



The Peoples of



Malaysia,



Brunei,



& Singapore



The Peoples of Malaysia, Brunei, & Singapore

*After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude
that no one could count,
from every nation, tribe, people and language,
standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb.
They were wearing white robes
and were holding palm branches in their hands.
And they cried out in a loud voice:
“Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.”
Revelation 7:9-10 (NIV)*

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INTRODUCTION

Blessings for the “Peoples” of Three Incredible Countries

The Southeast Asian nations of Malaysia, Brunei, and Singapore are home to a multitude of many different people groups. Diverse in terms of economies, educational opportunities, political systems, and religions, these countries have large contrasts between rural and urban dwellers, the wealthy and the poor, the educated and uneducated, and the variety of beliefs. These three countries possess a wonderful diversity in number and complexity of ethnic groups (or “ethnè” as in Matthew 28.19).



An Open Market Along the Roadside

As a crossroad between three major Asian civilizations – Malay, Indian, and Chinese—these Southeast Asian nations have been greatly influenced by all. Other groups that exerted influence include Sri Lankan Buddhist monks, Chinese pilgrims, Muslim merchants, and Western colonizers. All left their traces. All of the great religions are represented: Hinduism flourishes mainly among the Indian peoples, while the Malay peoples profess Islam. In addition, Chinese civilization is alive and well with its various syncretistic forms of Buddhism, Taoism, animism, and ancestor worship.

These countries have made extensive effort to create a united national identity and pride in their respective nationalities. Overall, peace exists between the various ethnic groups in Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei. At the same time, many symbolic forms reinforce cultural self-awareness, self-identity, and ethnicity. Some symbolic forms are less obvious while other more obvious ones, such as language and religion, have reinforced the complexity that exists throughout the three countries. As a result, these three Southeast Asian nations are truly an amazing multi-cultural, multi-lingual, multi-religious, and multi-ethnic reality.

This book examines the diverse and complex populations of these three countries. More specifically, it introduces the multitude of people groups found in these three nations. These introductions are intentionally brief. The purpose of this book is not to be a detailed anthropological study since numerous ethnographies are already available.

This book is published in order that followers of Christ around the world can become more aware of these many peoples. Christ has calls His followers to be a blessing. Our calling is to see all peoples experience God’s fullest blessing and ultimately His salvation and to be truly at peace and reunited with the other peoples of the human family. Most of these peoples have been “unserved” by the Christian community in that we have not sought to pray for blessing and to go among them to share blessings. For this negligence, we ask God’s forgiveness and theirs. Therefore, this collection of “prayer profiles” of almost all of the people groups of Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei is meant as a tool so that many followers of Christ can:

1. Come to know, love and serve these numerous peoples.
2. Become more aware of the number and diversity of these peoples in these three countries.
3. Pray to the One True God that He will pour out true blessing and true peace on each of these peoples.
4. Pray that a full measure of abundant life and eternal salvation will be poured out among these peoples.
5. Pray that each ethnic group and each person among them will have the experience of personal relationship with God.
6. Be willing to go among these peoples to know and serve them.

As “Christ-followers,” we have experienced the saving power of Jesus. We believe Jesus Christ’s perfect life, death, resurrection and promised return is an incredible gift God has given to us. God has given us blessing upon blessing. Not only are we commanded to be a blessing and share our witness to the world, we also want to share all of the blessings we have received because of our gratitude and debt which cannot be repaid.

Therefore, the collective group who has produced this book offers it to the Christian Church so we can first pray for all of God’s blessings for these peoples, and then we can go among them to build friendships, and share peace and blessing.



Logging in Sarawak, Malaysia

Location

Located in the tropics, the Southeast Asian nations of Malaysia, Brunei, and Singapore straddle the South China Sea. Peninsular Malaysia, divided into a total of eleven states, is at the tip of mainland Southeast Asia while the states of Sabah and Sarawak are on the island of Borneo. Brunei rests between the Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak, while Singapore is a city-state located at the tip of Peninsular Malaysia.



Cameron Highlands of Malaysia

Temperatures in the lowlands are hot and humid while temperatures in the highlands range from mild to cool. The air quality ranges from very clear to moderately polluted to hazy, filled with smoke.

Rural areas include many oil palm and rubber plantations interspersed with thick rainforests. Seashore areas are abundant with fishing opportunities. Rice, tropical fruits, and other vegetable products grow in abundance in both lowland and highland areas. Malaysia especially enjoys a great tourism industry which can promote wonderful mountain and beach resorts. Travel in the rural areas ranges from major interstate-like highways to small dirt trails to accessibility only by boat.

Some of the most modern and advanced cities in the world are in these three countries including Singapore itself and Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia. These cities have some of the strengths and weaknesses of any major urban city: wonderful cultural opportunities, very modern technology, traffic jams, etc.

Socio-Economic Changes & Contrasts

Though these nations are rich in natural color and beauty, the effects of modernization, industrialization, and urbanization have changed many places in these three Southeast Asian nations, creating many contrasts. Golf courses are built, but rainforests are disappearing. These countries are known for the wonderful rich variety

of renowned cuisines from the Chinese, Malay, Indian, Thai, or Baba-Nyonya people. Fancy restaurants or hawker stalls (street-side vendors) serving these foods compete side by side with Western fast food restaurants which have become popular eateries and hang-outs for youth, students, and young adults.

Modern shopping malls are not an uncommon sight in most large cities with night markets selling similar items and articles on the street. Standing beside traditional kampong (village) housing and squatter dwellings, modern high rise condominiums and apartments have shot up in many cities. In these same modern cities, people dress in Western style clothing and executive suits, and then the same people dress in traditional clothes during special events or festival times.

Hi-tech telecommunications have not only come to these three Southeast Asian nations but are becoming one of their major “products.” Cell phones are in evidence everywhere. It is not uncommon to see one person driving a Mercedes Benz and another person riding a motorcycle with both talking to someone on their cell phones. Even in small towns, internet cafés have sprung up with many people having e-mail and internet access. Bank ATMs are available in most towns and all cities, allowing access to cash from one’s own bank account whether local or international. On the other end of the spectrum, some areas do not even have access to telephones, and village towns will often share one public phone among all of the people. In even more remote areas, cell phones are often the main means of keeping in touch with the outside world.

