Among other demands were USD four trillion in reparations from the British for bringing them to Malaysia and then failing to secure equal status for them after exploiting their labor.[74] The protest was broken up by the police and the leadership was detained under the provisions of the ISA.

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http://arts.monash.edu.au/mai/asaa/wanaidawanyahaya.pdf

[71] East Asia Forum. Lopez, Greg. "The Internal Security Act in Malaysia: abolish, not reform it." 27 August 2009. http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2009/08/27/the-internal-security-act-in-malaysia-abolish-not-reform-it/

[72] *Cage of Freedom: Tamil Identity and the Ethnic Fetish in Malaysia*. Willford, Andrew. "Chapter 2: Marginal Existence and Social Distance: 'Worthless Dregs in a Prosperous Society.'" [pp. 16–17]." 2007. Singapore: National University of Singapore Press. http://books.google.com/books?id=HphXHA4_sYQC&pg=PA16&lpg=PA16&dq=untouchable+class+tamil+malaysia&source=bl&ots=qs9BDQHl0X&sig=474ecdW1pSzO6zO0cqaWjxKD2Zk&hl=en&ei=YnkiS9MEg_K1A8_x0KoL&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=3&ved=0CA0Q6AEwAjgU#v=onepage&q=&f=false

[73] Christian Science Monitor. Montlake, Simon. "Temple Demolitions Anger Malaysian Indians." 7 February 2008. http://www.csmonitor.com/2008/0207/p04s01-woap.html

[74] New York Times. Fuller, Thomas. "Indian Discontent Fuels Malaysia's Rising Tensions." 10 February 2008. http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/10/world/asia/10malaysia.html

Orang Asli

© Wazari Wazir
Orang Asli boy

This label, meaning "original people," refers to indigenous groups on the Malay Peninsula—many of whom were traditionally forest dwellers. It replaced the vernacular "sakai," meaning slaves in Malay, when the government wanted to woo aboriginal peoples away from the communist insurgency during the 1950s. The tribal groups themselves use the name of the river or other geographical landmark in their self-chosen name.[75] There has been active effort to proselytize the Orang Asli to remove the awkward distinction between indigenous people and *Bumiputera*. While this opens the door to a host of privileges, in fact the Orang Asli and their way of life remain under siege. During British colonial rule, forests were cleared by commercial logging interests and for rubber plantations. This affected the traditional Orang Asli way of life. Subsequent conservation efforts after independence also put pressure on the Orang Asli who practice slash and burn agriculture rather than settled farming. The government now regulates Orang Asli access to forest land and they are subject to non-voluntary resettlement in some cases to make room for development projects.[76]

Dayak

The word *dayak* means inland or upriver in an indigenous language spoken in Sarawak. The label subsumes many different tribal groups, including the Iban, who share a single characteristic: they are not Muslim. Some remain animist while others have converted to Christianity. The Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak (PBDS) uses the term to refer to its base of political support and to mobilize non-Muslim voters in Sarawak. The Dayak and their way of life are under threat from logging. Because they follow communal land use systems that evolved generations ago, they do not hold title to the land. This enables the government to convert it for development. Such threats to their livelihood have spurred development of ethnic consciousness as a means to push for their political rights. For example, the Lun Bawang Association was formed in Sarawak to represent a variety of groups. To maximize their leverage in dealing with the government, each group has an individual name such as Lun Dayeh (people of the upriver) and Lun Ba (people who cultivate rice paddy).[77]

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[75] Department of Anthropology, The Chinese University of Hong Kong. Tan Chee-Beng. "Ethnic Groups, Ethnogenesis and Ethnic Identities: Some Examples from Malaysia [pp. 8, 14–15]." 1997. http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/ant/publish/workingpaper5.pdf

[76] International Institute for Asian Studies. IIAS Newsletter No. 35. Indigenous People's Movements. "The Orang Asli of Malaysia." November 2004. http://www.iias.nl/nl/35/IIAS_NL35_10.pdf

[77] Department of Anthropology, The Chinese University of Hong Kong. Tan Chee-Beng. "Ethnic Groups, Ethnogenesis and Ethnic Identities: Some Examples from Malaysia [pp. 12–13]." 1997. http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/ant/publish/workingpaper5.pdf

Chapter 2: Religion

Introduction

© Remin Noir
Prayer

Malaysia is a country of multiple faiths. While the official religion is Islam, the constitution provides for the practice of other religions. On the peninsula, ethnic Malays are Muslim, most Chinese practice an eclectic mix of Buddhism and Taoism, and Indians are mainly Hindu. In East Malaysia, some indigenous people are animists while others have converted to Christianity. Despite the profusion of religious beliefs, Malaysia lacks a federal authority responsible for the oversight of religion. Instead religious matters are overseen at the state level. All 11 states on the Malaysian Peninsula have their own Islamic councils.[78] The sultan of each state is the official head of the local Muslim establishment, and the federal government has no authority to interfere in religious matters under his purview, a precedent established during British colonial rule.

Islam has experienced a resurgence in Malaysia over the last few decades.[79] This translates into an increase in the number of women who veil outside the home as well as the use of Shari'a, or Islamic law, to regulate the social behavior of Muslims.[80] The phenomenon has been attributed to many causes. The rural-to-urban Malay migration that began in the 1970s mixed Muslims with non-Muslims for the first time, possibly spurring a need to practice their faith. The resurgence may have also been a response to Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad's use of Islam to promote capitalist development during his long time in power (1981-2003). Televised call to prayer, for example, would declare "Allah is great" followed by "Let us pray!" and the suggestion, "Let us follow the path to prosperity."[81] The state-run channel images of the Kaaba, Islam's most sacred site, were mixed with those of the Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur, which briefly ranked as the tallest building in the world.[82] Whether associating a sacred Islamic structure with modern symbols of progress truly represented the spirit of Islam became an issue of contention between Mahathir and the Islamic opposition. The latter group has been led by

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[78] BNET. Sociology of Religion. Lee, Raymond L.M. "The State and New Religious Movements in Malaysia." Winter 1994. http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0SOR/is_n4_v55/ai_16501346/

[79] BNET. Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia. Kortteinen, Timo. "Islamic Resurgence and the Ethnicization of the Malaysian State: The Case of Lina Joy." October 2008. http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_hb3413/is_2_23/ai_n31059714/

[80] In 2009, a Malay woman who works as a model was sentenced to six lashes of the cane after being caught drinking beer at a remote beach resort. In the past, a first time offender who expressed remorse would have been fined. Her punishment was delayed, however, due to Ramadan. Telegraph. MacKinnon, Ian. "Model Who Drank Beer to Be First Woman Caned in Malaysia." 19 August 2009. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/malaysia/6054890/Model-who-drank-beer-to-be-first-woman-caned-in-Malaysia.html

[81] "Clash of Civilizations or Asian Liberalism? An Anthropology of the State and Citizenship [p. 60]." Aihwa Ong. In *Anthropological Theory Today*. , Henrietta L. Moore, Ed. 2000. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

[82] *Submitting to God: Women and Islam in Urban Malaysia*. Frisk, Sylva. "Chapter 4: Religious Duties and Acts of Worship [p. 109]." 2009. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press.

Parti Islam SeMalaysia (PAS), which has not hesitated to play "the religion card." For example, PAS has questioned the devoutness and character of candidates for office put forward by the ruling party, even allowing its own candidates to engage in mudslinging. The PAS has been criticized itself for deviating from the spirit of Islam, which discourages Muslims from shaming or defaming another person.[83]

Religion and the State

© Trey Ratcliff
Islamic school in Kuala Lumpur

The constitution defines a Malay as a person who "professes the religion of Islam, habitually speaks the Malay language, and conforms to Malay customs." Thus, while the constitution guarantees freedom of religion, it also defines all ethnic Malays as Muslims. In 1998, the federal government declared that those who renounce their Muslim faith would not face punishment as long as they did not defame Islam after their conversion to another religion. Yet a Malay woman who had converted to Christianity subsequently faced difficulty marrying her Christian boyfriend since her identity card continued to list her religion as "Islam."[84]

Muslims fall under the jurisdiction of the Shari'a court. Apostasy, or renunciation of the Islamic faith, is now punishable in most states.[85] In the states of Kelantan and Terengganu it is a capital offense, although no one has been executed to date.[86] Offspring of mixed marriages, even in the case of a parent who converted after the birth of the children, are considered Muslim by Shari'a courts. This classification limits the parental rights of non-Muslims, whose only recourse is through the secular court system whose rulings may not be recognized.[87] A 1988 decision on the part of the ruling party to pass a constitutional amendment granting formal legal equality to Shari'a law was a move intended to placate Islamists without increasing their actual authority. Yet this led to a dramatic expansion in the jurisdictional authority of Shari'a courts and afforded Islamists the ability to defy the claims of civil law and even the federal government.[88]

The federal government has not been hesitant to label smaller, and in some cases radical, Islamic sects "deviant" on the grounds these groups represent a national security threat enabling clerics and followers to be placed in detention.[89] Yet such moves must be factored

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[83] Asia Media Archives, UCLA. The Straits Times. "Malaysia: Religion A Hot Topic for Papers." 19 March 2004. http://www.asiamedia.ucla.edu/article.asp?parentid=9095
[84] Wall Street Journal. Wu, Angela. "Lina Joy." 7 September 2006. http://online.wsj.com/public/article_print/SB115757444080555464.html
[85] Asia Sentinel. Imran Imtiaz Shah Yacob. "Doing the Impossible: Quitting Islam in Malaysia." 27 April 2007. http://www.asiasentinel.com/index.php?Itemid=34&id=466&option=com_content&task=view
[86] Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, U.S. Department of State. *International Religious Freedom Report 2009*. "Malaysia." 26 October 2009. http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127277.htm
[87] Daily Express. "Testing the Limits on Conversion Laws." 3 May 2009. http://www.dailyexpress.com.my/news.cfm?NewsID=64737
[88] Australian Broadcasting Corporation. "Malaysian Caning Reveals Politics Behind the Punishment." 25 August 2009. http://www.abc.net.au/pm/content/2008/s2666672.htm
[89] Global Security. "Malaysia Religion." 13 August 2009. http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/malaysia/religion.htm

into the government's balancing act so as not to offend devout Muslims.[90] Thus for example, while Mahathir signed the condolence book at the U.S. Embassy in the wake of the events of 11 September 2001, he also declared Malaysia an "Islamic state" to undercut an emboldened Islamic opposition.[91] However, this designation introduced a host of contentious issues that have yet to be resolved. In July 2007, then Deputy Prime Minister Najib Razak asserted that Malaysia was an Islamic state and not a secular state. This statement caused an outcry from representatives of the non-Muslim community who publicly challenged him by asserting that the country is, according to its constitution, a secular state. Dismayed by the intense public debate engendered by Najib Razak's comments, the government eventually prohibited the mainstream media from discussing the matter except to publish statements by the prime minister and deputy prime Minister.[92] In early August 2007, the prime minister circumvented the issue by stating Malaysia was neither a secular nor theocratic state, but rather a parliamentary democracy.[93]

Five Pillars of Islam

© Salehi Hassan
Masjid Zahir, Kedah

The five pillars of Islam are the essential religious obligations for Muslims. The first and foundational pillar is the sincere declaration of faith (*shahada*) in the oneness and singularity of God (*Allah*) and Muhammad's role as his prophet. Islam's monotheistic view—in which Allah is the sole creator of everything—stands in contrast to Chinese Buddhists and Indian Hindus who worship multiple gods. The other pillars include the performance of five daily ritual prayers (*sembahyang*), fasting during the month of Ramadan, an annual almsgiving (*zakat*) that must be paid before the end of Ramadan, and a pilgrimage (*hajj*) to Mecca for those who can afford it. In the case of the *zakat*, the amount is customarily set at 2.5 percent of household income after expenses are deducted. The government has recommended levels based on the number of people in the household. In Malaysia, collection of the *zakat* is handled by state-level religious councils (*Majlis Agama*). Muslims may go there and pay the *zakat* or give directly to a charity of their choice. Everyone complies because Allah would know if someone failed to give. Among Malaysia's middle class, making more than one *hajj* has become commonplace.[94]

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[90] Reuters, FaithWorld. "Malaysia Trying to Find its Religious Equilibrium." 7 May 2009. http://blogs.reuters.com/faithworld/2009/05/07/malaysia-trying-to-find-its-religious-equilibrium/
[91] New York Times. England, Vaudine. "Malaysia Struggles with Islamic Path." 13 May 2005. http://www.nytimes.com/2005/05/12/world/asia/12iht-malaysia.html
[92] Singapore Institute of International Affairs. "Is It an Islamic State or Secular State? - Fierce Debates over Malaysia's State Identity." 24 July 2007. http://www.siiaonline.org/?q=programmes/insights/is-it-islamic-state-or-secular-state-fierce-debates-over-malaysia%E2%80%99s-state-identi
[93] Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State. *International Religious Freedom Report 2008*. "Malaysia." September 2008. http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2008/108413.htm
[94] *Submitting to God: Women and Islam in Urban Malaysia*. Frisk, Sylva. "Chapter 4: Religious Duties and Acts of Worship [pp. 99–140]." 2009. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press.

Religion in Daily Life

Prayer

For observant Muslims, the *sembahyang*, or daily prayers, are an important ritual that brings a person in direct contact with Allah. Such prayers are an act of submission in which a person accepts Allah as the creator of everything. Those praying assume a variety of body postures to demonstrate their submission to the creator. The daily time varies according to the position of the sun, with the first prayer held before sunrise and the final one performed after sunset. The call (*azan*) to prayer is broadcast from mosque minarets and also on television.

