

A History of Malaysia



**Barbara Watson Andaya
and Leonard Y. Andaya**

Macmillan Asian Histories Series

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For Elise and Alexis

Foreword

Although a small country, Malaysia has been given more than its share of attention by foreign scholars especially those from the English-speaking world. Two reasons perhaps account for this. Malaysia, since the mid-nineteenth century, has had a flourishing economy; its society is unique — it is, one might say 'Asia in miniature'.

Writings on the Malay Peninsula, in English, paralleled the growth of British economic interests in the region in the first half of the nineteenth century as it became necessary to introduce the area to the British public. It was at this juncture that what might be considered the first history of the Malay Peninsula, in English, was published — *The Malayan Peninsula Embracing Its History, Manners and Customs of the Inhabitants, Politics, Natural History &c. from its earliest Records* — in 1834. The author (P. J. Begbie), a military officer, devoted much space to a discussion of the Naning War (1831–2) in which he had participated; the book nonetheless dealt rather elaborately with the history as well as various other aspects (including botany) of the Malay States.

T. J. Newbold, another professional soldier, published his *Political and Statistical Accounts of the British Settlements in the Straits of Malacca* in two volumes in 1839. Quite apart from providing a useful political and social history of the Malay states, this work is still considered a mine of information on the contemporary economy of the Straits Settlements and the Peninsula.

The next attempt to write a history of the Malay Peninsula, however, occurred more than fifty years later. Published in 1906, Frank Swettenham's *British Malaya: An Account of the Origin and Progress of British Influence in Malaya* was more an apologia for British colonialism than an exposition of Malay history and society as Begbie's and Newbold's books had been. Indeed Swettenham practically established the framework for Malayan history which remained unquestioned for the next fifty years. It is his view of Malayan history which the modern generation of scholars describe as *Euro-centric*.

Following upon Swettenham's footsteps came R. J. Wilkinson and R. O. Winstedt, two officials considered authorities on Malay culture, literature and history much as Swettenham himself was then revered as an expert on things Malay. Originally interested in the Malays, Wilkinson first wrote his 'History of the Peninsular Malays' as part of a larger project entitled *Papers on Malay Subjects*; it was published in

1908. Subsequently, it was revised and expanded to include the establishment of British political control and was published in 1923 as *A History of the Peninsular Malays with Chapters on Perak and Selangor*. Winstedt was the more prolific of the two. He edited *Malaya: The Straits Settlements and the Federated and Unfederated Malay States* (1923), wrote 'A History of Malaya' (1935) as well as 'A History of Malay Literature' (1939) both in the *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*; *Britain and Malaya 1786-1941* (1944); *The Malays: A Cultural History* (1947) and *Malaya and Its History* (1948). Although both Wilkinson and Winstedt were avid students of Malay literature and culture, they, like Swettenham, saw Malayan history largely in political terms and, more specifically, as the story of the conquerors rather than the conquered, the rulers rather than the ruled.

The 1930s, however, saw the appearance of the American, Rupert Emerson, whose valuable work — *Malaysia: A Study in Direct and Indirect Rule* (1937) — elicited from Frank Swettenham the comment that it was 'full of highly contentious writing'. Emerson was less concerned with writing Malaysian history than a critique of Imperialism. Still his book provided a refreshing contrast to those of Winstedt (on Malayan history) if only because he was under no constraint to reveal frankly the motives behind the formulation of colonial policies.

For a period of more than fifty years since the publication of Swettenham's *British Malaya*, Malayan history had been cast in a particular mould, Emerson's *Malaysia* notwithstanding. In making the first attempt to reshape it, K. G. Tregonning (formerly Raffles Professor of History first of the University of Malaya and later the University of Singapore) remarked that for too long Malayan history had been viewed 'from the deck of a foreign ship'. He would like to take Malaya itself 'as my frame of reference, . . . considering the activities of the many peoples in it as my interest'. His book *A History of Modern Malaya* (1964) broke new ground even if Malaysian historians today are of the opinion that it has obvious shortcomings: it is too preoccupied with modern developments and hence completely relegates the indigenous society to a position of obscurity and inconsequence.