Media is also diverse in its broadcasting. In Malaysia, two of Malaysia’s television channels are government owned, broadcasting in the Malay language. A third television channel is commercially owned, showing English language news and documentaries, Chinese kung fu, and Chinese, Tamil, British, and American



Singapore Mall

films and sitcoms. Malaysia has at least two satellite television services, with multiple channels carrying movies, documentaries, sports, sitcoms, and the like in many languages and produced in many countries.

Clearly, these three Southeast Asian nations are lands full of socio-economic changes characterized by many contrasts. They are characterized as a melting pot of diversity and complexity. Yet, many contrasts remain among many ethnic groups and clusters living throughout Malaysia, Brunei, and Singapore.

People Groups & Clusters

Before proceeding, it is necessary to make a distinction between people groups and clusters. Max Weber gives the earliest comprehensive sociological definition of people groups, which he defines as,

those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonization and migration; this belief must be important for the propagation of group formation; conversely, it does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists. (Weber 1968:389. See also this influence on later scholars including Fredrik Barth, 1969; Charles Keyes, 1976; and Richard Jenkins, 1997).

What is significant in Weber's definition is his emphasis on the idea of subjective belief and historical factors. In the past few years, Christians have popularized the term "people groups" (rather than "nations") as a better translation for the Greek word "ethnè." Probably the most significant unified effort to define a "people group" came in March, 1982, as a result of the work of the Lausanne Strategy Working Group. This meeting defined a "people group" as,

A significantly large grouping of individuals who perceive themselves to have a common affinity for one another because of their shared language, religion, ethnicity, residence, occupation, class or caste, situation, etc. or combinations of these. [It is] the largest group within which the gospel can spread as a church planting movement without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance. (Winter 1989:12)

The above definition proposes that other factors beyond only ethno-linguistic ones determine the distinctiveness of a people group. As such, one can examine a certain population using a set of "broad stroke" factors. In doing so, a general sense of a distinctive identity can be developed which differentiates one people from another, and peoples can be "mapped" or located. While one must always remember that these "boundaries" can be porous and that overlap will occur, still distinctions can be made. Some of these boundaries between people groups are cultural, ethnic, religious, political, and

physical ones. While language is often a key identity factor, other factors include economic systems, customs and practices, behavioral patterns, etc. One factor or a combination of these factors might be the basis for deciding the distinctiveness of a people group within a certain population.

Ethnic factors deal with ancestral background and also constitute racial identification, the desire for endogamous marriages, and the preservation of family ties especially through observing norms at birth, marriage and death. Religious factors include what people claim as their faith plus how they observe and practice that faith. Political factors include such things as loyalty to the state or government, the need for commitment to and participation in the tasks of nation-building and, often in the background, how others govern the people. Other factors include support given to clan, district and other similar organizations which enhance solidarity. Physical factors include



A Tribal Iban with Tattoos

structural makeup (e.g. housing) of where the people reside plus geographical considerations (e.g. mountains, rivers, etc.). Ultimately, a major factor in research is understanding how a people identifies itself, and delineates itself from other groups.

For the most part, this book looks at "people group" ethno-linguistically. However, this book does not limit itself to just ethno-linguistic factors. The method chosen is to examine people groups from the viewpoint that people groups consist of people who entertain a subjective belief in being one people, whether that belief is determined by cultural, ethnic, religious, political, or physical factors.

For purposes of organization, this book clusters people groups together. Despite there being over two hundred people groups numbering over thirty million in these three Southeast Asian nations, this book uses the following clusters for the multitude of people groups:

1. Malay Cluster
2. Sabah Coastal Cluster
3. Sabah Interior Cluster
4. Sarawak Interior Cluster
5. Sarawak Coastal Cluster
6. Migrant Cluster
7. Chinese Cluster
8. Peranakan Cluster
9. Indian Cluster
10. Orang Asli Cluster

In the same way as “peoples” are delineated, this clustering is sometimes based on ethno-linguistic makeup while on other occasions it is based on occupation, geography, or some other common affinity.

Methodology

The research methodology was essentially qualitative as is most ethnographic research. It took place over a period of several years with people from a variety of backgrounds and expertise making valuable contributions. Some of these people were from these countries and some of them were from other countries. These profiles relied upon the anthropological tradition known as participant observation, (what other writers have already said about the people groups) as well as interviews with both insiders and outsiders of the many people groups.

Throughout the following pages, no personal names are used. Protecting informants and their communities has become a canon in anthropological research.

The scope of the research was both broad and deep in the effort to accurately portray these people groups and to discern how much the Christian community had sought to bless them. None of the cultural profiles claim to be exhaustive ethnographies. Instead, they summarize who the people are, what their lives are like, what they believe, and what are their needs. Their purpose is to stimulate prayer and involvement with these peoples.

Some of the cultural profiles are a concise one-page profile on a specific people group while others are a combination of more than one people group. In the latter case, it was discovered in the course of the research that some people groups had close similarities



A Hindu temple

either in linguistic use or cultural practices or some other factor. In those cases, those people groups were summarized together, and an aggregate cultural profile was produced for those people groups.

Every effort was made to include complete profiles for every people group in Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei. However, because cultures are constantly changing or complete profile content was not available omission of some people groups was inevitable.

As with the research effort, no one single person made possible the publication of this book. Rather, many people contributed to its publication. Some people took time to help with the editing and to provide suggestions and helpful comments. Others made the maps, while others provided photos.

Other contributors include several field researchers. They spent many hours traveling throughout the three countries, observing the customs and behaviors of the peoples, interviewing both insiders and outsiders, compiling field notes, and writing the cultural profiles. Without their taking time to travel, many resources otherwise would have never been discovered or unearthed in the course of the research.

Last, but not least, there are those people who were interviewed. They took time out of their busy lives to answer many questions. They freely shared their life stories. Anthropology is about people; and without people opening up their lives, this kind of publication would go unwritten. Therefore, without these people sharing their life stories, this work would not have been possible.

The cultural profiles are a work in progress. The contributing researchers welcome any suggestions and any new data from other field researchers. Therefore, it is hoped that this book stimulates Christians to undertake further ethnographic research and to become personally involved in the lives of these peoples.