© Magalie L'Abbé
Men praying in a Georgetown mosque

Exchange: 1: When do you pray?

Soldier:	When do you pray?	beela aandaa sembaah-yaang?
Local:	We pray five times a day.	kaamee sembaah-yaang leema kaalee sehaaree

Before praying, a person must wash from head to toe with water that has not touched anyone else. Prayer can be conducted at home and many offices have prayer rooms (*surau*) as well. Any place is acceptable as long as it is clean. Women wear a special white, hooded garment (*telekung*) to pray at the mosque. It is important that it be ironed and absolutely clean. Although women are not excluded from the Friday noon prayer, the most important one for Muslims, mosques are typically overflowing with male worshippers. This makes it logistically impossible to accommodate females, even though mosques have a special section for women, given the two sexes cannot touch.

Male-Female Interaction

The basic rule followed by observant Muslims is that touching a member of the opposite sex or going to the bathroom requires them to perform a new ablution, or ritual cleansing, prior to prayer. Thus, by avoiding these actions, one can perform successive prayers without the ritual washing. Because ablution is time consuming, Malays often have to improvise on the spot if they are on a tight schedule and must remain ritually pure. For example, a Swedish anthropologist recounted her taxi ride with a Malay friend during Ramadan. They wanted to break the fast at the mosque after visiting her family. The Muslim woman asked the Chinese taxi driver to put her change on the seat. This enabled her to avoid touching a man—an act that would have invalidated her ritual purity and prevented her from praying at the mosque. The taxi driver was unaware of why he had been asked to do this by several female passengers; he

© Bin Gregory
Inside the moque

assumed it was because he was Chinese.[95] It applies to all members of the opposite sex, regardless of faith or ethnicity.

Place of Worship

© Magalie L'Abbé
Ablution at a Georgetown mosque

Most mosques in Malaysia are white. In tribute to Malaysia's multi-racial and colonial heritage, they reflect a variety of architectural styles. The earliest mosques were built like Malay houses (on raised stilts) when Islam became an established religion on the Malay Peninsula in the 15th century. Moorish and Mughal influences are evident in mosques constructed over the succeeding centuries.[96] The Putra Masjid, a "mega-mosque" with a minaret measuring 116 m (380 ft) high, was built in Putrajaya, the new federal administrative center located near Kuala Lumpur. It can accommodate 15,000 worshippers inside the building and has space for tens of thousands more outside.[97] Recently, officials announced plans to build several Chinese-style mosques. These structures will feature pagoda-style roofs rather than domes and minarets. The style change is intended to attract converts and make Islam seem more inclusive and less threatening to non-believers.[98]

Exchange 2: Is this acceptable to wear?

Soldier:	Is this acceptable to wear?	paakaayaan begeenee boleh dee paakaay?
Local:	Yes.	ya

All visitors to mosques are required to cover their arms and legs. In addition, female visitors must cover their heads. A few larger mosques provide scarves, robes, and slippers for inappropriately dressed visitors.[99]

Exchange 3: Do I need to cover my head?

Soldier:	Do I need to cover my head?	aada kaa saaya haaros menootoop kepaala?
Local:	No.	teedaak

[95] *Submitting to God: Women and Islam in Urban Malaysia*. Frisk, Sylva. "Chapter 4: Religious Duties and Acts of Worship [p. 110]." 2009. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press.
[96] Zain's Pix and Text. Islamica Magazine, No. 15. Gregory, Rick. **"**Foreign Occupation: Islamic Symbolism in Malaysia." 9 September 2007 http://zainabdullah.wordpress.com/2007/09/09/mosque-architecture-in-malaysia/
[97] Asia Explorers. "Putra Mosque." No date. http://www.asiaexplorers.com/malaysia/putra_mosque.htm
[98] The Malaysian Insider. "Chinese-Style Mosques in Three States." 4 December 2009. http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/index.php/malaysia/45412-chinese-style-mosques-in-three-states
[99] Journey Malaysia. "Facts and Fiction – Etiquette Guidelines." No date. http://www.journeymalaysia.com/M2_f&f1.htm

Shoes must be removed before entering the mosque.

Exchange 4: Must I take off my shoes inside the mosque?

Soldier:	Must I take off my shoes inside the mosque?	mastee kaa saaya mambooka kaasot beela dee daalaam maasjid?
Local:	Yes, here are slippers.	ya, inee aada sleepaa

Inside the mosque, visitors should take care not to walk in front of worshippers; this is believed to invalidate their prayers.

Religious Events and Holidays

Ramadan

© Tian Yake
Street market during Ramamdan

The most important religious event for Muslims is Ramadan. Even for Malays who do not always fulfill their daily prayer obligations, maintaining the fast during the lunar month of Ramadan (*Bulan Puasa*) remains an important ritual. During this time, Muslims are required to abstain from eating and drinking during daylight hours. People may be more irritable during the day and many public offices shorten their hours, particularly as the month wears on. The sick, old, and very young are exempted from fasting, as are pregnant women and nursing mothers. Menstruating women are required to break the fast. They simply need to say, "Today I do not fast" to explain why they are eating and drinking, which is done inside the home. Women who break the fast for purposes of pregnancy, nursing, and menstruation are expected to "pay back" the lost days by fasting—typically on Mondays and Thursdays—over the following months, with the appropriate number of fasting days to be completed before the next Ramadan. The sick and the elderly may be required to pay *fidiah*, a form of compensation, for lost fasting days; the *fidiah* for each day is roughly equivalent to a bowl of rice.[100]

During the fast, any Muslim seen eating or drinking on the street during daylight hours is subject to a fine or detention. At night, Malaysians mark the end of the daylight fast with a large meal (*itfar*). To avoid temptation or the need to taste food as it is being prepared, many families eat at restaurants. Indeed, during Ramadan, street bazaars with food stalls proliferate and remain open throughout the night, attracting both Muslim and non-Muslim customers.[101] About a half hour before sundown, which is officially signaled by the *azan*, restaurants fill with diners who want to secure a seat for when they are able to eat. Conscientious fasting alone, however, does not capture the spiritual dimension of the holiday. "Fasting from the heart" includes not saying bad things about others or thinking bad thoughts. It is a time of self-reflection as well as private prayer (*doa*) to atone for sins

[100] *Submitting to God: Women and Islam in Urban Malaysia*. Frisk, Sylva. "Chapter 4: Religious Duties and Acts of Worship [pp. 120–122]." 2009. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press.
[101] About.com: Southeast Asia Travel. Aquino, Michael. "Ramadan and Aidilfitri in Southeast Asia." No date. http://goseasia.about.com/od/malaysianculturepeople/a/ramadan.htm

committed over the past year. Overall, Ramadan is an opportunity for Muslims to demonstrate their piety and devotion to the Islamic faith through both physical and spiritual purification.

Eid Al-Fidr

© CuLeX- / flickr.com
Eid Al-Fidr

Eid Al-Fidr (*Hari Raya Aidilfitri*) marks the end of Ramadan and the breaking of the fast. It is a festive celebration during which people don bright-colored traditional clothing and return to their villages or visit friends in the city. Celebrations may extend for a week. Malays begin the fast-breaking day by going to the mosque for morning prayers. Afterward, the family enjoys breakfast at home, the first meal during daylight hours in a month. Younger members of the family seek blessings from their elders by kissing their hands and wishing them a happy holiday (*Selamat Hari Raya*). Children receive packets of money from their elders, a tradition the Malays appear to have borrowed from the Chinese, who give children red envelopes with money on the first day of the lunar new year. This is followed by a visit to the cemetery. In the past it was common for Malays to leave water and food items for the deceased, as well as to read a chapter of the Quran to help them gain merit. It is the reader who attains merit that cannot be transferred to the deceased. These practices have been discouraged on the grounds that they do not derive from Islam but are a legacy of animist traditions in which people believed that the living could communicate with the dead. Instead, Muslim Malays are encouraged to say a *doa* directly to Allah on behalf of the deceased.[102]

Exchange 5: Will you be celebrating Eid?

Soldier:	Will you be celebrating Eid?	aandaa aakaan menyaambot haaree raaya aaydeel-fitree?
Local:	Yes!	ya!

At the end of the day, there is a lavish communal meal. While this feast was originally intended as an offering of food to the poor, it is now seen as a place for business networking and currying favor with government officials.[103] Afterward, many Malays take their annual vacations.

[102] *Submitting to God: Women and Islam in Urban Malaysia*. Frisk, Sylva. "Chapter 4: Religious Duties and Acts of Worship [p. 105]." 2009. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press.
[103] Cross Culture. Králik, Martin. "Malaysia: An 'Open House' Tradition." 24 November 2009. http://blog.crossculture.com/crossculture/2009/11/malaysia-an-open-house-tradition.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed:+Cross-culture+(Cross-Culture)

Eid al-Adha

© servus / flickr.com
Eid al-Adha

Marking the end of the *hajj*, the holy pilgrimage to Mecca, this "festival of sacrifice" falls in the 12th month of the Islamic lunar year. It is known as *Hari Raya Korban or Hari Raya Haji* in Malaysia. Muslims will attend prayers at the mosque and reflect on the meaning of this holiday, which commemorates the willingness of the Prophet Abraham to sacrifice his son to Allah. As told in the Quran, Abraham was about to sacrifice his son at Allah's request, but Allah intervened and revealed that it was a test of his faith. Thus, his son Ishmael's life was spared and a ram was sacrificed in his place. While unfulfilled, Abraham's offer encapsulates the Muslim duty to give up anything on behalf of the religion. Muslims around the world celebrate by sacrificing animals, usually their best livestock, to commemorate Allah's mercy in receiving a ram in place of Abraham's son. The animal may be sacrificed (*korban*) or slaughtered within the mosque compound.[104] Afterward, the meat is distributed among family, friends, and the poor.[105] It is customary for Malays to visit their families on this day.

[104] Delirium. "Salam Hari Raya Aidiladha." 8 December 2008. http://www.abinesh.com/delirium/posts/salam-hari-raya-aidiladha/
[105] World Guide. "Hari Raya Haji (Eid al-Adha)." No date. http://www.worldguide.eu/wg/index.php?StoryID=146&ArticleID=2127

Chapter 3 Traditions

Introduction

© Fadzly Mubin
Young fisherman

The Malay inhabitants of the peninsula are believed to have originally migrated from Melanesia, settling in the plains and pushing the aboriginal natives into the jungles.[106] Identifying Malay traditions is complicated because the term "Malay" was not in widespread use prior to British colonial rule which began in the 19th century. The term now refers to people who share certain characteristics including mother tongue, religion, region, loyalty to a sultan, and customary habits (*adat*).[107] Malay life traditionally revolved around fishing and subsistence crop farming. There were few markets because most households were self-sufficient and did not need to buy and sell goods. Yet Malays did not lead an insular existence. Because the peninsula commands the Strait of Malacca, one of the world's most important sea lanes, residents have historically had regular contact with people from other cultures and incorporated foreign influences, such as Islam, into their way of life.

Greetings

Malays use the standard Muslim greeting, meaning "May peace be with you." The person being addressed extends the same greeting back. Children are instructed from an early age to call this greeting whenever they enter a home, even their own.[108] It is also used when people part company.

Exchange 6: Peace be upon you.

Soldier:	Peace be upon you.	aas saalaamoo aalaykoom
Local:	And upon you.	waa aalaykoom saalaam

[106] *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam*. Nagl, John. "Chapter 4: British Army Counterinsurgency Learning During the Malayan Emergency, 1948–1951 [p. 60]." 2002. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. http://books.google.com/books?id=2JIjFpSZ6iYC&pg=PA60&dq=Learning+to+Eat+Soup+with+a+Knife:+Counterinsurgency+Lessons+from+Malaya+and+Vietnam+Melanesia+coastal+plains&cd=1#v=onepage&q=&f=false

[107] *Islam in Malaysia: From Revivalism to Islamic State?* Mutalib, Hussin. "Chapter 2: Islamic Revivalism in Malaysia [p. 18]." 1993. Singapore: Singapore University Press. http://books.google.com/books?id=pDzqZoWS1soC&pg=PA17&lpg=PA17&dq=traditional+society+malaysia&source=bl&ots=D29ZmZJTyH&sig=3y8R2uYuuI862UiBvvzN37r3xPc&hl=en&ei=N6QrS97QB4b-sgOjzoG-BA&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=10&ved=0CCgQ6AEwCTgK#v=onepage&q=traditional%20society%20malaysia&f=false

[108] Tripod. "Customary Code of Conduct (Adat Resam)." No date. http://members.tripod.com/kidd_cruz/adat_resam.htm

Alternatively, a greeting may indicate the time of day: Good Morning (*Selamat pagi*), Good Day (*Selamat tengah hari*), Good Afternoon, (*Selamat petang*), and Good Evening or Good Night (*Selamat malam*).[109]

© Dzulhaidy Abdul Rahim
Two girls playing

Exchange 7: How are you?