In 1969, J. M. Gullick, ex-Malayan Civil Servant and a social anthropologist by training, published a book entitled *Malaysia* which treated the new nation (formed in 1963) not as a unified whole but as three separate entities: Malaya, Singapore and the Borneo Territories. His conceptualization of Malayan history is nonetheless interesting. It does not differ substantially from Tregonning's but his approach is clearly influenced by his social science training. While not neglecting chronology, he provides more than just a political and economic perspective of Malayan history but, like all earlier authors who had ventured to write standard texts on Malayan history, he was

unable to furnish an integrated view of the subject and, in particular, to provide a continuous thread linking the Melaka sultanate with the period of modern developments. In this respect, the present work by Leonard and Barbara Andaya is a major triumph.

The writings of Leonard and Barbara Andaya on the eighteenth-century history of the Malay states have, in the past few years, contributed immensely to the enrichment of Malaysian historiography. Using largely Dutch sources and without ignoring indigenous material, they have not only filled long-existing gaps but corrected a number of erroneous dates, speculations and assumptions.

Apart from being an outstanding example of how Malaysian history can be treated as a cohesive whole, the strength of the present work lies in its treatment of the pre-nineteenth century period. Tracing the origin of the Melaka sultanate to its Sumatran roots, Leonard and Barbara Andaya proceed to explain not only the factors which contributed to the growth of that sultanate but also the beginnings of Malay political culture as we know it today. Other authors have tended to see Malay society as of marginal importance for the period 1511–1800 but here the development of the indigenous society is followed through until the nineteenth century which saw the emergence of a more complex society.

For many years historians have doubted the plausibility of writing a standard work on Malayan/Malaysian history which does not depend heavily on the colonial presence as the pivot. Their treatment of Malaysian history (in particular the period 1400–1945) tends to be fragmented. When confronted with the need also to integrate the history of the peninsula with that of Sabah and Sarawak the task appeared to them insurmountable. Admittedly, it is difficult to marry disparate parts but for the historian who is perceptive it is possible to discern common denominators.

Quite apart from having skilfully woven together the entire span of Malaysian history, Leonard and Barbara Andaya have not, unlike previous authors, neglected to discuss education and religion (in particular Islam). Therefore, while the work is comparatively more tightly structured, it is also more comprehensive and the authors have presented a viewpoint which is not only new but more in keeping with current local interpretation of Malaysian history.

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Preliminary Note

The new spelling system adopted by Indonesia and Malaysia has been followed for Malay words. The most notable features of this system are the use of 'c' and 'sy' respectively to represent English ch/Dutch tj and English sh/Dutch sj. The spelling of place names follows current practice; for example, Melaka and Kuching.

The spelling of titles in Malaysia has not yet been standardized. In this book most honorifics have been rendered in the new spelling (thus Syah, not Shah), but some states still retain the old form for state titles, for example 'Dato' rather than 'Datuk'. Where relevant this differentiation has been maintained. 'Dato' has also been used when an individual held that title but died before the new spelling was introduced (for example, Dato Onn). Chinese words have been romanized according to the Wade-Giles system since pinyin is not yet widely used in the literature on Malaysia.