How to Use this Book

This book is offered as an overview of the peoples of Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei. Certainly, just by reading the cultural profiles a person’s knowledge of the many peoples will broaden. Readers are encouraged to use the book to deepen their understanding of the peoples of the region and then to focus on a cluster or even a single people group. Begin to pray regularly and systematically for God to work among those people. Asking for blessings and offering prayers is an integral part of the majority of the people in Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei. Such devotion should motivate Christians to pray.

Prayer is the way forward! Prayer is the most powerful asset to bless and serve these people groups. Lives are changed by the power of the Holy Spirit released

through prayer.

Our Holy Scripture clearly teaches God works when people pray fervently and without ceasing. As you pray for a specific people, use God's promises from both the Old and New Testaments to plead for the rapid fulfillment of those promises. Examples include:

All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the earth will bow down before him. (Psalm 22:27)

The LORD will lay bare his arm in sight of the nations, and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God. (Isaiah 52:10)

I will send those ... to far away coasts that have not heard My fame, nor have seen My glory. And they will declare My glory among the nations. (Isaiah 66:19)

Therefore go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things, whatever I commanded you. And Lo, I am with you always even to the end of the age. (Matthew 28:19-20)



Devotees Praying
in a Chinese Temple

The contributors of this book anticipate that God will call forth Christian men and women who will "make a wall, and stand in the gap . . . on behalf of the land" (Ezekiel 22:30). In doing so, Christians expect God's kingdom

to come upon the many unserved peoples of Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei.

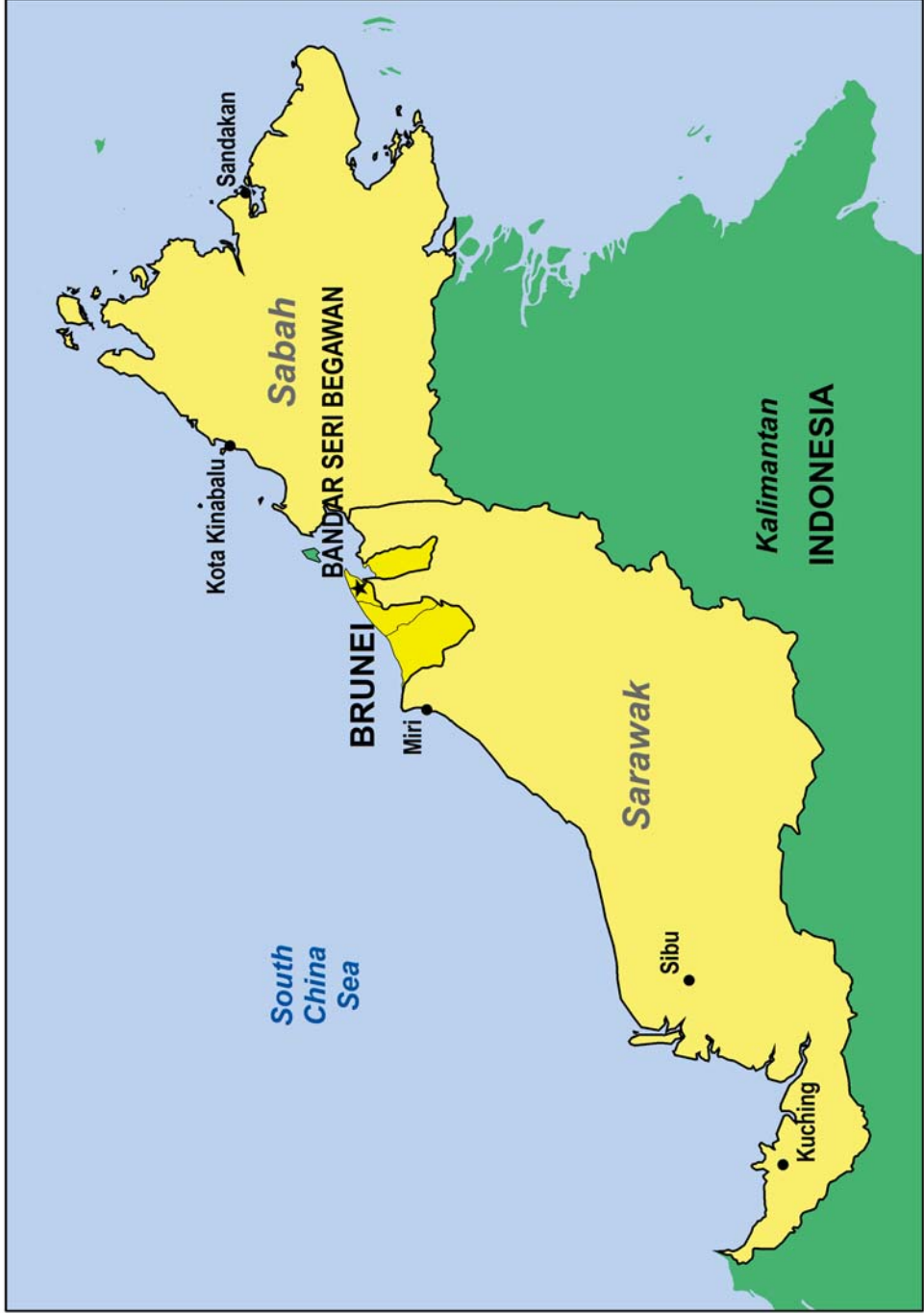
Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." (Revelation 21:1-4, NIV)

WEST MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE



EAST MALAYSIA AND BRUNEI



MALAY CLUSTER

The Malay Cluster consists of the Orang Pantai Timur, Peninsular Malay, Bugis, Minangkabau, Orang Jawa, East Malaysia Malay, Singapore Malay, and Brunei Malay people groups. Although similar in many ways, each one of these people groups vary slightly in their living styles, traditions, and languages depending upon which country or state they reside.

The peoples of the Malay Cluster number approximately eleven million. They form the predominant people group in Peninsular Malaysia, a substantial minority in Sarawak and a smaller minority in Sabah. They also form Brunei's largest people group and the second largest people group after the Chinese in Singapore.

The People and Their Identity

Traditional Malay peoples find identity in close-knit communities with an emphasis on family values. They see work as a means of living, not a way of life, and accumulation of wealth for its own sake is neither a goal nor does it give prestige. They value cooperation more than competition. As a result, traditional Malay culture centers on the villages. Those living in the riverside villages are predominantly fishermen, sailors, and traders while those who settle further inland are rice farmers.