Soldier:	How are you?	aapa kaabaar?
Local:	Fine, thank you.	baayek, treema kaasey

Malays are addressed by their first names preceded by a salutation. Thus, Amirul bin Suleiman would be addressed as Mr. Amirul because Mr. Suleiman would be his father. It is polite to use the person's name after a greeting. "Good Morning" would thus be conveyed "*Selamat pagi, Encik Amirul*." If the name of the person is not known, use mister (*encik*) or madame (*puan*) to convey respect.[110] Malays often avoid the informal "you" (*anda*) with strangers[111] and will instead ask, "What's the lady's name" rather than "What is your name?" when addressing a female. She would then answer, "The lady is named Latifah, what is the gentleman's name?" He would then respond, "The gentleman's name is Hassan."[112]

Exchange 8: Hi, Mr.Hassan

Soldier:	Hi, Mr.Hassan.	haay enchik haasaan
Local:	Hello!	halo!
Soldier:	Are you doing well?	aandaa seyhaat?
Local:	Yes.	ya

When asking about family, it is acceptable to ask a married man how many children he has, but avoid specific inquiries about his wife or daughters. Malays may ask questions about income or family background that Americans find invasive. This is because social status is based on who you are rather than what you do in Malaysia. Vague responses are accepted since it is important not to make anyone lose face.[113]

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[109] *Everyday Malay: Phrasebook and Dictionary*. Oey, Thomas G. and Alwee Alkadri. "Greetings [pp. 14–15]." 2004. North Clarendon, VT: Tuttle Publishing. http://books.google.com/books?id=Yz7b07Xvhp4C&pg=PA12&lpg=PA12&dq=greetings+in+malay&source=bl&ots=Ob9f3bHN82&sig=yUGyWwbjwXvcTW3sqnpY1PsMrrk&hl=en&ei=gUk5S6D2II22sgP6tpiIBA&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=9&ved=0CB8Q6AEwCDhG#v=onepage&q=&f=false

[110] Executive Planet. "Malaysia: First Name or Title?"6 May 2008. http://www.executiveplanet.com/index.php?title=Malaysia:_First_Name_or_Title%3F

[111] *Everyday Malay: Phrasebook and Dictionary*. Oey, Thomas G. and Alwee Alkadri. "Greetings [pp. 14–15, 17, 18]." 2004. North Clarendon, VT: Tuttle Publishing. http://books.google.com/books?id=Yz7b07Xvhp4C&pg=PA12&lpg=PA12&dq=greetings+in+malay&source=bl&ots=Ob9f3bHN82&sig=yUGyWwbjwXvcTW3sqnpY1PsMrrk&hl=en&ei=gUk5S6D2II22sgP6tpiIBA&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=9&ved=0CB8Q6AEwCDhG#v=onepage&q=&f=false

[112] *CultureShock! Malaysia*. Munan, Heidi. "Chapter 8: The Malaysian Languages [pp. 203–205]."*.* 2008. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

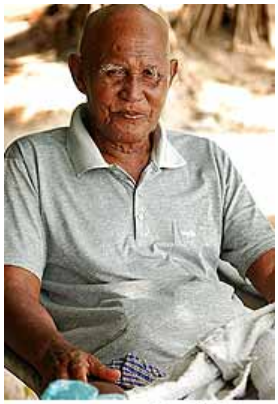
[113] eDiplomat. "Malaysia." 2009. http://www.ediplomat.com/np/cultural_etiquette/ce_my.htm

Exchange 9: How is your family?

Soldier:	How is your family?	baagaaymaana kelooaarga aandaa?
Local:	They are doing fine, thank you.	mreyka semoowa nya baayek, treema kaasey

Malay men and women on familiar terms may exchange a handshake (*salam*) consisting of touching palms with those of the same sex. Both hands are extended to sandwich the other party's right hand. Depending upon the degree of emotion or respect, the junior party may bend down to kiss the hands of the senior one who is seated.[114] More common is the greeting in which the person retracts the right or both hands to touch his or her chest to convey, "I greet you from my heart." This gesture is a form of body language intended to convey gratitude and acceptance. In the event you are greeted this way, it is polite to follow suit.[115] Those of opposite genders or vastly different ages may bow their heads in greeting. The person of lower status makes a more pronounced gesture.

Honor and Values


© nadi0 / flickr.com
Elderly man

For Malays, there is no greater personal dishonor than shame (*malu*). Their culture evolved through *adat*, which promoted appropriate behavior as a means to ensure social harmony.[116] After the adoption of Islam, loyalty to the sultan reinforced the norm of not questioning elders, no matter how wrong they were. Yet while such extreme deference to authority exists in most cultures in the region, Malays lack a warrior heritage or even a golden age to draw upon in fashioning a cultural identity.[117] Malays refer to themselves as sons of the soil (*Bumiputera*) to emphasize their indigenous roots. They are therefore sensitive to the possibility that more "robust" cultures might overwhelm them, a concern that intensified during British colonial rule when large-scale Chinese and Indian immigration occurred.[118] To guard against this, the Malays keep other ethnic groups at arm's length and require them to recognize Malay political supremacy (*ketuanan Melayu*). Still, suspicion remains. The term "foreign comer"

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[114] Tripod. "Customary Code of Conduct (Adat Resam)." No date. http://members.tripod.com/kidd_cruz/adat_resam.htm

[115] Gempamelayu. "The Importance of the Handshake." 22 April 2009. http://gempamelayu.com/2009/04/22/the-importance-of-handshake/

[116] *The Languages of East and Southeast Asia: An Introduction.* Goddard, Cliff. "Chapter 3: Words: Origins, Structures, Meanings [p. 80]." 2005. Oxford: Oxford University Press. http://books.google.com/books?id=S3rObkPRzP4C&pg=PA80&lpg=PA80&dq=The+Malay+for+shame+is+malu&source=bl&ots=PwJRYveBTc&sig=Tr8flCf1Lu6f8mxVYUmSaEXeFlc&hl=en&ei=OHEpS9ghjYqyA9nqgNgD&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=3&ved=0CBMQ6AEwAg#v=onepage&q=The%20Malay%20for%20shame%20is%20malu&f=false

[117] Nautilus Institute, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. Jones, David Martin. "Malaysia's Dilemma." 21 February 2008. http://www.globalcollab.org/Nautilus/australia/apsnet/policy-forum/2008/dilemma/

[118] *After Independence: Making and Protecting the Nation in Postcolonial and Postcommunist States*. Mauzy, Diane. "Chapter 3: From Malay Nationalism to Malay Nation? [pp. 47–49]." Lowell Barrington, Ed. 2006. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. http://www.press.umich.edu/pdf/0472098985-ch3.pdf

(*pendatang asing*) is used to refer to illegal immigrants. Yet it has been extended to include non-Malay Malaysians as well, reflecting the importance of ethnic nationalism to the Malay identity. To retain this sense of "Malayness," resident Chinese and Indians, whether they are citizens or not, must be viewed as exiles from their ancestral homelands.[119]

Hospitality and Gift Giving

© Lan Rasso
Hospitality

Malays take hospitality very seriously and prefer to receive visitors on an invitation basis. Before ascending the steps, it is customary to call out and announce one's presence rather than walking directly inside a home. After being invited in, visitors should remove their shoes and wash their feet. The family will have an earthenware jug of water for that purpose.[120] When offered a glass of tea or a plate of snacks from a Malay host, accept it. It is offered in the spirit of friendship and it would be rude to turn down.[121]

Exchange 10: I appreciate your hospitality.

Soldier:	I really appreciate your hospitality.	saaya saangaat bertreema kaasey aataas laayaanaan baayek aandaa
Local:	It is nothing.	teedaak aada aapa-aapa

It is polite to bring a gift which should be presented with the right hand unless both hands are required. The gift should contain no pork or alcohol. Fresh fruit (*buah tangan)* or chocolate are both acceptable and home-country souvenirs particularly appreciated. Should the gift be non-edible and wrapped, it will be opened by the hosts later who may have to be pressed to accept it.

Exchange 11: This gift is for you.

Soldier:	This gift is for you.	haadyaa inee oontuk aandaa
Local:	I cannot accept this.	saaya teedaak boley menreemanya

Silence is an integral part of Malay communication. When engaged in a conversation, it is polite to pause before answering. This demonstrates the person being addressed considers the question worthy of reflection.[122] Malays like to get to know a person well

[119] Explorations. Dashini Jeyathurai. "Interrogating National Identity: Ethnicity, Language and History in K.S. Maniam's *The Return* and Shirley Geok-lin Lim's *Joss and Gold*." Volume 9. Spring 2009 http://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/bitstream/10125/10716/1/UHM.Explorations.2009.v9.Jeyathurai.Malay-Identity.pdf
[120] Pickles and Spices. "Malay Table Manners." 2009. http://www.pickles-and-spices.com/malay-table-manners.html
[121] Tripod. "Customary Code of Conduct (Adat Resam)." No date. http://members.tripod.com/kidd_cruz/adat_resam.htm
[122] Kwintessential. "Malaysia – Language, Culture, Customs, and Etiquette." No date. http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/malaysia.html

before proceeding to business discussions. Trust, rather than contracts, was the traditional basis for reaching agreement.

Eating Habits

© Jonas Voss
Eating Habits

When invited to a Malay home for a meal, arrive within 15 minutes of the stated time. If the family eats on the floor in customary fashion, dishes are placed on a cloth (*saprah*) and Malay men and women cross their feet differently. Men extend their legs and sit lotus-style (*bersila*) while women put their feet to one side (*bersimpuh*), alternating sides to prevent loss of blood circulation.[123] When seated in chairs, it is considered impolite to cross your legs in front of anyone of higher social status. [124]

Prior to eating, a bowl of water (*ketor*) is passed around so those gathered can wash their hands. Malay meals are served all at once, not by course, and the eldest person usually starts eating first. While most Malays now use dining tables, they still follow the communal dish custom. Use the communal utensils to serve yourself. Should two people reach for the same dish at once, the elder has priority. Malays only use their right hand to pass food or objects. Since the food is cut into small pieces, knives are not necessary. Hold the fork with your left hand and use it to push the food onto the spoon. Eat from the spoon in your right hand.[125]

Exchange 12: What is the name of this dish?

Soldier:	What is the name of this dish?	aapa naama maasaakan inee?
Local:	This is *laksa johor*.	inee laaksa joho

Laksa is a noodle soup found in many varieties throughout Southeast Asia. Some are served in a curry sauce while others are served in a sour fish base. The name is said to mean “10,000,” the amount of ingredients that can be added.[126] Laksa Johor is distinguished by the use of spaghetti noodles.

Exchange 13: This food is very good.

Soldier:	This food is very good.	Maakaanaan inee saangaat sedaap
Local:	It’s *mee goreng*.	inee mee goreng

Fragrant herbs and roots are used to make many dishes spicy. Rich coconut milk is used to give sauces a creamy texture. Most women mix their own spices to create unique

[123] Pickles and Spices. “Malay Table Manners.” 2009. http://www.pickles-and-spices.com/malay-table-manners.html
[124] Sealang Projects. Kok Seong Teo. “The Acquisition of Malay as a Second Language: A Case of the Essentiality of Culture Learning [p. 16].” 2001. http://sealang.net/sala/archives/pdf8/teo2001acquisition.pdf
[125] eDiplomat. “Malaysia.” No date. http://www.ediplomat.com/np/cultural_etiquette/ce_my.htm
[126] Soupsong. “Laksa!” No date. http://www.soupsong.com/rlaksa.html

dishes. Rice (*nasi*) is a staple item served at most meals. Malays feel each grain is sacred and should not be left on a plate. Take only as much as you can consume.

Exchange 14: Ingredients

Soldier:	What ingredients are used to make *mee goreng*?	aapa baahaan baahaan yaang dee goonakaan oontuk membwaat mee goreng?
Local:	Noodles, onion, tofu, chili, vegetables, tomatoes, and egg.	mee, baawaang, taahoo, laada, saayur-sayuraan,tomaato daan telo

Since the host and his family have likely put substantial effort into planning the meal, the guest should acknowledge their hard work. Rather than directly praising the hostess's cooking, which might embarrass her, the appropriate way to express appreciation is to emphasize that the ingredients must have been selected with great care and prepared with much attention. This will convey, indirectly, that the guest found her cooking delicious.[127]

Dress Codes

© Magnus von Koeller
Dress Codes

The traditional Malay dress code is dictated by Islam and therefore conservative. Beachwear should be restricted to the beach. In other settings, clothing that covers the body, particularly the shoulders, and shirts with closed collars are preferred. When making official visits, it is important to appear in professional attire. Casual wear will be taken as an indication of lack of respect.[128]

Malay dress would not be mistaken for that worn in the Muslim Middle East. It is distinguished by the bold use of color. For men, the traditional outfit is called *Baju Melayu* and is still worn on a regular basis. It consists of a loose long-sleeved shirt tunic (*baju*) with a raised collar worn over a pair of pants (*seluar)* of matching material and color which is adorned by a wrap-around skirt. The man wears a velvet cap (*songkok*) on his head.