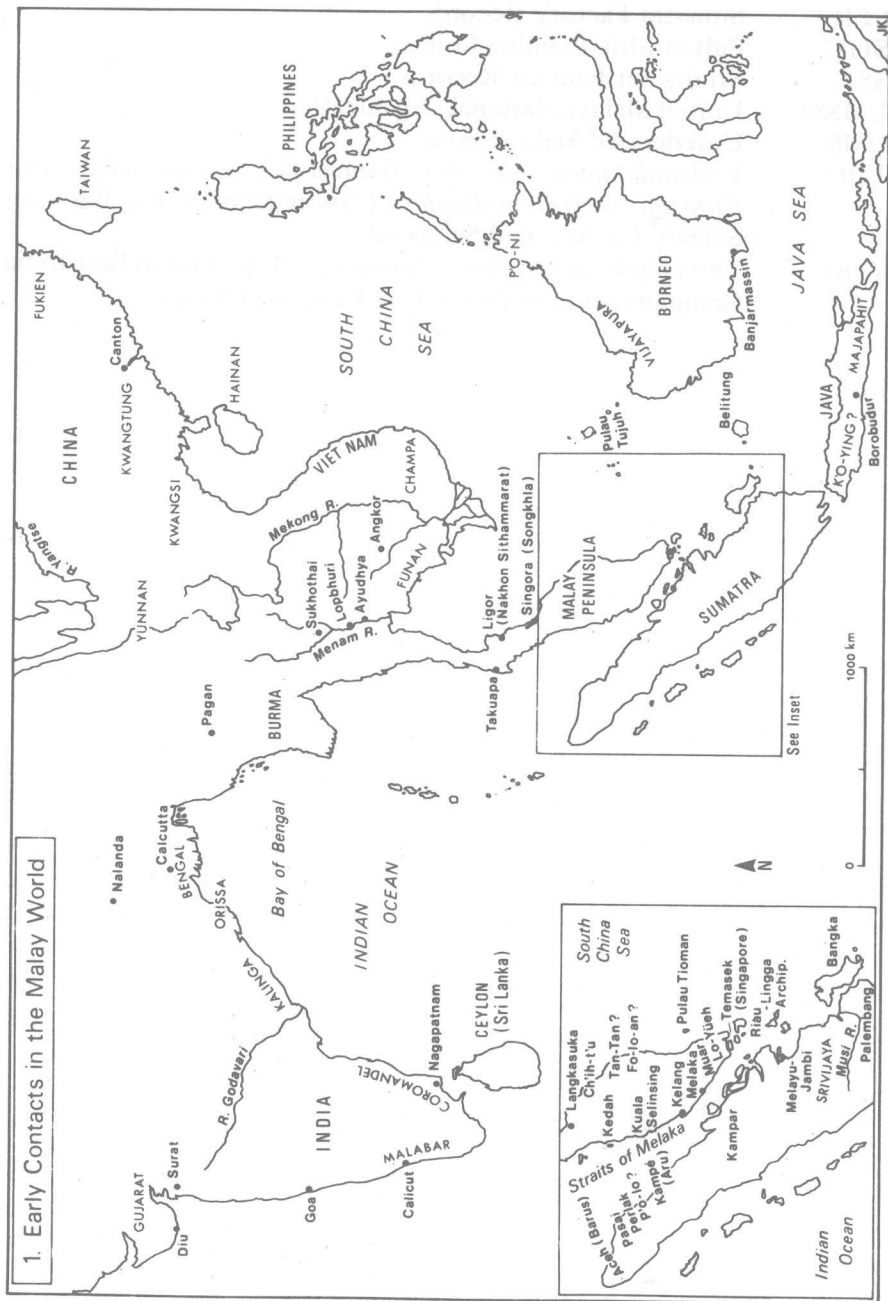
All dollar figures quoted are in Straits (later Malayan/Malaysian) dollars or *ringgit*. In the nineteenth century the value of the Straits dollar fluctuated, but in 1904 it was pegged to sterling at the rate of M\$1.00 to 2s. 4d. (about US\$.40–60 in pre-World War II terms). From 1947 to 1974 M\$3.00 was equal to about US\$1.00. The *ringgit* has appreciated since 1973 when Malaysia opted out of the Sterling Area and floated the *ringgit* against the US dollar and the British pound. The value of the *ringgit* towards the end of 1981 was approximately M\$2.22 to US\$1.00.