Many Malay peoples have migrated to the cities where they are heavily involved in the public and private sectors, other professions and industries. Consequently, the more modern Malay peoples are finding identity in business and commercial sectors. In Malaysia and Brunei, the Malay peoples hold considerable political influence over the non-Malay peoples.

Today there is little distinction between those Malays who settled long ago and those who settled in considerable numbers during the later part of the 19th and 20th centuries. Those Malays who settled in more recent years include; the Javanese,



Aerial View of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

the Boyanese, Koming, Acehnese, Riau Malay and Mandailing, especially on the western Malaysian coasts of Johor, Selangor and Lower Perak. There exist several other smaller groups like the Orang Khmer on the eastern Malaysia coasts as well. All of these have assimilated into the larger Malay peoples as a result of common cultural traits and, above all, the bond of Islam.

Religion

The majority of the Malay people adhere to the Islamic faith. In fact, they were the first converts to Islam in South East Asia. The Malay peoples view Islam as a remembrance of the greatness and mercy of *Allah*, and their faith finds expression in their joyful and vibrant culture.

In Malaysia, it is said that "to be Malay is to be a Muslim and to be Muslim is to be Malay." Consequently, the ethnic identity of the Malay people is intrinsically tied to their religious identity.

With Islam and Malayness intrinsically tied together, many Malay Muslims practice and belong to a form of Islam that comes from "the Shafi school of the Sunni tradition" (Provencher 1978:255). Named after Abu 'Abdullah ibn Idris al-Shafi'i (767-820), the Shafi school of thought emphasizes Muhammad's sunna, his traditions known as the hadiths, as the interpreter of the Qur'an (Newby 1981:673). This tradition applies "rules of analogy throughout their system" (Newby 1981:673), paying particular attention to rituals before prayers and underlining the importance of Friday congregational worship.

Although Malay Muslims are predominantly "orthodox in their conception and practice of Islam" (Provencher 1978:255), folk Islam varies from region to region. Historically, Islam arrived after Hinduism and Buddhism in Malaysia. Due to the influence of these pre-Islamic religions, Malay Muslims still maintain some pre-Islamic beliefs in spirits, ghosts, and magic.

Although retention of past beliefs still forms a part of the



Singapore Malay Women

Malay's belief system, the coming of Islam transformed the Malay world in all aspects of life. Mohammad Taib Osman, professor of Malay Studies at the University of Malaya, insists that "since the fourteenth century AD onwards, it can safely be said that Islam had transformed



Mosque in Brunei

the culture of the Malays" (1985:47). He further alleges that "the Islamic belief and ethos have become the foundation of the culture of the Malays" (1985:47).

The two main Malay celebrations are *Hari Raya Puasa* and *Hari Raya Haji*.

Hari Raya Puasa is celebrated after one month of fasting during Ramadan. During these festivals and because many Malay peoples work in the cities or some other country, they observe a tradition known as *balik kampung* (going back to the village). *Balik Kampung* is a time to build closer ties with family members and friends. It is also a time to feast together. Children go from house to house collecting 'green packets' that contain a token sum of money.

Hari Raya Haji is celebrated to honor Muslims who have performed their *hajj* (pilgrimage) in the Holy Land, Mecca. The celebrations include prayer and thanksgiving and a feast for the village people.

Language

Bahasa Malaysia, a form of the Malay language, is used by most of the Malay people and is also the official

language of Malaysia. Some of the Bahasa Malaysia accents differ widely depending on location.

Culture

The Malay peoples have a complex and highly artistic culture. They are famous for their beautifully crafted and colorful wooden houses that are found in villages. They are also known for *kain songket* (cloth woven with gold and silver thread) and for their silverware and brassware. The image of Malay culture is the *Kris* (Malay dagger), which is often associated with magical powers. In olden times, if a Malay man is not wearing his kris he is not properly dressed. Many men still wear the kris for ceremonial occasions.



Malay Lady

Good manners and respect, especially shown to the elders by the younger people, are very important. The Malay way of greeting is by shaking hands with the guest using both hands. When

a younger person shakes hands with an elder person, the younger person bows during the handshake and kisses the upper side of the older person's hand.

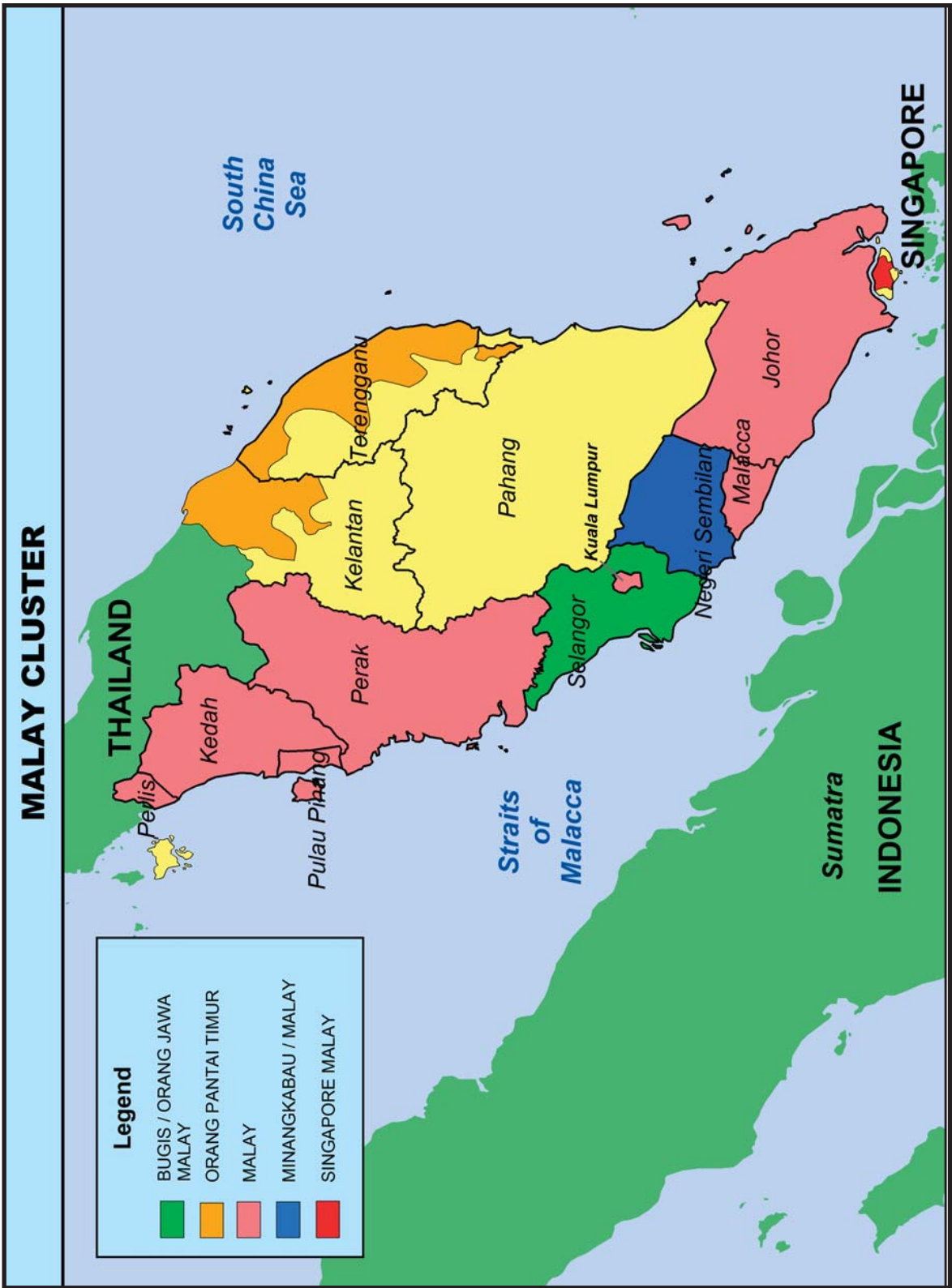
When giving, receiving, or eating, it is taboo to use the left hand. It should be done using the right hand.