Women have several choices. One is the two-piece *sarung kebaya*, a tight long-sleeved blouse (*baju kebaya*) atop a body-hugging batik or silk skirt with a slit to allow for movement. Variants of the *surung kebaya* are the official female flight attendant outfits for Singapore, Malaysia, and Garuda Indonesia airlines. Another popular traditional outfit is the *baju kurung*, which consists of a loose tunic (*baju*) worn over a long wrap around skirt (*sarong*). It can be made from many fabrics, with batik and silk being higher quality, and can be adorned by beadwork and embroidery. A white *baju kurung* suit is worn for a funeral, while more somber colors are worn for other occasions when it is important to

[127] Sealang Projects. Kok Seong Teo. "The Acquisition of Malay as a Second Language: A Case of the Essentiality of Culture Learning [p. 7]." 2001. http://sealang.net/sala/archives/pdf8/teo2001acquisition.pdf
[128] Kiat.net. "Malaysia Page – Travel Information." No date. http://kiat.net/malaysia/travelinfo.html

show respect.[129] While Malay women traditionally covered their heads with a loose fitting shawl (*selendang*) made of lace that draped over the shoulders,[130] a white head scarf (*tudung*) has become the social norm for Malay females past puberty. [131]

Gender Issues

© Lan Rasso
Gender Issues

Malay women traditionally enjoyed relative gender equality with men.[132] After the introduction of the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1972, which stipulated that at least 30% of a company's employees had to be ethnic Malay, along with a shift into manufacturing, women entered the paid workforce in large numbers. Females, socialized to be diligent and obedient, were sought to work in export factories which operate under tight schedules and often on continuous shifts. As a result, for the first time there was an exodus of unmarried women in their late teens and early twenties from their village (*kampung*) environs to free-trade zones where they were housed in factory dormitories.[133] In a market economy, the wages they earned often enabled their families to maintain an adequate standard of living and helped to defray their own wedding expenses. Yet it also added to their responsibilities. Women were held responsible for the undesirable changes that typically accompany rapid urbanization and lead to the break-down of the traditional family unit.[134] This has become more

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[129] Tripod. "Customary Code of Conduct (Adat Resam)." Not date. http://members.tripod.com/kidd_cruz/adat_resam.htm

[130] *Three Generations, Two Genders, One World: Women and Men in a Changing Century.* Chant, Sylvia H., and Cathy McIllwaine [p. 84]." 1998. New York: St. Martin's Press. http://books.google.com/books?id=dFC78hYzkIcC&pg=PA84&dq=malaysia+selendang&lr=#v=onepage&q=malaysia%20selendang&f=false

[131] *Gateway to Malay Culture.* Ragman, Zaki. "Chapter 7: Home and Attire [p. 88]." 2003. Singapore: Asiapac Books. http://books.google.com/books?id=1qIhB0I3Pq0C&pg=PA88&dq=tudung+selendang&lr=&cd=25#v=onepage&q=tudung%20selendang&f=false

[132] *Gender, Education and Development: Beyond Access to Empowerment*. Pong, Suet-ling "Chapter 10: Gender Inequality in Educational Attainment in Peninsular Malaysia [p. 166]." Heward, Christine and Sheila Bunwaree, Eds. 1999. London: Zed Books. http://books.google.com/books?id=VRPbGbxeCYIC&pg=PA166&lpg=PA166&dq=malay+women+gender+equality&source=bl&ots=rTaeodATuV&sig=Nr6PT-5UahAgzfizjyAwsfBNaH8&hl=en&ei=zNMrS--BK4j8sgPTlO25BA&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=4&ved=0CBkQ6AEwAzgK#v=onepage&q=malay%20women%20gender%20equality&f=false

[133] *Women and Labour Organizing in Asia: Diversity, Autonomy and Activism*. Crinis, Vicki. "Chapter 4: Malaysia: Women, Labour Activism and Unions [p. 52]." Broadbent, Kaye and Michele Ford, Eds.. 2007. New York: Routledge. http://books.google.com/books?id=Zcu_LxA8SGMC&pg=PT70&lpg=PT70&dq=malay+women+export+processing&source=bl&ots=Q2fVnCt9QX&sig=49eZoM6YyoVng3-GjnHJ3-0HoU4&hl=en&ei=0rcrS_zuPIHYsgPFxa3KBA&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=4&ved=0CBkQ6AEwAw#v=onepage&q=malay%20women%20export%20processing&f=false

[134] *Politics in Malaysia: The Malay Dimension*.. Ting, Helen "Chapter 3: Gender Discourse in Malay Politics: Old Wine in a New Bottle? [p. 83]." Edmund Terence Gomez, Ed. 2007. New York: Routledge. http://books.google.com/books?id=-0dL3aIH7fYC&pg=PT85&lpg=PT85&dq=malay+women+gender+equality&source=bl&ots=765PF6K00A&sig=FsSvPfDiHQiq9O26nxwBoG7hRiE&hl=en&ei=AMErS6SkK4PKsAP84Z3MBA&sa=X&oi=book

pronounced due to the resurgence of Islam in Malaysia. Shari'a court counselors routinely hold wives responsible for a couple's marital problems.[135] Shari'a courts also discount female testimony, placing women at a disadvantage in gaining a fair divorce settlement and in custody matters.[136]

Holidays

© Fendy Zaidan
Malaysia Day

Malaysia vies for the largest number of public holidays reflecting its multicultural citizenry.[137] These include Chinese Lunar New Year; Wesak, a Buddhist holiday; Deepavali, the Hindu festival of lights; as well as Christmas. In addition to federal holidays, states may declare their own holidays. For example, the position of national sultan rotates among the nine regional sultans. The birthday of the national sultan will therefore be celebrated in his home state but it is not a gazetted nationwide holiday.

Hari Merdeka

Peninsular Malaysia became independent of British colonial rule on 31 August 1957, hence this date is the country's independence (*merdeka*) day and an important national holiday. Towns and cities all host parades, but the big one occurs in Kuala Lumpur where the sultan and high-ranking government officials inaugurate the festivities from Merdeka Square.

Malaysia Day

Beginning in 2010, the country will recognize 16 September as a public holiday to celebrate the 1963 inclusion of Sabah and Sarawak in the federation, marking the name change from Malaya to Malaysia.[138] In creating a new holiday, the prime minister cited the importance of strengthening national integration.[139] Others saw the impact of the ruling party's loss of its two-thirds majority in parliament in 2008 as a factor in his decision. Malaysia Day offered the ruling party a way to appear more inclusive, reflecting the importance of voters in the two Eastern Malaysia states in its electoral calculations.[140]

_result&ct=result&resnum=8&ved=0CCEQ6AEwBw#v=onepage&q=malay%20women%20gender%20equality&f=false

[135] Al Arabiya News Channel. "Women Must Accept Polygamy: Malaysian Official." 23 May 2008. http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2008/05/23/50294.html

[136] Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. U.S. Department of State. "Malaysia: International Religious Freedom Report 2009." 26 October 2009. http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127277.htm

[137] The Guardian. Barton, Laura. "Which Country Has the Most Public Holidays?" 9 April 2007. http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2007/apr/09/britishidentity.laurabarton

[138] The Star. Yeng Ai Chun. "Malaysia Day Now a Public Holiday, Says PM." 19 October 2009. http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2009/10/19/nation/20091019103509&sec=nation

[139] MySinchew.com. "Malaysia Day Declared a Public Holiday." 19 October 2009. http://www.mysinchew.com/node/30314

[140] The Malaysian Insider. Chong, Debra. "Dr M Has a Laugh Over Najib's Malaysia Day Holiday." 19 October 2009. http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/index.php/malaysia/40821-dr-m-has-a-laugh-over-najibs-malaysia-day-holiday

Do's and Don'ts

Do call ahead before visiting a Malay home.

Do remove your shoes before entering a Malay home or mosque.

Do wait for a Malay woman to extend her hand for a handshake, since Malays traditionally refrain from touching the opposite sex when greeting.

© Joshua Treviño
Do remove your shoes before entering a Malay home or mosque

Do accept drinks and snacks offered by a Malay host in the spirit of friendship.

Do address Malays by their first names preceded by title or Mister (*Encik*) or Madame (*Puan*).

Do use right thumb with fingers folded under when pointing at something.

Don't use the left hand to pass anything—Muslims associate it with washroom activities.

Don't point your feet toward another person or toward sacred objects.

Don't touch anyone's head.

Don't engage in public displays of affection.

Don't take photographs without asking permission first.

Don't discuss Malaysian politics or ethnic group relations.

Chapter 4 Urban Life

Introduction

© Ville Miettinen
Kuala Lumpur skyline

Urban centers proliferated in present-day Malaysia due to its export economy. Cities developed to funnel tin, rubber, timber and other raw materials into world markets under British colonial rule.[141] Local consumption did not spur development until after independence in 1957. Several decades of economic growth created futuristic high-rise architecture next to bustling open air markets. In Kuala Lumpur, "Old cafes are tucked under gleaming expressways. Calls to prayer beckon white-collar professionals from towers of steel and glass." [142] Yet as cities on the western side of the peninsula expanded to accommodate rural migrants, they often annexed former rubber plantations for residential housing developments. The Tamil Indians who provided plantation labor were often forced into squatter settlements.[143] While ethnic Malays can also be found in squatter settlements, they alone receive preferential assistance programs that cover most aspects of modern life (housing, education, employment) and have markedly better prospects for upward mobility. Much of the private economy is controlled by ethnic Chinese.

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[141] *The Encyclopedia of World History*, 6th Ed. "Southeast Asia 1753–1914 [p. 559]." Peter Stearns, Ed. 2001. New York: Houghton Mifflin. http://books.google.com/books?id=MziRd4ddZz4C&pg=PA559&lpg=PA559&dq=urban+centers+malay+trade+ports&source=bl&ots=Y5aHj8zbtF&sig=_MbGCeP1OcgRJY5LpsRb4_yxESg&hl=en&ei=jJYyS4vUOIK6swPl-8zJBA&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=9&ved=0CCAQ6AEwCA#v=onepage&q=&f=false

[142] New York Times. Lindt, Naomi. "36 Hours in Kuala Lumpur." 20 December 2009. http://travel.nytimes.com/2009/12/20/travel/20hours.html

[143] University of Pennsylvania. Schiffman, Harold. "A New Factor: Urban Squatter Settlements." 31 December 1998. http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/~haroldfs/messeas/maltamil/node3.html

Transportation

Historically waterways were the major form of transportation in the Malay Archipelago. Rivers remain important transportation arteries in East Malaysia. The two parts of Malaysia are connected by well developed air links.

© caribb / flickr.com
Malaysia airlines

Exchange 15: Which road leads to the airport?

Soldier:	Which road leads to the airport?	jaalaan maana menoojoo ke laapaangaan turbaang?
Local:	The road heading east.	jaalaan yaang meng-haala ke teemoor

A railway connecting Thailand to Singapore runs through peninsular Malaysia. It was built during British colonial rule to transport raw materials from the interior to the coast. The railway has been upgraded, and the historic Kuala Lumpur railway station has been replaced by a modern facility offering express service to the airport.

Exchange 16: Is there a train station nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a train station nearby?	dekaat sinee aada steyshan kreytaapee?
Local:	No.	taak aada

Kuala Lumpur has an extensive light rail network. All cities have municipal bus service. Luxury bus service with seats that recline into beds is also available for long distance routes.

Exchange 17: Will the bus be here soon?

Soldier:	Will the bus be here soon?	baas eetoo aakaan teeba sekejaap laagee?
Local:	Yes.	ya

The high number of international visitor complaints about Malaysian taxis has been noted by high-level government officials who are concerned over the effects on tourism.[144]

Exchange 18: Where can I get a taxi?

Soldier:	Where can I get a taxi?	dee maana boley saaya daapaatkaan teksee?
Local:	Over there.	dee saana

Taxis include meters, but many drivers prefer to negotiate the fare individually with passengers. This has led to complaints about overcharging and extortion.

[144] Brisbane Times. "Malaysia's Taxi Drivers 'Worse Than Dirty Toilets'." 14 December 2009. http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/travel/travel-news/malaysias-taxi-drivers-worse-than-dirty-toilets-20091214-kqyd.html

Exchange 19: Can you take me there?

Soldier:	Can you take me there?	boley aandaa baawa saaya ke saana?
Local:	Yes, I can.	ya saaya boley

If you don't know what the going rate is, find a driver who will use the meter before setting off. This type of service would most likely be found in monitored locations, for example outside luxury hotels where passengers are picked up when the doorman beckons.

© Aldas Kirvaitis
Light rail

Exchange 20: Where can I rent a car?

Soldier:	Where can I rent a car?	dee maana saaya boley seywa kreyta?
Local:	Downtown.	dee poosaat baandaa

Most international brand-name car rental agencies are represented in Malaysia. It is not necessary to hire a driver.

Exchange 21: Is there a gas station nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a gas station nearby?	dekaat sinee aada steyshan meenyaak?
Local:	Yes.	ya aada

Malaysia has one of the highest rates of car ownership in Asia, and repair shops are easy to find. Although new roads are constantly being built to accommodate the ever increasing number of private vehicles, they fill up quickly.[145] Traffic congestion has yet to be eased. Some feel that the national transportation policy is too skewed toward expanding road space for single occupancy vehicles at the expense of promoting public transportation.[146]

Exchange 22: Is there a good auto mechanic nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a good auto mechanic nearby?	dekaat sinee aada kdaay mekaaneek yaang baagos?
Local:	Yes.	ya aada

[145] Asia Times. Netto, Anil. "Malaysia Chokes on Car Culture." 11 August 1999. http://www.atimes.com/se-asia/AH11Ae02.html

[146] International Association of Traffic and Safety Sciences, Vol. 31, No. 1. Mohamad, Jamilah and Amin T. Kiggundu,. "The Rise of the Private Car in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia – Assessing the Policy Options – [p. 75]." 8 March 2007. http://www.iatss.or.jp/pdf/research/31/31-1-07.pdf

Telecommunications

As information technology became a driver of economic growth, the Malaysian government realized it had to partner the state-run domestic telecommunications industry with private institutions. Doing so allowed them to remain competitive in attracting foreign investment in manufacturing and other sectors.[147]

© Melissa Maples
Telephone

Exchange 23: Telephone number

Soldier:	What is your telephone number?	braapa nombor teleefon aanda?
Local:	My phone number is (3) 2168-5479.	nombor teleefon saaya yalaah (teega) dower saatoo enaam laapaan leema empaat toojo smeelaan

Many firms now compete to offer cellular phone and other services in the Malay telecommunications market. Cell phones have become an essential item for all Malays regardless of income.

Exchange 24: May I use your phone?