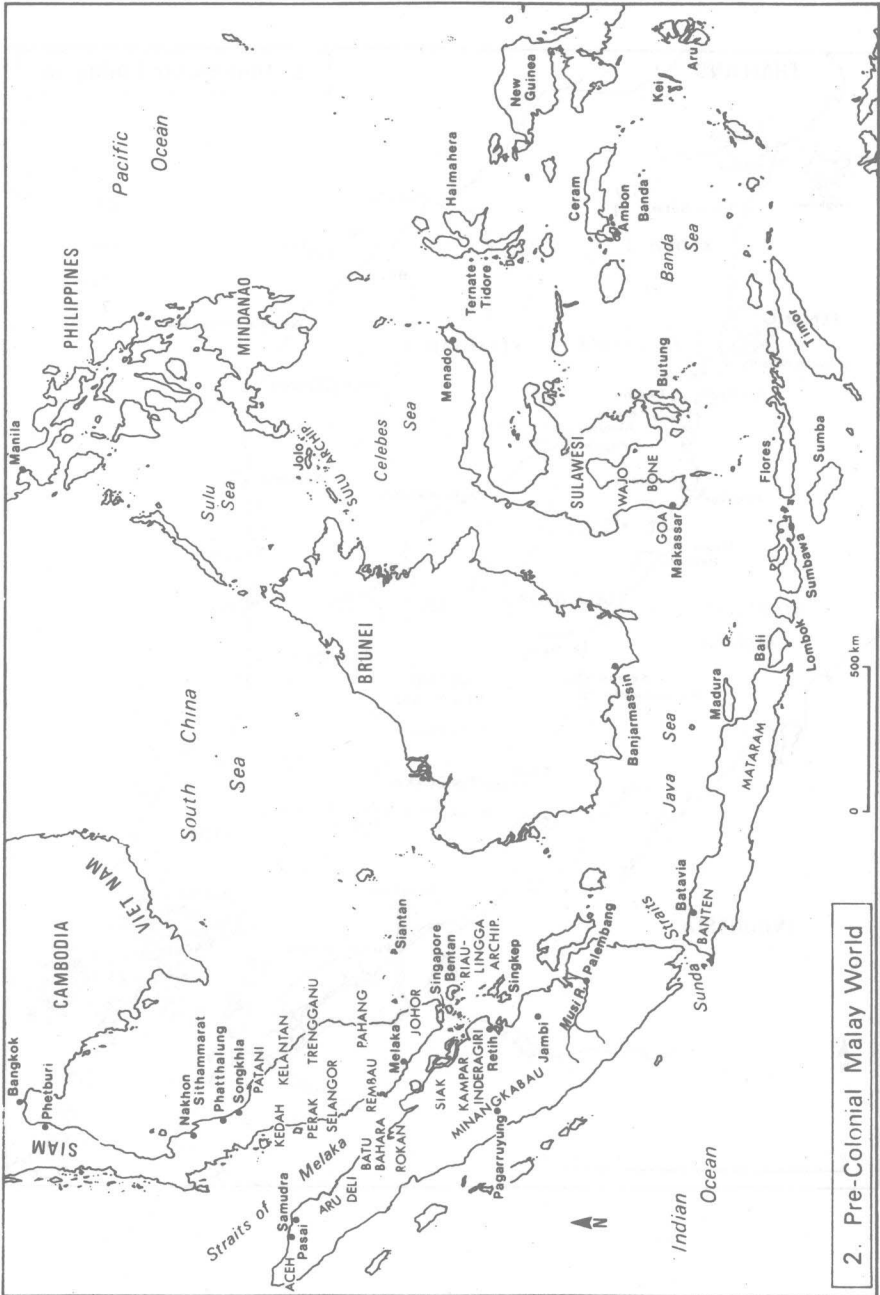
Throughout the text the term 'Thai' refers to the ethnic group which came to settle in present-day Thailand, as well as to the citizen of that state which was officially decreed as Thailand in June 1939. Before the latter date the various Thai kingdoms are called by their specific names, such as Sukhothai and Ayudhya. The terms 'Siam' and 'Siamese' are used for the Thai kingdom and people reunified under the Chakri dynasty in 1782 until the official name change in 1939.

Abbreviations

ANU	Australian National University
ASA	Association of Southeast Asia
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BKI	<i>Bijdragen tot de Taal—, Land— en Volkenkunde</i> (Journal of the Royal Institute of Linguistics and Anthropology)
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
Cod. Or.	Codex Orientalis
DAP	Democratic Action Party
EIC	English East India Company
FAMA	Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority
FELDA	Federal Land Development Authority
FMS	Federated Malay States
FSGCP	Fort St George Council Papers
FWCP	Fort William Council Papers
Gerakan	Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia (Malaysian People's Movement)
GLU	General Labour Unions
JMBRAS	<i>Journal of the Malayan (later Malaysian) Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society</i>
JSBRAS	<i>Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society</i>
JSEAH	<i>Journal of Southeast Asian History</i>
JSEAS	<i>Journal of Southeast Asian Studies</i>
JSS	<i>Journal of the Siam Society</i>
KA	Koloniaal Archief (Colonial Archives)
KMT	Kuomintang (Chinese Nationalist Party)
MBRAS	Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society
MCA	Malayan Chinese Association
MCP	Malayan Communist Party
MCS	Malayan Civil Service
MIC	Malayan Indian Congress
MPAJA	Malayan Peoples Anti-Japanese Army
MRLA	Malayan Races Liberation Army
NCC	National Consultative Council
NEP	New Economic Policy
OB	Overgekomen Brieven (Incoming Correspondence)
PAP	People's Action Party
PAS	Parti Islam Sa-Melayu (Pan-Malayan Islamic Party)
PETA	Pembela Tanah Air (Defenders of the Fatherland)
PMFTU	Pan-Malayan Federation of Trade Unions