Conclusion

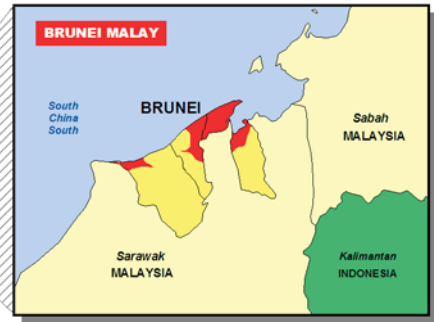
The Malay Cluster draws together a unique blend of peoples. Many of the Malay people still adhere to traditional values and practices that are oriented toward a peasant and community based living as found in the *kampung* (village). They share the Malay language, their Islamic religion and a basic Malay-Indonesian culture in the conduct of the village. Moreover, their actions and relationships are defined by *Adat*, the customary law or way of doing things that combines Islamic law with ancient Malay customs and Hindu elements. However, in the modern trappings of development and the commercially-oriented economies of Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei, some Malay people are assimilating the values of the Information Age as they interact with other people in their respective countries and with foreigners. As a result, the way Malay people build relationships and communicate with one another is being impacted.



Malay Lady selling Vegetables in Labuan, Malaysia



BRUNEI MALAY



Population	Major Religion	Language
175,000	Islam	Brunei Malay

Who are the Brunei Malay?

Brunei Malay is the name used to refer to several very closely related and assimilated groups of indigenous people in Brunei. The largest are the Malay and the Kedayan. Several smaller groups, including the Low Malay Creole, Kiput, Kayan, and Southern Bisaya are also a part of the Brunei Malay population.

Although they are ethnically related to the Malay and also share the same Islamic religion, there are many cultural and linguistic differences that make them distinct from the larger Malay populations in nearby Malaysia and Singapore.

The majority of Brunei Malay live in the capital city called the Brunei-Muara District, and also on the coastal strip spread along the sea border of the country. They write in Bahasa Malaysia but they speak in Brunei Malay, which is uniquely different in sound from spoken Malay.

What are their lives like?

The culture and customs of the various groups are often quite different—for instance, they differ from group to group in the *adat* (the unwritten village law) which regulates behavior in the individual villages.

As the indigenous people of the land, the Brunei Malay generally enjoy special privileges that are tied to the prosperity of the country—the Islamic Sultanate controls extensive petroleum and natural gas reserves. They are much favored in areas such as government employment and access to the national universities.

They enjoy medical and educational services that are relatively well developed. Revenues from petroleum production largely finance these facilities, which are provided free of charge to the Brunei Malay. The Sultan

of Brunei Darussalam also subsidizes their food and housing.

What do they believe?

The Malay Islamic Authority of Brunei Darussalam under all Brunei Malay are classified as Muslims at birth—they are 100% Shafi Sunnis Muslims. The Brunei Malay people adhere to traditional Islamic practices and beliefs. It is estimated that Brunei has more mosques per square kilometer than any other country in the world.

Their religion is based on the five pillars of Islamic faith. They affirm there is no god but *Allah*, and Mohammed is his prophet. They are required to pray five times a day, give alms to the poor, fast during the month of Ramadan, and try to make at least one pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca.

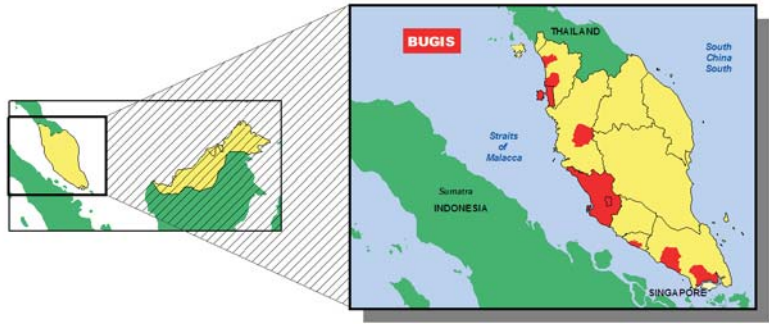
Many of the Brunei Malay groups characterize their entire people group as being Muslim. This classification, however, is more of a cultural distinction than a characterization of individual beliefs. Individual beliefs will often be influenced by tribal religions of their ancestors.

What are their needs?

Currently, the Brunei Malay groups are physically well taken care of. Their country is rich in oil and petroleum and the Sultan is very generous. But material resources can run dry.

the Brunei Malay have many material resources, there remains a need for spiritual fulfillment. Pray that laborers will be sent forth who will go and work among the Brunei Malay.