Soldier:	May I use your phone?	boley saaya goonakaan teleefon aanda?
Local:	Sure.	tentoo saaja

[147] Monash University, Malaysia. Sivalingam, G. "Network Governance in Malaysia's Telecommunications Industry." 2008. http://www.hks.harvard.edu/netgov/files/NIPS/Paper_G_Sivalingam.pdf

Restaurants

The climate allows for outdoor dining all year round in Malaysia. Sampling street food is a memorable experience for most visitors. Also popular are buffet-style restaurants (*Nasi Campur*) which can offer up to 100 different dishes (*lauk*) to put atop rice.[148]

© Tian Yake
Malay restaurant next to Dewan Melayu Klang

Exchange 25: One bill

Soldier:	Put this all in one bill?	tolong letaakkaan semoowa inee daalaam saatoo beel?
Local:	Okay.	Baayiklaa

While Muslims are prohibited from drinking alcohol and there is a "sin tax" on alcoholic drinks, there is no shortage of bars in major cities.[149] Coffee houses (*Kopi tiam*) have long been a part of Malay culture and Malays remain avid coffee and tea drinkers.[150]

Exchange 26: Coffee or tea

Soldier:	I would like coffee or tea.	saaya eengeen kopey aataw teh
Local:	Sure.	baayiklaa

Roti canai is a type of flatbread made from wheat flour and eggs eaten with many stuffings, including fried eggs, curried meats, and melted bananas. [151] In Kuala Lumpur it is a favorite breakfast, snack, and curry accompaniment, and can be eaten at all hours of the day. While the dish was introduced by Indians, it has been localized and is considered Malay fare.

Exchange 27: Are you still serving breakfast?

Soldier:	Are you still serving breakfast?	aandaa maasey heedaangkaan saaraapaan paagee?
Local:	Yes.	ya

Hot, spicy noodle soups (*laksa*) are popular in Malaysia and come in an endless assortment of varieties. The broth varies along several dimensions: spice, creaminess (*lemak*), sweetness, and heat. "Curry laksa is like my entire country in one dish,"

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[148] Backpacking Malaysia. "Nasi Campur (Malay Mixed Rice)." No date. http://www.backpackingmalaysia.com/stories/nasi-campur-malay-mixed-rice

[149] New York Times. Lindt, Naomi. "36 Hours in Kuala Lumpur." 20 December 2009. http://travel.nytimes.com/2009/12/20/travel/20hours.html

[150] *Malaysia Brunei & Singapore.* Alexander, James. "Chapter 5: Food and Drink [p. 61]" 2006. Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press. http://books.google.com/books?id=KXaX4tUEOOsC&pg=PA61&dq=kopi+tiam+malaysia+brunei+%26+singapore&lr=&cd=1#v=onepage&q=kopi%20tiam%20malaysia%20brunei%20%26%20singapore&f=false

[151] Wall Street Journal. Krich, John. "Roti Canai." 31 July 2009. http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124893513501192849.html

observed an expatriate Malaysian explaining, “It’s not Indian. It’s not Chinese. But it has so many things in it, and the mix is so tasty.” [152]

Exchange 28: Hot soup

Soldier:	I’d like some hot soup.	saaya eengeen soop paanaas
Local:	Sure.	baayiklaah

For Muslim Malays who do not eat pork, chicken is a widely available staple available in Chinese restaurants.

Exchange 29: Type of meat

Soldier:	What type of meat is this?	inee daageeng aapa?
Local:	Chicken.	aayaam

Malays enjoy sweet desserts. *Cendol* is made from coconut, sugar, and noodles. *Ais kacang* is common at outdoor stalls where customers can point to the toppings they want. Served in the shape of a steep mountain, it is made from red beans and jellied fruit topped with shaved ice, various syrups, and condensed milk. A third popular dessert, called *bubur kacang*, is made from mungbeans and rice cooked in coconut milk.[153]

© Isriya Paireepairit
Bubur kacang

Exchange 30: Dessert

Soldier:	Do you have a dessert?	aandaa aada penchoochee mooloot?
Local:	Yes, we have bubur kacang	ya aada. kaamee aada booboor kaachaang

It may be necessary to ask for water for which there can be an additional charge.

Exchange 31: May I have a glass of water?

Soldier:	May I have a glass of water?	boley beree saaya segelaas aayir?
Local:	Yes, right away.	boley, skaaraang jooga saaya aambeyl

While hotels may add a gratuity, the custom of tipping is unfamiliar to Malays.

Exchange 32: Can I have my total bill, please?

Soldier:	Can I have my total bill, please?	boley saaya daapaatkaan beel?
Local:	Yes, of course.	ya tentoo saaja

[152] New York Times. Moskin, Julia. “From Asia, Rapture in a Bowl.” 6 January 2009. http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/07/dining/07laksa.html

[153] *Lonely Planet Kuala Lumpur, Melaka & Penang.*. Eckhardt, Robyn “Food and Drink: Staples & Specialities [p. 45.]” Bindloss, Joe and Celeste Brash, Eds.. 2008. Lonely Planet. http://books.google.com/books?id=mzDloil93f4C&pg=PT45&dq=bubur+kacang+malay&cd=7#v=onepage&q=bubur%20kacang%20malay&f=false

More expensive restaurants will have restroom facilities.

Exchange 33: Where is your restroom?

Soldier:	Where is your restroom?	dee maana beelayk aayir aandaa?
Local:	That room to your left, over there.	dee saana, beelayk yang dee seblaah keeree aandaa

Shopping

Traditional markets operate year round in Malaysia. The Petaling Street Market in Kuala Lumpur is one of the more famous open-air markets.

© Lan Rasso
Bargaining

Exchange 34: Is the market nearby?

Soldier:	Is the market nearby?	aada kaah paasaa dekaat sinee?
Local:	Yes, over there on the right.	ya, dee saanaa ke seblaah kaanaan

There are also night markets (*pasar malam*) that operate on specific evenings.

Exchange 35: Night market

Soldier:	When will the night market be here?	beela paasaa maalaam aakaan aada dee sinee?
Local:	On Tuesday.	haaree slaasa

Urban Malays increasingly prefer American-style shopping malls, where one can shop in air-conditioned comfort. But it is traditional markets that offer the best selection of locally made items as well as knockoff brand-name goods.

Exchange 36: Do you sell batik?

Soldier:	Do you sell batik?	aandaa aada menjwaal baateyk?
Local:	Yes.	ya aada

Locally made items are not mass produced, therefore merchants may have a limited supply.

Exchange 37: Do you have any more of these?

Soldier:	Do you have any more of these?	aanda aada laagee sepurtee inee?
Local:	No.	teedaak aada

Merchants are generally happy to allow the customer to examine the item close up.

Exchange 38: May I examine this close up?

Soldier:	May I examine this close up?	boley saaya preeksa inee dengaan lebeyh dekaat laagee?
Local:	Sure.	tentoo saaja

Bargaining is the norm in traditional markets and is supposed to be fun. Let the merchant set an opening price. It's more effective than responding to his effort to get a potential buyer to name a figure by asking, "How much do you want to pay?" Then you come down from his price. How much will depend on both your skill as a bargainer and the value of the item in question.

© Chooyutshing / flickr.com
Vegetable vendor

Exchange 39: Can I buy a batik dress with this much money?

Soldier:	Can I buy a batik dress with this much money?	boley saaya belee baajoo baateyk dengaan waang sebaanyaak inee?
Local:	No.	teedaak boley

Another bargaining tactic is to thank the merchant and say you may be back. He will likely offer a "walk away" price. When you are ready to purchase the item, pay the merchant in exact or near exact change rather than expecting him to make change for a big bill.

Exchange 40: Can you give me change for this?

Soldier:	Can you give me change for this?	boley aanda buree saaya tookaaraan oontuk inee?
Local:	No.	teedaak boley

Many merchants keep little cash on hand. They will also likely only accept local currency due to concerns over counterfeit U.S. banknotes.[154]

Exchange 41: Do you accept U.S. currency?

Soldier:	Do you accept U.S. currency?	aanda treema dolur amereeka?
Local:	No we only accept ringgits.	teedaak, kaamee haanya treema reenggat maleyshyaa

Merchants can aggressively court customers. In the words of one world traveler who went shopping in Kuala Lumpur, "I stopped to look at one particularly appealing Kelly bag in powder blue, which [the merchant] said she would give me for 300 ringgit, the equivalent of about [USD] 80. I really was looking for batik, not bags, so I put the bag back in her hands, thanked her, and walked on. 'How much you pay--*lah*?' she screeched.

[154] Bloomberg.com. Takayama, Hideko and Bradley K. Martin. "Nearly 'Perfect' Fake Dollars Complicate Korea Talks." 28 March 2007. http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=aOuds2awDwds

‘I give you for 200 ringgit! Okay, how much you offer?!’ And that was without me even opening my mouth.”[155]

Exchange 42: Please, buy something from me.

Local:	Please, buy something from me.	tolong belee seswaatoo daaree saaya
Soldier:	Sorry, I have no money left.	maa-aaf saaya teedaak aada waang laagee

If you are not interested in buying anything, simply make a polite excuse to enable the seller to “save face.”

Beggars

Begging has become a punishable offense in Malaysia. Buddhist monks who were not residents of Malaysia have been fined for soliciting alms in what was perceived as an aggressive manner.[156] The Malay view is that most beggars are in fact illegal immigrants (*pendatang asing*) who are ruining the country’s good name.[157] Given that view, Malays of all ethnicities may not look kindly on foreigners giving money to beggars who, if they are Malaysian citizens, have access to government-provided social services.

© G Menon
Beggars and handicaps

Exchange 43: Give me money.

Local:	Give me money.	buree saaya waang
Soldier:	I don’t have any.	saaya teedaak aada waang

There is a fear that if begging pays off for illegal immigrants, more may be encouraged to come. Another fear is that human-trafficking gangs will organize those most likely to prey on human emotions such as the severely disfigured.[158]

[155] *Condé Nast Traveler, Daily Traveler*. Elliot, Dinda. “Malaysian Markets Are Not for the Meek.” 3 March 2009. http://www.concierge.com/cntraveler/blogs/80days/2009/03/malaysian-marke.html
[156] *Earth Times.* “Begging Chinese Monk for Threatening Malaysians.” 6 October 2009. http://www.earthtimes.org/articles/show/288892,begging-chinese-monk-fined-for-threatening-malaysians.html
[157] Malaysiaku Sayang. “Chinese Beggars in Malaysia.” 23 April 2009. http://malaysiakusayang.blogspot.com/2009/04/chinese-beggars-in-malaysia.html
[158] The Malaysian Bar. The Star Online. “Extreme Tactics Used on Beggars.” 13 December 2009. http://www.malaysianbar.org.my/legal/general_news/extreme_tactics_used_on_beggars.html

Health Care

Health care in Malaysia is managed by the Ministry of Health. Consultation and medications are free although administrative fees are charged. These fees amount to approximately 4% of the government's health care expenditures.[159]

© Eng Hooi Sim
Emergency

Exchange 44: Is the doctor in?

Soldier:	Is Dr. Hussein in?	dokter hooseyn aada?
Local:	No.	teedaak aada

The district-level hospital is the primary care provider for most Malaysians and in-patient services are covered by the government's national health care program. Outpatient services are typically provided on a fee for service, private basis.

Exchange 45: Is there a hospital nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a hospital nearby?	dekaat sinee aada hospeetaal?
Local:	Yes, in the center of town.	ya dee poosaat baandaa

Owing to rising costs, the government now employs various private-insurance schemes while maintaining its commitment to provide care for the indigent. Medical tourism has been promoted as a means to offset public expenditures.[160]

Exchange 46: Do you know what is wrong?

Soldier:	Do you know what is wrong?	aandaa taaw aapa seelaapnya?
Local:	No.	teedaak

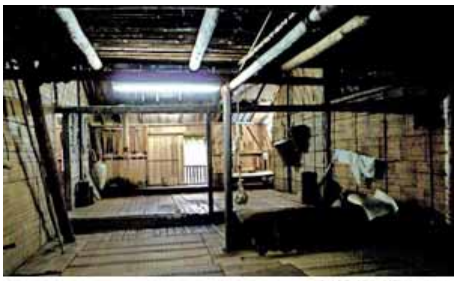
[159] The Pacific Review, Vol 21, No. 2. Ramesh, M and Xun Wu. "Realigning Public and Private Health Care in Southeast Asia [p.176.]" May 2008. http://www.spp.nus.edu.sg/docs/fac/wu_xun/Published%20Papers/pacific_review_2008.pdf

[160] The StarOnline. Ang, Elaine. "Malaysian Medical Tourism Growing." 14 February 2009. http://biz.thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2009/2/14/business/3245091&sec=business

Chapter 5 Rural Life

Introduction

Rural Malays may still live in traditional wooden homes built on stilts. These homes have been described as "cool, infinitely expandable or contractable, movable and well adapted to the exigencies of heat, rain, floods and large families."[161]



© Winifred/flickr.com
Traditional wooden home

Exchange 47: How many people live in this house?