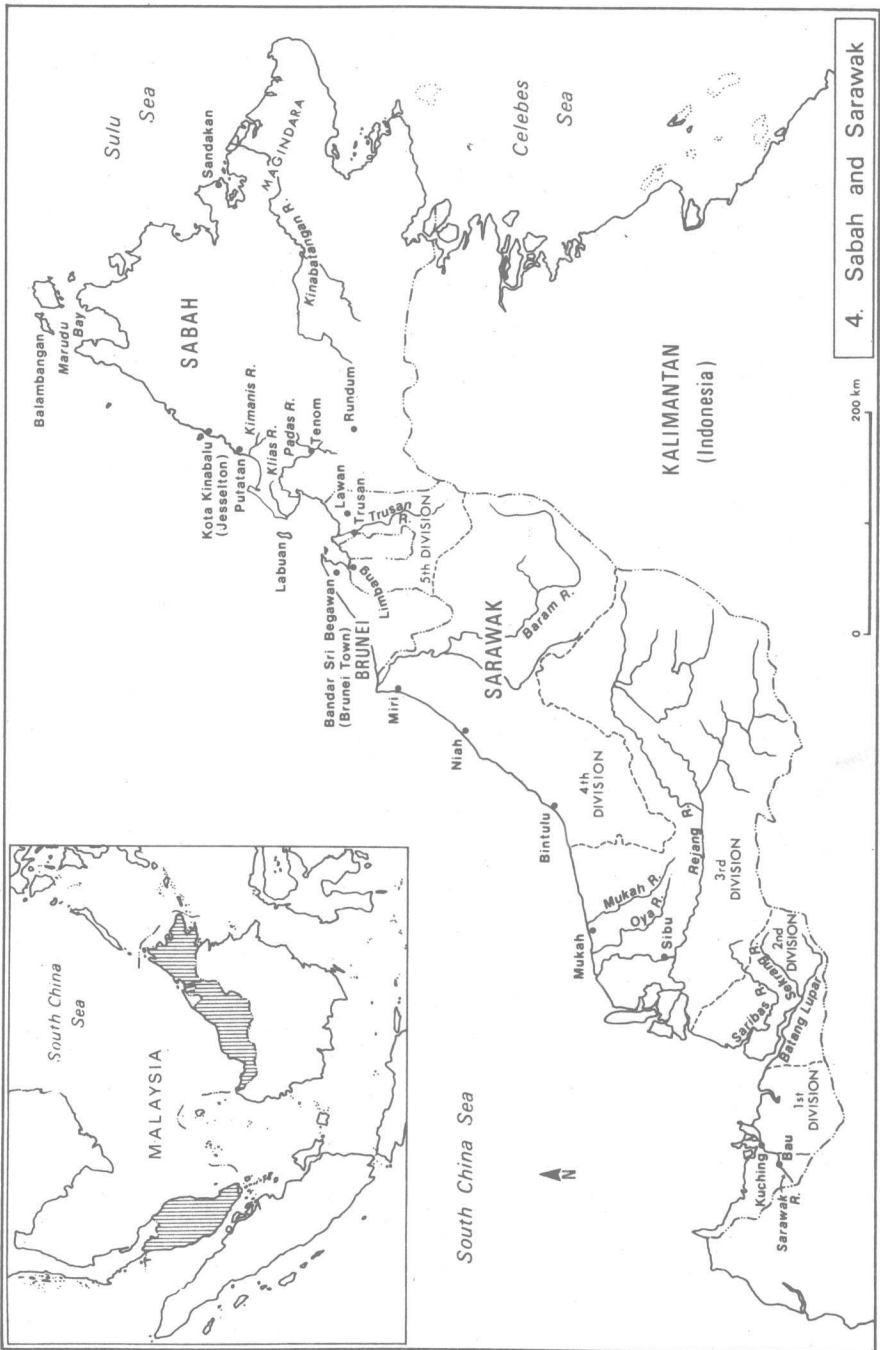
PPP	People's Progressive Party
SFR	Sumatra Factory Records
SITC	Sultan Idris Training College
SSR	Straits Settlements Records
UMNO	United Malays National Organization
UMS	Unfederated Malay States
VBG	<i>Verhandelingen van het Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen</i> (Proceedings of the Batavian Society for Arts and Sciences)
VOC	Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie (the United East India Company, i.e. the Dutch East India Company)





2. Pre-Colonial Malay World





4. Sabah and Sarawak