BUGIS



Population	Major Religion	Language
20,000	Islam	Bahasa Malaysia

Who are the Bugis?

The Bugis people are acclaimed sea traders and legendary warriors from Indonesia. They first came to Malaysia in the 16th century and settled in various parts of Malaysia in the states of Johor, Selangor, and Pulau Pinang. Francis Light once called them “the best merchants” among the eastern islands. By the 1700s, they dominated Selangor’s politics and economy and eventually established the Sultanate of Selangor; the current Sultan traces his roots back to the Bugis Empire. The 18th century has been called, the “Age of the Bugis.” There are several Bugis communities scattered along Sabah’s southeast coast.

What are their lives like?

The Bugis people are cultured and well-mannered, but acknowledged also as aggressive warriors. In the past, Malay princes hired them as mercenaries due to their renowned war dances and chants. In Johor today, many Bugis are landlords of large coconut and coffee plantations, while some are smallholders and fishermen. Bugis people are also known to be excellent craftsmen, for example, building houses without using nails. Their architectural influence is evident in some of today’s Malay houses.

Being proud of their self-image, many Bugis people are active in reviving their culture, language, and heritage, though many younger Bugis cannot speak the language anymore due to assimilation into the Malay community through intermarriage. However, some customs remain highly esteemed; for example, those who serve should not turn their backs to those who eat, and no one should leave the dining area until the entire meal is finished.

In marriages, courtship begins through subtle overtures by the potential groom’s family. To woo her, they will send her family a *tepak sirih* (a gift box with

food or betel nut) as a sign of interest. Eating this food means acceptance; otherwise, they need more time to consider. Once the match is agreed upon, the girl will live in the loft area of her house to preserve her chastity until the wedding day. The groom is blindfolded on the eve of the wedding and must find his bride among the women in the room. After the ceremony, he grabs her and brings her into the bridal chamber. This signifies the warrior instinct of the Bugis. This practice is still carried out today, especially among traditional families.

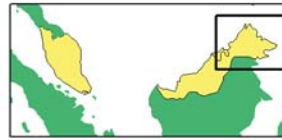
What do they believe?

The Bugis were among the early converts to Buddhism, but later converted to Islam in the early 1600s. Superstition is strong in daily life: there are many do’s and don’ts associated with pregnancy, childbirth, eating, fishing, planting, and opening windows. For instance, the whole skeleton of the fish must be removed and thrown away before they can eat the other side of it. Not to do so brings bad luck. When dressing, buttons are fastened beginning at the bottom, but unfastened from the top to the bottom, signifying a proper ordering of events. Windows are likewise opened with the bottom latches undone first while praying to drive away evil and bad luck.

What are their needs?

The Bugis have a rich cultural heritage in the region that is under pressure to conform to the majority Malay culture. Pray for doors of opportunity to bless the Bugis people by helping them preserve their unique culture designed by their Creator.

EAST MALAYSIA MALAY



Population	Major Religion	Language
250,000	Islam	Bahasa Malaysia

Who are the East Malaysia Malay?

Sarawak and Sabah, Malaysia's 12th and 13th states, are home to many different people groups including the East Malaysia Malay. They number a substantial minority in Sarawak and a smaller minority in Sabah. Like other Malay peoples, this people group brings its own distinct cultural practices that are different from other people groups of Sabah and Sarawak.

Bahasa Malaysia is the language spoken.

What are their lives like?

Traditionally, the East Malaysia Malay worked as fishermen and traders. Today, many of them are employed in logging industries, palm-oil plantations, and civil industries. In addition, many work as government servants.

Intermarriage with other people groups is common for the East Malaysia Malay as long as the prospective partner is a Muslim. A non-Muslim spouse is expected to embrace Islam. Hence, the value of being a part of a family is significant.

For the most part, they dwell in villages consisting of Malay communities with shops, *surau* (small prayer hall), and other facilities. Some live alongside other East Malaysia people groups like the Bajau in waterfront homes. Due to years of fishing and using the ocean as a major source of transportation, homes are built on stilts right at the ocean's edge. Sleeping in one of these homes is quite an experience, as the water will gently rock the house with the movement of the waves. They also reside on land in different villages.

Good manners and respect is very important especially shown to the elders by the younger people. Elders are much respected by the community especially when they hold positions of *Penghulus* (village head), *Pemajasa* (someone who takes care of the law in the village), or *Temenggong* (similar to a policeman in the village), in

their respective communities. Hence, as is the case with most other Malaysian people groups, social networks function with a hierarchical system.

The value of saving face, observed in the community and workplace, is also deemed significant. It is unbecoming to cause another person to lose face. As a result, it is common to use members of another people group to convey a message which would be uncomfortable for the recipient.

What do they believe?

As followers of Islam, the East Malaysia Malay participates in the five pillars of Islam, and mosques are common landmark across the landscape of the state.

But as with their wedding traditions, traces of animistic and Hindu beliefs are still evident and openly discussed. The legend of the *Penanggal* (either a male or a female who is looking for the blood of a baby or a virgin girl) is a classic example. The *Penanggal* comes out at night and his head detaches from the body and flies around searching for a victim. Since those bitten by a *Penanggal* will die, people are careful to stay away from anyone who is suspected of being such a creature.

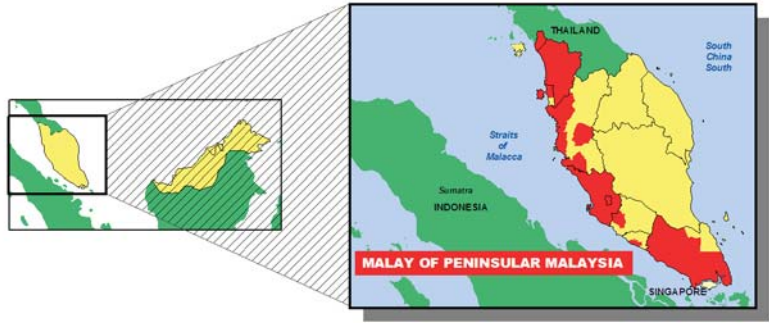
Funerals are consistent with Islamic practice as is male and female circumcision.

What are their needs?