Soldier:	How many people live in this house?	braapa oraang yaang teeng-gaal daalaam roomaah inee?
Local:	Six.	enaam

Interior space is not broken up by partitions or walls but rather floor height.[162] The house is built around the highest floor, or core (*rumah ibu*), reflecting its importance in family life. It may be used for sleeping at night and eating during the day. Since most activities take place on the floor, little furniture is required. The kitchen (*dapur*) is located in the back and toilet facilities are detached from the main structure. The house has large windows to allow for maximum air circulation and ventilation. Stairs lead up to a porch (*anjung*), which separates the public realm from the private sphere. Unfamiliar guests will be entertained here and residents of the house often sit here to visit with passersby or *kampung* neighbors.[163] The Malay word *kampung* is frequently translated into English as "village." It also refers to a community that usually has a mosque or prayer hall at the center.[164]

[161] New York Times. Diamonston, Barbaralee. "Landmarks of Kuala Lumpur." 23 September 1990. http://www.nytimes.com/1990/09/23/travel/landmarks-of-kuala-lumpur.html?pagewanted=all
[162] Malaysiasite. Van Wijnen, Ben. "Malay House." 2001–2010. http://www.malaysiasite.nl/malayhouse.htm
[163] UNDP. *Sharing Innovative Experiences, Vol. 4. Examples of Good Practices in Social Policies, Indigenous and Traditional Knowledge, and Appropriate Technology in the South.* "Chapter 6: The Traditional Malay House: Malaysia." 2000. http://tcdc.undp.org/sie/experiences/vol4/Malay%20house.pdf
[164] Wall Street Journal. Calvert, Brian. "Time-Travelling in Malaysia." 16 October 2009. http://online.wsj.com/article/SB125559176023786957.html

Health Care
The provision of medical services has been a priority for the Malay government. As a result, 90% of Malaysians enjoy convenient access to health care facilities.

DoD image: Edward G. Martens
Waiting at a health clinic

Exchange 48: Is there a health center nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a health center nearby?	dekaat sinee aada poosaat keseyaataan?
Local:	Yes, over there.	Ya dee saanaa

The remaining 10%, disproportionately indigenous peoples who live in remote regions, do not. Their primary care may come from a Village Health Promoter (VHP) who has been trained in first aid and basic preventive care.[165]

Exchange 49: Can you help me?

Soldier:	Can you help me?	boley aandaa tolong saaya?
Local:	Yes.	ya boley

Because some indigenous peoples are born in remote villages rather than at a hospital, they may lack national identity cards. This can complicate admittance to a hospital because social welfare programs that would assume responsibility for their medical bills require such cards.[166]

[165] UNICEF Malaysia. Lubon, Lydia. "Village Health Promoters Bringing Care to Rural Communities in Malaysia." 26 May 2006. http://www.unicef.org/malaysia/media_4844.html
[166] Hornbill Unleashed. Yang, Sim Kwang. "Parangs against the Bulldozer: The Tale of One Sarawak Mountain." 20 May 2009. http://hornbillunleashed.wordpress.com/2009/05/20/1265/

Lodging
Hotels are alien urban structures to rural Malays, who feel visitors should be accommodated in one's home.[167]

© Linus Mak
View of a town

Exchange 50: Is there lodging nearby?

Soldier:	Is there lodging nearby?	dekaat sinee aada roomaah pengeenaapaan?
Local:	Yes.	ya aada

A communal spirit of *gotong-royong* (togetherness) still characterizes life in rural Malaysia, and Malays take great pride in their natal villages or hometowns.[168] While Malays "return" to their *kampung* (village), travel from *kampung* to city is simply done to take advantage of opportunities but not to establish a new home.

Exchange 51: Do you know this area?

Soldier:	Do you know this area very well?	aanda taaw kaawaasaan inee dengaan baayik?
Local:	Yes.	Ya

[167] *Unsettling Absences: Urbanism in Rural Malaysia*. Thompson, Eric. "Chapter 7: Schooling [p. 147]." 2007. Singapore: National University of Singapore Press. http://books.google.com/books?id=DgCAQXoMQ3kC&pg=PA147&lpg=PA147&dq=hotels+rural+malaysia&source=bl&ots=aECKqkMPzd&sig=4PkMwY6daIvIoQf5nWqHP3tCER8&hl=en&ei=MC45S_uUKo6iswPpu9C8BA&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=8&ved=0CBwQ6AEwBw#v=onepage&q=hotels%20rural%20malaysia&f=false

[168] *Understanding Global Cultures: Metaphorical Journeys Through 28 Nations*, 3rd Ed. Gannon, Martin J. "Chapter 18: The Malaysian *Balik Kampung* [p. 246.]" 2004. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. http://books.google.com/books?id=4X0KY9cVm7MC&pg=PA246&dq=gotong+royong+malaysia&lr=&cd=20#v=onepage&q=gotong%20royong%20malaysia&f=false

Land Ownership

© Marufish / flickr.com
Rural home

When rubber boomed in the early 1900s, the British colonial government created Malay reservations in the peninsula. The concept resembled Native American reservations in North America because they set aside land for native Malays. But participation was limited to practicing Muslims of Malay ethnicity. The 1913 Malay Reservation Enactment was designed to protect Malay farmers from ending up landless due to the transfer of land to non-Malays and rubber companies.[169] It was also to help Malays maintain their subsistence-oriented way of life since they had little role in the cash-crop economy built upon Indian immigrant labor and British and Chinese capital. If resentment developed among the Malays against the status quo, they could potentially challenge an arrangement which had proved very lucrative for the British.[170]

Exchange 52: Do you own this land?

Soldier:	Do you own this land?	aanda memeeleekee taanaah inee?
Local:	Yes.	ya

While all land must be owned by ethnic Malays in a Malay *kampung*, that does not mean it must be distributed equally. Tenancy was historically widespread in Malay villages. Anthropological fieldwork in the 1960s and 1970s uncovered the fact that payment arrangements were individually negotiated. Kinship and residence had a strong effect on the amount and timing of payments. When both landlord and tenant were members of the *kampung*, payments were reduced. Those who were relatives of the landlord were far more successful in negotiating for payment after the harvest.[171]

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[169] *South East Asian Studies.* Vol. 14, No. 4., March 1977. Voon, Phin-Keong. "Rural Land Ownership and Development in the Malay Reservations of Peninsular Malaysia." http://www.cseas.kyoto-u.ac.jp/seas/14/4/140402.pdf

[170] *Education in the Third World*. Watson, Keith. "Chapter 5: Education and Colonialism in Peninsular Malaysia [p. 95]." 1982. New York: Routledge. http://books.google.com/books?id=MekNAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA96&lpg=PA96&dq=malay+education&source=bl&ots=groUiL4p9I&sig=m_P9J2GjKm7Z0vkLAKRQq8HwIB0&hl=en&ei=_sY7S9XvB5TsswOhtNy-BA&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=10&ved=0CCcQ6AEwCTgo#v=onepage&q=malay%20education&f=false

[171] *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. Scott, James. "Chapter 4: Sedaka, 1967–1979. [pp. 105–106]." 1985. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. http://books.google.com/books?id=YpB_Ft8Q294C&pg=PA105&dq=Weapons+of+the+Weak:+Everyday+Forms+of+Peasant+Resistance+level+of+paddy-land+rents+paddy+cultivators+ordinance&cd=1#v=onepage&q=&f=false

Eastern Malaysia fell under different types of expatriate governance. From 1841 to 1946 Sarawak was first ruled by a British family and then the government itself.[172] North Borneo, present-day Sabah, was a British protectorate where the government claimed custody of all land not under continuous cultivation.[173] Because many ethnic minorities practiced slash and burn agriculture, little land was in fact exempt from government oversight.

© Ben Beiske
Logging in Borneo

Exchange 53: Where do you work?

Soldier:	Where do you work, sir?	dee maana enchik bekurja?
Local:	I am a farmer, sir.	saaya pekebon enchik

After independence in 1963, the respective state governments assumed de facto ownership of all non-continuously cultivated land. In both Sarawak and Sabah it has proved difficult for indigenous peoples to claim ownership through customary title, known as Native Customary Rights (NCR), since they bear the burden of proof. This has allowed private businesses to purchase untitled land and expand palm oil cultivation by converting forest and fallow land for new planting. They have also acquired new land from forced sales of newer plantations.[174] Kuala Lumpur has defended this conversion on the grounds that palm oil seed cultivation represents a means to reduce poverty.[175] Yet a study showed poverty rates in Sabah were comparable to those of Sarawak despite the considerably greater area under oil seed cultivation there.[176] Owners often hire Indonesian and Filipino laborers, not all of whom have work authorization in Malaysia.

In Sarawak, logging remains the most important source of revenue for the state government. Many riverside communities have become timber towns. Yet granting virgin forest concessions, often to international companies, has resulted in law enforcement clashes with indigenous people whose way of life is dependent on the forest.

Exchange 54: Did these people threaten you?

Soldier:	Did these people threaten you?	oraang oraang inee mengaanchaam aandaa?

[172] *State, Communities and Forests in Contemporary Borneo*. Potter, Lesley. "Chapter 3: Native Customary Land: The Trust as a Device for Land Development in Sarawak: Defining Native Customary Rights to Land." 2005. http://epress.anu.edu.au/apem/borneo/mobile_devices/ch03s02.html
[173] Global Forestry Services. *Understanding Forest Tenure in South and Southeast Asia*. Toh, Su Mei and Kevin Grace. "Case Study: Sabah Forest Ownership [p. 257.]." 2005. ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/009/J8167e/J8167e10.pdf
[174] New York Times. Koswanage, Niluksi and Soo Ai Peng. "Palm Oil Plantations Available as Prices Drop." 2 November 2008. http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/02/business/worldbusiness/02iht-deal03.1.18325493.html
[175] *Global Oils and Fats Business Magazine.* Vol. 6, Issue 2, April–June 2009. "Oil Palm–Leader in Sustainability [p.6]." http://www.malaysiapalmoil.org/pdf/20090529PulloutCEO%206-2_2.pdf
[176] Mongabay.com. Butler, Rhett. "Does Palm Oil Alleviate Rural Poverty in Malaysia?" 24 October 2007. http://news.mongabay.com/2007/1023-palm_oil.html

Local:	No.	teedaak

As one blogger observed, "The land is more than capital or property for them. Their land and their river[s] are the entire universe to them. Their culture, religion, myths, and ways of life are all intimately connected to the land on which they live."[177]

Rural Leadership

© Andrew Garton
Community leader in Sarawak

The administration of the states in Peninsular Malaysia is divided into three sub-levels: *daerah* (district), *mukim* (sub-district), and *kampung*. The district, also referred to as a town, has a population of 10,000 whereas a *mukim* is a sub-district with a population below 10,000. Town heads, known as Mayors (*Datuk Bandar*), are filled by election. By contrast, the *mukim* is headed by a *penghulu*, a position traditionally filled by the sultan's nominee. Now the *penghulu* is appointed by the State Public Service Commission and the person's main responsibilities are to assist federal and state-level agencies carry out development projects.[178]

Exchange 55: Does your mayor live here?

Soldier:	Does your mayor live here?	datuk baandaa aandaa teeng-gaal dee sinee?
Local:	Yes.	Ya

The village head, known as the *ketua kampung*, is the lowest or grass-roots level position in the administrative hierarchy. It is filled by the state-level government.[179] When power changes hands in elections, the new ruling party may want to replace the *ketua kampung*, a trend that could politicize the position. Many of the duties are in fact non-partisan, such as attesting to a student's impoverished circumstances to enable him to qualify for a scholarship or improving garbage pick-up. Yet a person could withhold such services to those who failed to show electoral support.

Exchange 56: Can you take me to your mayor?

Soldier:	Can you take me to your mayor?	boley aanda baawa saaya burjoompa datuk baandaa?
Local:	Yes.	ya boley

[177] Hornbill Unleashed. Sim Kwang Yang. "Parangs against the Bulldozer: The Tale of One Sarawak Mountain." 20 May 2009. http://hornbillunleashed.wordpress.com/2009/05/20/1265/
[178] The Sunday Star. Azizan, Hariati and Rashvinjeet S. Bedi. "Villages in a Quandary." 6 April 2008. http://www.malaysianbar.org.my/news_features/villages_in_a_quandary.html?date=2009-11-01
[179] *Unsettling Absences: Urbanism in Rural Malaysia.* Thompson, Eric C. "Kampung [p. 48.]" 2007. Singapore: National University of Singapore. http://books.google.com/books?id=DgCAQXoMQ3kC&pg=PA48&lpg=PA48&dq=ketua+kampung&source=bl&ots=aECKxkHQAb&sig=GBpVzbDCOMcZo_WPWkvLJgAxNBE&hl=en&ei=dMlDS8X4E5OkswP_k-3dBA&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=9&ved=0CCMQ6AEwCDgK#v=onepage&q=ketua%20kampung&f=false

While little overt conflict was observed by an American anthropologist who spent years studying rural Malaysia, there was much posturing to gain moral advantage as social relations in the *kampung* became marketized. For example, wealthy landlords rationalized their treatment of poor tenants by claiming to be poor themselves and therefore unable to provide *tolong-menolong* (mutual help) as village norms would dictate.[180]

Exchange 57: We need your advice.

Soldier:	Respected mayor , we need your help / advice / opinion.	datuk baandaa yaang dee hormatee kaamee purlookaan baantoowaan / naasey haat / pendaapaat aanda
Local:	Yes.	Ya

Checkpoints

Malays on the peninsula may be familiar with international checkpoints. All vehicular traffic in and out of Singapore passes through the Woodlands Checkpoint, which spans the equivalent of 31 soccer fields.[181]

© Danny Howard
Thailand-Malaysia border crossing

Exchange 58: Where is the nearest checkpoint?