There is a need for improvement in the basic standards of living among coastal Malay peoples.

Working conditions because the Malay are a minority can be difficult in the logging and other export industries. Pray that believers in the main coastal cities would be eager to love and encourage their fellow East Malaysia Malay.

MALAY OF PENINSULAR MALAYSIA



Population	Major Religion	Language
7,500,000	Islam	Bahasa Malaysia

Who are the Malay of Peninsular Malaysia?

The Malay of Peninsular Malaysia make up the majority of the Malay peoples in Malaysia, Brunei, and Singapore. In Malaysia, people are classified as Malay by the federal constitution if they speak their national language, Bahasa Malaysia, practice Malay customs, and are followers of Islam.

The Malay of Peninsular Malaysia find much pride in their cultural heritage and place great emphasis on family and community dependence. Titles, such as *Pa' Long* (Eldest Uncle), are used as terms of endearment to acknowledge hierarchical position.

What are their lives like?

The Malay of Peninsular Malaysia are seen in many levels of society. There are urban Malay who are well educated and hold white collar or government positions, and there are rural Malay who may or may not pursue higher learning and typically occupy jobs such as farming, trading, and fishing. While rural Malay men often wear traditional dress such as a cloth wrap-around skirt, urban Malay men tend to blend into a western setting with their blue jeans, cell phones, and Polo shirts.

While many Malay are now building modern homes, there are still numerous traditional homes within the *kampung* or village in which Malay people reside. Traditional homes are large in order to have sufficient space for the extended family as custom allows for many generations to reside under one roof.

Although the Malay society has undergone a number of social and political changes through education and urbanization, their value orientation is still very much influenced by community. The Malay are a very social people and dependence upon community is considered normal and healthy. Often families will live within close proximity to one another so that help from relatives is easily attained. *Kenduri* (or party) is a social occasion for an entire community. The Malay women will assist to the

hosting home with the cooking and preparations.

What do they believe?

Islam was brought to Malaysia by Arabic and Indian traders many centuries ago, and the Malay people have come to embrace and ardently follow the Islamic faith. All Malay people are considered Islamic though levels of devotion to the religion are varied. Even those who half-heartedly follow Islam participate in the fasting month, and the Malay people of affluence will go on the pilgrimage to Mecca at least once if not many times during their lifetime.

The Malay have early roots in Hinduism and traces of this can still be seen in certain aspects of their culture such as weddings. For instance, the bride and groom will paint their hands with henna and will sit upon a platform for hours for the guests to admire.

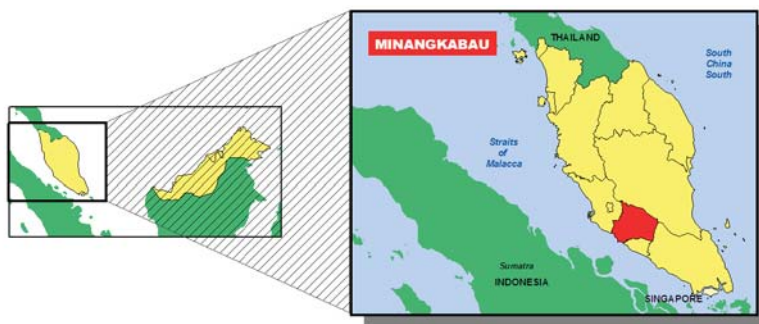
Another divergence from Islam is the use of a *bomoh* (witchdoctor). Although Islam forbids the use of such a person, many Malay of Peninsular Malaysia will seek the services of a *bomoh* when they are experiencing a difficult situation or when they need some "magic." Also, they use *bomohs* for honorable or ignoble purposes. Furthermore, they consult *bomohs* in order to receive a blessing or a cure; or, on the other hand, in order to curse someone or get revenge.

What are their needs?

While the Malay place great emphasis on family, it is ironic that one of their greatest needs lies in the breakdown of the family unit. Divorce and youth issues are challenges facing the Malay family.

During turbulent times, pray that peace can reign among the Malay of Peninsular Malaysia and their families. Much opportunity exists for young entrepreneurial Malay students through Malaysian education, sports and business.

MINANGKABAU



Population	Major Religion	Language
800,000	Islam	Bahasa Malaysia

Who are the Minangkabau?

The Minangkabau, or Minang, comprise a majority of the state of Negeri Sembilan in Peninsular Malaysia. As descendants from the Minangkabau people from West Sumatra, Indonesia, the Minang of Malaysia have a distinct culture and their own royal line that dates back several centuries. The Minang speak the national language of Malaysia, but they have their own dialect that reflects lingual roots in the language of their Indonesian heritage. Within Malaysia, the Minang refer to themselves as Orang Negeri or person from Negeri.

What are their lives like?

The Minang are most noted for their adherence to *adat pepatih* (matrilineal inheritance). Certain areas of Negeri Sembilan have moved away from this tradition due to the complexities of the matrimonial ceremonies and the blending of communities with peoples from different Malay groups who use traditional male inheritance. However, the areas of Kuala Pilah, Tampin, Seri Menanti, and Jelebu are still strong in their unique culture and consistently practice this tradition.

The Minang place great emphasis on their women. In order to protect the rights of the female, the name and property are passed down through the line of the mother. Daughters are strongly encouraged to marry within the same people group or else they are not allowed to live on family land. Sons are allowed to marry outside of the people group, but they, too, forfeit their right to live on family land since the wife would have no land inheritance of her own. Newlyweds either live on their own or with the family of the bride.

Clan leaders within the Minang estimate that there are approximately 35,000 square kilometers of clan land in the region. This land is in the name of the female, but male clan leaders balance the scales of power. Clan leaders have their own titles within their *suku* (clan group) and

strict hierarchy designates how many leaders each clan group is allowed.

Housing and architecture for the Minang have become more modern over the past generation though older, more traditional homes are still being occupied. The roof of a traditional home is peaked at both ends to represent the horns of a water buffalo. These roofs along with spicy food are two trademarks of the Minangkabau.

What do they believe?

The Minang are devout Muslims in spite of their matrilineal heritage. Polygamy is rare within the Minang culture because it conflicts with a pure inheritance line. The aspect of female inheritance and men being unable to take a second wife draws criticism from more fundamental Islamic people groups.