Soldier:	Where is the nearest checkpoint?	dee maana pondok pemereeksaa aan turdekaat?
Local:	It's two kilometers.	eeya nya doer keelomeetur jaaw

The Malaysian Government Multipurpose Card (GMPC), known as MyKad, is a standard credit-card-sized plastic card with an embedded microchip. The card was introduced in 2001 and progressively extended to the entire population over the age of 18. The card displays several items of information and is encrypted with biometric data.[182] Information can be uploaded by multiple government agencies, including the Road Transportation Department which issues driver's licenses. The MyKad is required for many transactions including opening a bank account. In addition, it is increasingly used for commercial transactions such as checking into a hotel via a card reader.[183]

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[180] *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. Scott, James. "Chapter 6: Stretching the Truth: Ideology at Work [p. 209.]" 1985. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. http://books.google.com/books?id=YpB_Ft8Q294C&pg=PA209&dq=Weapons+of+the+Weak:+Everyday+Forms+of+Peasant+Resistance+landlord+duit+tidak+cukup&cd=1#v=onepage&q=&f=false

[181] Kajima News Notes. Vol. 11, Winter 2000. "New Woodlands Checkpoint: A Gateway to Singapore." http://www.kajima.com/news_events/news_notes/pdf/v11.pdf

[182] RogerClark.com. "MyKad-The Malaysian ID Card." 19 July 2005. http://www.rogerclarke.com/DV/MyKad.html

[183] The Star. Oh, Errol. "Be Smart About MyKad." 12 December 2009. http://biz.thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2009/12/12/business/5289211&sec=business

Exchange 59: Is this all the ID you have?

Soldier:	Is this all the ID you have?	inee saaja kaad pengenaalaan deeree yaang aandaa aada?
Local:	Yes.	Ya

DoD image
MyKad card

The MyKad also includes a citizen's religion. For Muslims, it has proved next to impossible to change this designation thus preventing them from marrying non-Muslims.[184] Muslims must also carry special photo identification of themselves and their spouses as proof of marriage. This confers the right to be in close proximity *(khalwat)* or alone together in a private place. MyKad cards are used to identify those whose conduct is subject to Shari'a law.[185] For example, in conservative Selangor state, convenience stores selling alcohol use the MyKad to ensure customers are not only over the age of 18 but are not Muslims, something for which the store could be penalized.[186]

Exchange 60: Please get out of the car.

Soldier:	Please get out of the car.	tolong kelooar daaree kereyta inee
Local:	OK.	Baayiklaah

Malaysians are familiar with the vehicle inspection routine. All cars must be registered and the driver must produce the appropriate documentation.

Exchange 61: Show us the car registration.

Soldier:	Show us the car registration.	toonjuk-kaan kaamee pendaaftaaraan kereyta inee
Local:	OK.	Baayiklaah

In Malaysia hunting guns are legal although they must be registered.

Exchange 62: Are you carrying any guns?

Soldier:	Are you carrying any guns?	aandaa baawa sbaaraang senjaata?
Local:	No.	Teedak

[184] Asia Sentinel. "Once a Muslim, Always a Muslim in Malaysia." 30 May 2007. http://www.asiasentinel.com/index.php?Itemid=199&id=515&option=com_content&task=view
[185] Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State. "Malaysia: International Religious Freedom Report, 2009." 26 October 2009. http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127277.htm
[186] The Star. "No Ban on Alcohol at Convenience Stores in Selangor." 14 August 2009. http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2009/8/14/nation/4520709&sec=nation

Chapter 6: Family Life

Introduction
While the extended family was traditionally important to Malays, urbanization has accelerated the trend toward nuclear families.

© Lan Rasso
Malaysian family

Exchange 63: Does your family live here?

Soldier:	Does your family live here?	keloowaarga aandaa teeng-gaal dee sinee?
Local:	Yes.	ya

The relative inability of Malays to accumulate wealth, in comparison to the ethnic Chinese, has been attributed to their view that the household is not an enduring unit. Therefore they do not engage in long-term, strategic planning to maximize family income by pooling resources.[187]

Exchange 64: Are you the only person in your family who has a job?

Soldier:	Are you the only person in your family who has a job?	aandaa se-orang saaja daalaam kelowaarga yaang mempoonyai pekurjaan?
Local:	No.	teedaak

Women may continue to work outside the home after they are married. Middle-class Malay families employ immigrant maids mainly from Indonesia, who until recently were expected to work seven days a week.[188] These domestic workers are responsible for housework and cooking in the event no adult family member is at home full-time or simply because the family can afford to hire help.[189]

Exchange 65: Are these people part of your family?

Soldier:	Are these people part of your family?	oraang-oraang inee sebaahgeeyaan daareepaada aahlee keloowaarga aandaa?
Local:	No.	teedaak

[187] Federal Research Division, U.S. Library of Congress. Barbara Leitch Lepoer, Ed. *Singapore: A Country Study*. "Chapter 2: The Society and Its Environment." 1989. http://countrystudies.us/singapore/23.htm
[188] ABS-CBN News, Agence France Presse. "Indonesian Maids in Malaysia to Have Weekly Day Off." 3 September 2009. http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/world/09/03/09/indonesian-maids-malaysia-have-weekly-day
[189] In mid 2009 Indonesia barred its nationals from seeking domestic work in Malaysia after numerous incidents of abuse came to light. The Malaysian Bar. Kandasamy, Darshini. "No Lifting of Freeze on Indonesian Maids." 25 December 2009. http://www.malaysianbar.org.my/legal/general_news/no_lifting_of_freeze_on_indonesian_maids.html

Shari'a law has been used to enforce the Islamic prohibitions on sex outside of marriage. Over New Year's Day 2010, police swept through budget hotels in Selangor state and detained 52 Malay Muslim couples who could not produce proof of marriage.[190]

Exchange 66: Is this your wife?

Soldier:	Is this your wife?	inee eestree aandaa?
Local:	Yes.	ya

The Status of Women

The Malays believe men possess larger amounts of *akal* (self-control, reason) while women are endowed with more *nafsu* (desire, emotion). Therefore the responsibility for safeguarding the virtue of women falls upon male members of the family.

Exchange 67: Do you have any brothers?

Soldier:	Do you have any brothers?	aandaa aada aabaang aataaw aadeyk lelaakee?
Local:	Yes.	ya aada

Yet in daily life actions such as drinking, adultery, and gambling show that men are prone to *nafsu*.

Exchange 68: Are you married?

Soldier:	Are you married?	aanda soodaah burkaaween?
Local:	Yes.	ya soodaah

Women were kept out of sight during men's prayer presumably because men could not concentrate in their presence. Women, by contrast, had no such problems with self-control but were forced to navigate in a world where established views conflicted with reality. As noted by a Swedish anthropologist, one Malay woman reasoned that if men were able to control their *nafsu*, they would have no reason to complain about female attire.[191]

© Angela Sevin
Preparing for prayer service

[190] New York Times, Associated Press. "52 Couples Face Jail for Hotel Liaisons." 4 January 2010. http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2010/01/04/world/AP-AS-Malaysia-Amorous-Couples.html?ref=global-home

[191] *Submitting to God: Women and Islam in Urban Malaysia*. Frisk, Sylva. "Chapter 6: Becoming Mukmin [pp. 170–171]." 2009. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press. http://books.google.com/books?id=jqqBn3pqiZkC&pg=PA171&dq=Submitting+to+God:+Women+and+Islam+in+Urban+Malaysia+akal+Zainah&cd=1#v=onepage&q=&f=false

Marriage and Divorce

Weddings

© Fendy Zaidan
Contract signing

Malay marriages are marked by a series of steps, including identifying a suitable mate, exchanging betrothal gifts, participating in a religious ceremony, presenting the couple to the public, and celebrating with a feast or banquet (*kenduri*). In the first stage, the parents of a male who is of age seek a suitable wife for their son. Close friends are enlisted as representatives (*wakil*) in the search (*merisik*) for potential mates. After a candidate has been identified, the *wakil* meet with the young lady and her parents to gauge the family's interest in the match. No formal proposal is extended at this stage. If both parties view the match as desirable, a second meeting takes place with the *wakil* again acting as representatives for the male side. At this time the two families reach agreement on the major issues such as the date of the engagement ceremony (*meminang*). There is also the amount of money the groom's family will contribute to wedding-related expenses (*wang belanja*) incurred by the bride's family. This is distinct from the dowry (*mas kahwin*), which is paid directly by the man to his wife—not to her parents. The base amount of the *mas kahwin* is typically set by the Islamic Religious Council in each state, but a groom may give his bride in excess of that amount.[192] The date and time for the actual wedding ceremony and feast (*kenduri*) are also set. In addition, penalties are agreed upon in the event either party backs out prior to the wedding.

On the day of the *meminang*, the bridegroom's family sends betrothal gifts (*hantaran*) to the home of his fiancé. The *hantaran* items are agreed upon in advance and presented on trays carried by female members of his family. Essential items include: 1) a gold or diamond ring, which will be placed on the bride's finger by a close female relative of the groom; 2) a betel-leaf container (*tepak sirih*) filled with betel nut fragments and lime wrapped in fresh palm leaves (*sirih*); 3) a complete set of clothes for the bride including a scarf or shawl (*kain tudung*), handbag, and shoes. The bride's family will reciprocate with a greater number of trays, though they must be of an odd number. A velvet cap (*songkok*), a prayer mat (*sejadah*), and a set of clothes for the bridegroom are common gifts. This gift exchange establishes the engagement and is followed by a *kenduri* prepared by the bride's family for the groom's party who delivered the gifts.

The religious ceremony (*akad nikah*) legalizes the marriage. It is also where the groom presents the dowry money to his bride, usually in the form of a bank draft. Originally conducted between the bride's father or other male relative and the groom, it is now the purview of a religious officer (*kadhi*) or priest (*imam*) who establishes that both parties enter into the union freely. Then, seated on the floor and facing the groom, the *imam* will ask: "Musa bin Osman (groom), I hereby marry you to Aisyah binti Abdullah (bride)

[192] Tawau City News Forum. "The Malay Wedding." 2009. http://www.etawau.com/HTML/Culture/MalayWedding/MalayWedding.htm

with *mas kahwin* of Ringgit 22.50 cash." He will then shake the groom's hand, and the groom should respond without hesitation: "I accept (or agree) to marry Aisyah binti Abdullah with *mas kahwin* of Ringgit 22.50 cash."[193]

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Bringing gifts

The *imam* will then ask if the witnesses heard the groom. If they respond in the affirmative, the couple is considered man and wife in the eyes of the state and religious community. The groom slips a ring on his wife's finger. Before the *imam* departs, he will recite prayers for a happy and blissful marriage to the couple, who have undergone government mandated premarital counseling. The *imam* reads to the couple the means by which Muslims may seek a divorce as well the consequences of reciting divorce intentions—a privilege afforded only to men—as well as the avenues open to women who seek to terminate their marriages.

The most anticipated part of the wedding festivities follows the formal marriage ceremony, during which the bride may appear in multiple outfits. It is initiated by the arrival of the groom at the bride's home to take her from her family to his home. He is not allowed to enter the home until she sends him a betel leaf. This signifies she awaits the arrival of her betrothed. Led by a procession (*berarak*) of womenfolk, he walks slowly towards her family's home. The *berarak* is trailed by a group of musicians, beating various types of drums such as the hand-held *kompang.* Decorative flower bearers (*bunga manggar*) accompany the musicians. After being ushered in, the wedding party takes their seats in a special area of the house set up for a martial arts (*pencak silat*) performance. This is intended to show welcome and to convey the bride's family's respect for their new son-in-law.

Exchange 69: I wish you both happiness.

Soldier:	I wish you both happiness.	saaya oochaapkaan slaamaat berbaahaagyaa kepaada aandaa berdoowa
Local:	We are honored.	kaamee saangaat bertreema kaasey

[193] Pahang-Delights. "Akad Nikah (Traditional Malay Wedding Vows)." No date. http://www.pahang-delights.com/akad-nikah.html

This is all the lead up to the *bersanding*, which literally means "enthronement," a custom that is Hindu in origin. The couple, dressed in brocade suits, sit on a dais (*pelamin*) above everyone else, like royals. Family members from both sides take turns applying *henna* on their hands. Family may also apply rice and a flour mixture to the newlyweds' palms and foreheads. This ritual is intended to cleanse both parties and protect them from evil influences. The festivities conclude with a lavish *kenduri*, which can follow immediately or be postponed for up to a few months, to accommodate distant family members.

© think_tank / flickr.com
Bride with henna on her hands

Exchange 70: Congratulations on your wedding!

Soldier:	Congratulations on your wedding!	taaneeyaa aataas perkaahweenaan aandaa!
Local:	We are honored you could attend.	kaamee saangaat baanga aandaa daapaat daataang

Devout Muslims frown on expensive extravaganzas as un-Islamic, regarding them as a desire for social recognition rather than to please Allah. More religious couples can opt to dispense with the *bersanding* and make the *akad nikah* the focal point of their wedding.

Polygamy is also part of the Islamic faith. Muslim men are allowed four wives, a practice whose original purpose was to provide for widows and orphans.[194] Yet few enter into polygamous marriages for that reason today. This leads both proponents and opponents of polygamy to base their arguments on Islam.[195] In reality, few Malay men are in a position to support more than one family.

[194] Asian Pacific Post. "Malaysia's Polygamy Debate." 10 November 2006. http://www.asianpacificpost.com/portal2/ff8080810ecef453010ecf049cc50007_Malaysia_s_polygamy_debate.do.html

[195] *Polygamy: A Cross-Cultural Analysis*. Zeitzen, Miriam Koktvedgaard. "Chapter 4: Muslim Polygyny in Malaysia [p. 70]." 2008. Oxford, UK: Berg Publishers. http://books.google.com/books?id=WIzHjpTJgdQC&pg=PT75&lpg=PT75&dq=malay+polygamy+muslims&source=bl&ots=-dCpcUxlmZ&sig=M9O94dkGlLllzr79TmvjRK3GdMY&hl=en&ei=BtU8S52jPITesgPfnIi-BA&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=2&ved=0CA0Q6AEwAQ#v=onepage&q=malay%20polygamy%20muslims&f=false

Divorce

© Alessio Brunozzi
Malaysian woman

Muslim men are allowed to divorce their wives simply by saying "I divorce you" (*talaq*) three times. This is typically carried out in front of the woman and an Islamic jurist (*kadhi*). A controversial 2003 ruling by a Shari'a court that decreed a man could divorce his wife via text message generated a great deal of attention.[196] In this case, the message was sent by a man informing his wife he would end their marriage in the event she failed to return immediately from her mother's home, where she had sought refuge after a quarrel. The Shari'a court ruled that the husband had given his wife adequate notice and upheld the divorce. Henceforth, an unambiguous divorce text message is treated as "any written letter"; the husband need only appear in court to receive the decree. It was the message, not the means in which it was conveyed, that was important from the court's perspective. Objections were raised concerning the inability to verify identity in texting, as opposed to the written medium.[197] Moreover, the ruling raised concerns that this could lead to divorce based on heat of the moment passions. In Singapore, for example, problems that prompt Malay couples to divorce are often tolerated or handled through family mediation by Chinese and Indians for whom the stigma of divorce is a lot greater.[198] The ruling stands.

[196] BBC News. "Malaysia Permits Text Message Divorce." 27 July 2003. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/3100143.stm

[197] Law and Religion, Rutgers University. Taylor, Eric. "Cellular Phone Divorces-Malaysia Permits Husbands to Divorce Their Wives Via Text Message." No date. http://www.lawandreligion.com/new_devs/RJLR_ND_75.pdf

[198] Federal Research Division, U.S. Library of Congress. Barbara Leitch Lepoer, Ed. *Singapore: A Country Study*. "Chapter 2: The Society and Its Environment." 1989. http://countrystudies.us/singapore/23.htm

Life Stages

Childbirth and Infancy

© Zamri Baseri
The first haircutting

Malay women undergo special rituals during their first pregnancies. At seven months, which was historically determined by a midwife (*bidan*) and is now determined by a woman's doctor, there is an all-female ceremony called *melenggang perut* to pray for an easy delivery and healthy baby.[199] The preferred days are Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, considered auspicious for expectant mothers. The Quran is read as a midwife massages the expectant mother's abdomen while she is lying flat on a piece of sarong or cloth being rocked gently side to side by pulling the sarong. In the past, it was more elaborate and included a coconut shell to determine the child's sex depending on whether it landed up or down. Now sex is determined by ultrasound.[200] The *melenggang perut* has become the equivalent of a Western baby shower in which a first-time mother receives reassurance from women who have already given birth.

The ceremonial first hair-cutting (*cukur jambul*) for a baby, an event to which relatives and friends are invited, is typically held 44 days after birth, signaling the end of confinement (*pantang*) for the mother. After a passage is read from the Quran, the new father or mother holds the infant while some of those present, who typically include senior members of the family, representatives of the community, and members of the clergy, in turn snip off a lock of the child's hair. The clippings are carefully put into either a bowl of water or a young coconut cut and shaped into a bowl. In some families, the accumulated hair will be weighed and an equivalent monetary donation will be made to the poor and needy. It is customary for those who are accorded the honor of cutting the baby's hair to present the child with a token gift, although it is not obligatory. Once the ceremony ends, the hair is buried traditionally in the yard. A banquet is held afterwards to celebrate this rite of passage.[201]

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[199] Pahang-Delights. "Melenggang Perut Ceremony in Pahang." 2005–2010. http://www.pahang-delights.com/melenggang-perut.html
[200] Bahasa-Maalysia-Simple-Fun. "Welcoming the First Baby According to Malay Culture." No date. http://www.bahasa-malaysia-simple-fun.com/malay-culture.html
[201] Babycenter Singapore. "Baby Traditions: Malay Cukur Jambul." 2010. http://www.babycenter.com.sg/baby/traditions/cukur-jambul/

Childhood and Schooling
Malay parents have the primary responsibility for teaching correct behavior to their children. They are regarded as clear authority figures to be obeyed without question by their offspring.[202]

© Lan Rasso
School girls

Exchange 71: Are these your children?

Soldier:	Are these your children?	inee aanaak-aanaak aandaa?
Local:	Yes.	Ya

Primary and secondary education is free in Malaysia, although only the first six years are compulsory.[203]

Exchange 72: Is there a school nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a school nearby?	dekaat sinee aada skolaah?
Local:	Yes.	ya aada

Students start school at age seven and complete Standard 1 to Standard 6 (the six compulsory years). They then continue to lower secondary for three years and upper secondary for two years. When each level is completed, students take a standardized test. Under the previous secondary school curriculum, the test at the end of lower secondary determined whether they pursued a science or liberal arts-based curriculum; now students are allowed to select between two and four elective subjects.[204]

Exchange 73: Do your children go to school?

Soldier:	Do your children go to school?	aanaak-aanaak aandaa purgee ke skolaah?
Local:	Yes.	ya

Ethnic Malays are heavily favored in post-secondary educational institutions due to government quotas, which reserve the majority of seats for them.

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[202] *European Journal of Social Sciences.* Volume 10, No. 1. Keshavarz, Somayeh and Bahurudin Rozumah. "Parenting Style in a Collectivist Culture of Malaysia." 2009. http://www.eurojournals.com/ejss_10_1_07.pdf
[203] Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, U.S. Department of State. "Profile: Malaysia." July 2009. http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2777.htm
[204] *Going to School in East Asia.* Loo, Seng Piew "Chapter 9: Schooling in Malaysia [pp. 217–218, 221]. Postiglione, Gerard A. and Jason Tan, Eds. 2007. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press. http://books.google.com/books?id=-myD_P0_QT4C&pg=PA207&dq=schooling+in+malaysia&cd=2#v=onepage&q=schooling%20in%20malaysia&f=false

The Elderly

In Malaysia those over age 60 are defined as elderly.[205] Traditionally, they were cared for by their children. The migration of many able-bodied people from their native villages (*kampung*) to the city has forced some elderly to care for themselves, and sometimes grandchildren too, if both parents work long hours in distant locales.

© Lan Rasso
Elderly woman

Exchange 74: Did you grow up here?

Soldier:	Did you grow up here?	aandaa dee besaarkaan dee sinee?
Local:	No.	teedaak

As a result of changing demographics, the government has formulated a National Policy on the Elderly aimed at "creating a society of elderly people who are contented and possess a high sense of *self worth* and *dignity*, by *optimizing their self potential* and ensuring that they enjoy *every opportunity* as well as [the] *care and protection* [of] members of their family, society and nation."[206] To what extent the government can legislate care of the elderly by their family members and communities, rather than providing those services, is unclear.

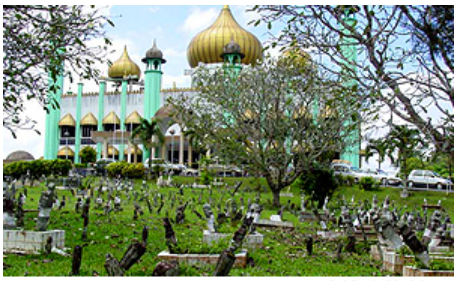
Exchange 75: Is this your entire family?

Soldier:	Is this your entire family?	inee semoowa aahlee keloowaarga aandaa?
Local:	Yes.	ya

[205] Social Welfare Department, Government of Malaysia. "National Policy for the Elderly." 2 November 2009. http://www.jkm.gov.my/jkm/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&catid=35:dasarpelan-tindakan&id=86:dasar-warga-tua-negara&Itemid=280&lang=en

[206] International Development Research Centre. Sim, Ong Fon. "Chapter 4: Ageing in Malaysia: A Review of National Policies and Programmes." No date. http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-28476-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html

Funerals



© Mindy McAdams
Muslim graveyard

As Muslims, Malays adhere to Islamic burial rites that include burial within 24 hours of death. First, the body (*mayat*) is thoroughly washed by a member of the same sex as the deceased and then held in the lap of the primary mourner, typically the eldest male son or closest relative. Afterwards, camphorated water is rubbed over the corpse, which is then wrapped in a white shroud. The face is left uncovered so bereaved relatives may kiss the dead person's forehead before the *mayat* is placed in the coffin. The coffin may be made or purchased the same day rather than prepared in advance. It is carried out of the house in stages. First the coffin is positioned across the doorway threshold both inside and outside the home while a prayer is said. The coffin is then moved a little further out the door. This is repeated three times and accompanied by a short prayer each time. After the third time, the coffin is carried from the home down the front steps. Outside it is placed on a decorated platform typically shouldered by mourners who proceed to the cemetery for burial. Should the funeral take place on a Friday, the coffin will first be carried to the mosque so onlookers can say extra prayers for the deceased before the mourners go to the cemetery.

Upon arrival at the final resting place, the *mayat* is lifted out of the coffin and laid in the freshly dug grave on its right side, facing Mecca. The coffin is placed over it, acting as a cover rather than an encasement.[207] When the grave is filled in, another prayer (*talkin*) is said. Three days after the funeral relatives and close friends are invited to the home of the deceased for a meal. Further observances will occur on the 7th, 20th, 40th, and 100th days. Henceforth, the death will be commemorated on the anniversary.

Exchange 76: My condolences.

Soldier:	I would like to give my condolences to you and your family.	saaya eengeen mengoochaapkaan taakzeeya kepaada aandaa daan kelooaarga
Local:	Thank you.	treema kaasey

On the evening of the burial the family hosts a *kenduri* for the community. The *kenduri* is supposed to be modest, reflecting its origins as a communal meal. Others contributed dishes, enabling the grieving family to concentrate on mourning and acceptance of the death. However, the trend is toward a more lavish banquet provided by the family. The women prepare all the food while men concentrate on the religious element, specifically the prayer.[208]

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[207] MyOneStopSarawak. "Some Malay Customs and Ceremonies." No date. http://www1.sarawak.com.my/org/hornbill/my/swk/borneo/malays/index.htm

[208] *Submitting to God: Women and Islam in Urban Malaysia*. Frisk, Sylva. "Chapter 5: Transforming Rituals: Claiming Public Religious Place [pp. 142–143]." 2009. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press. http://books.google.com/books?id=jqqBn3pqiZkC&pg=PA141&dq=Submitting+to+God:+Women+and+Is

Exchange 77: Be strong.

Soldier:	Please be strong.	haaraap aandaa taabaah
Local:	We will try.	kaamee aakaan chooba

There is continuing dispute over the religious significance of *kenduri*, reflecting distinctions between Islam and custom (*adat*). Instead of discouraging feasts, more devout Muslims have endeavored to increase the *kenduri's* conformity with Islam such as donating a portion of the food to the poor, thereby reducing waste which is often generated in an effort to gain social prestige.[209] Donating to the poor can gain merit for the living, but not for the deceased.

Naming Conventions

© Lan Rasso
Young girls

Malay names are constructed with a given name followed by *bin* (for men) or *binti* (for women) before a father's given name. One of the sons of Mahathir bin Mohamad, the former Prime Minister, is named Mokhzani bin Mahathir. The bin and binti component can be omitted, particularly in less formal situations. Puan Bahiyah binti Aziz indicates the person is a married female (*puan*) whose first name is Bahiyah, daughter of Aziz. Those who have completed a pilgrimage (*hajj*) to Mecca add *haji* or *hajjah* as a prefix in formal settings.[210] Thus, after the *hajj* Mohammad Yusoff becomes Haji Mohammad Yusof. Finally, when addressing Malays it is important to realize that some Arabic names do not count as first names but are part of double names, such as Abdul and Mohammad for boys or Nur and Siti for girls. Thus, Abdul Rahman bin Osman would be addressed as Abdul Rahman, not Abdul or Rahman.[211] With Malaysia's openness to global influences, Malay parents are moving away from traditional names and instead creating Malay variations of names familiar throughout most of the world. Rayyan and Jayden have become popular names for boys and Qistina, Qaseh, Alya, and Arissa for girls.[212] Siblings rarely refer to each other by name, instead it is by birth order.[213]

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lam+in+Urban+Malaysia+transforming+rituals+claiming+public+religious+space&cd=1#v=onepage&q=&f=false

[209] The role of banquets in acquiring social prestige was identified in *The Rational Peasant: The Political Economy of Rural Society in Vietnam.* Popkin, Samuel L. 1979. Berkeley: University of California Press. http://books.google.com/books?id=hFUZGoGrvT8C&printsec=frontcover&dq=The+Rational+Peasant:+The+Political+Economy+of+Rural+Society+in+Vietnam&cd=1#v=onepage&q=&f=false

[210] Language and Learning Unit, University of South Australia. "What Do I Call You? An Introduction to Chinese, Malay and Hindu Names." 2 February 2009. http://www.unisa.edu.au/ltu/students/start/first/meet/names.asp

[211] Some Southeast Asian Junk. "Naming Conventions; Or, Why TP's Bibliography Will Be Confusing." 15 June 2005. http://indolaysia.typepad.com/some_southeast_asian_junk/2005/06/naming_conventi.html

[212] Baby Center Malaysia. "Top Malaysian Baby Names 2009." 2009. http://www.babycenter.com.my/pregnancy/naming/top-malaysian-names-2009/

[213] Translation Journal. Vol. 11, No. 3. Yusoff, Radiah. "Translating Kinship Terms to Malay." 2007. http://accurapid.com/journal/41malay.htm