The Minang practice the five pillars of Islam and wear Muslim clothing that is consistent with other Malay groups throughout Malaysia. A large majority of Minang women wear a head covering and the percentage that do not are of the younger generation.

Marriage ceremonies and funerals are in keeping with Islamic tradition and both male and female children are circumcised: boys when they are twelve years old and girls when they are still babies. Only the circumcision of the male is celebrated.

What are their needs?

The Minang feel the need to protect their culture from future assimilation. As other areas of Negeri Sembilan have shown, mixing with other Malay groups results in a loss of their unique matrilineal customs. As a result, the Minang feel a sense of loss of identity.

May the unique culture of the Minang be preserved and blessed as a culture designed by the All-Compassionate One.

ORANG JAWA



Population	Major Religion	Language
10,000	Islam	Bahasa Malaysia

Who are the Orang Jawa?

The Orang Jawa ('people of Java', also known as 'Javanese') migrated from Central Java, Indonesia, to Malaysia from 1880 to 1930. They migrated to seek a new life away from the Dutch colonists who ruled Indonesia at that time. Today the Orang Jawa live throughout Peninsular Malaysia in parts of Perak, Selangor, and Kedah. There are also isolated communities in coastal areas of Sabah. Some Jawa have even gained influential positions in society. The Chief Minister of Selangor traces his roots back to Orang Jawa ancestors.

The Jawa language is being spoken less and less among today's younger Orang Jawa. Most of them have either never learned it or cannot remember how to speak it.

What are their lives like?

Recent generations of Orang Jawa who live in cities have assimilated with the general Malay culture. In the past their parents were farmers, construction workers and timber workers. Now they also work as bankers, pilots, engineers, accountants, and politicians. They are known to be efficient and industrious. Some Orang Jawa in Selangor work as Islamic religious teachers.

In some villages, the Orang Jawa maintain their identity and traditions. People from other Malay people groups who marry into an Orang Jawa family sometimes call themselves Orang Jawa, or Jawa Peranakan. Apart from growing their own vegetables and raising poultry, some villagers have also started their own tourism programs to promote the Javanese way of life.

The Orang Jawa are a very hospitable people, usually inviting visitors to share a meal with the family. Families are often quite large, some having between 10 and 17 children. Marriages are grand affairs that

sometimes last up to three days. The giving of love gifts to the newlyweds is common. Emphasis is placed on helping one another during weddings rather than receiving large sums of money. As the Orang Jawa have become more successful in life, their desire to recover their cultural Javanese roots has grown.

What do they believe?

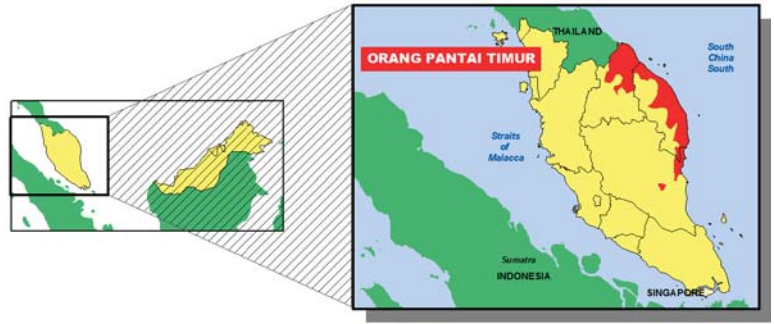
The Orang Jawa are predominantly Sunni Muslims. During weddings and circumcision rituals they perform the *jedur* (songs of praise to the prophet Mohammed) which is compiled in a book called *Silawatan*. They also perform the *kempling* (a type of dance giving praise to *Allah*) during religious occasions.

During the performance, they use a tool made from lamb's wool and wood. The Qur'an is read before and after the dance, and it takes a group of between ten to twenty people to perform it. The *kempling* performance is an opportunity for the Orang Jawa to get together to build ethnic solidarity and unity. It is also a time for discussing the challenges faced by the villages.

What are their needs?

The Orang Jawa have a strong Islamic background. Pray that communication bridges into their culture could be used to meet the spiritual needs. Pray that the lives of committed believers will be a positive influence and could bring about good relationships with Orang Jawa people.

ORANG PANTAI TIMUR



Population	Major Religion	Language
2,100,000	Islam	Bahasa Malaysia

Who are the Orang Pantai Timur?

Orang Pantai Timur (People of the East Coast) consists of Malay peoples along the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia. They are primarily located in the two states of Terengganu and Kelantan though some reside in other parts of Malaysia where job opportunities are more abundant. The Orang Pantai Timur speak the national language of Malaysia, Bahasa Malaysia. However, their own distinct accent identifies them as different from other Malay people groups in Malaysia, Brunei, and Singapore.

What are their lives like?

While many Orang Pantai Timur are progressing and securing lower-level government jobs or white-collar professions, the majority still adhere to traditional trades, the largest being fishing. Farming rice paddies and vegetables is frequent as well. It is still common for women to stay home as housewives and rear the children.

Selection of mates has evolved from the previous era of arranged marriages. Today, prospective partners are chosen by the individual. Parents and family still have “veto” power if the candidate is unacceptable for a particular reason. Partners are most acceptable if they are from the states of Terengganu or Kelantan. Persons from different states are fine as long as they are Malay and are upright in character.

Couples are married at either the home of the bride or the groom. This is a unique practice of the Orang Pantai Timur as many other Malay peoples hold weddings at the local Islamic place of worship. In keeping with *adat temenggung* (male inheritance), the wedding often takes place at the home of the groom. Couples may live on their own as newlyweds. However, common cultural practices emphasize living in the home of the groom’s parents.

Another common cultural practice is having children soon after being married. If newlyweds are poor, they may wait to have children. A decision to wait often invites pressure from family members. Consequently, even today families tend to be very

large. It is not uncommon for Orang Pantai Timur couples to have between three and seven children.

What do they believe?

Orang Pantai Timur are Islamic and devoutly follow the standards of the Muslim faith. Women wear a head covering and full-length dress or pants, but no veil is necessary. Men follow a less strict dress code, but those who are truly devout often wear the Muslim hat and traditional outfit.

Having multiple wives is common among the Orang Pantai Timur men. In keeping with Islamic law, a husband can have up to four wives. However, it is emphasized that only those men who can afford to provide for all his wives and children on an equal basis may take an additional spouse.

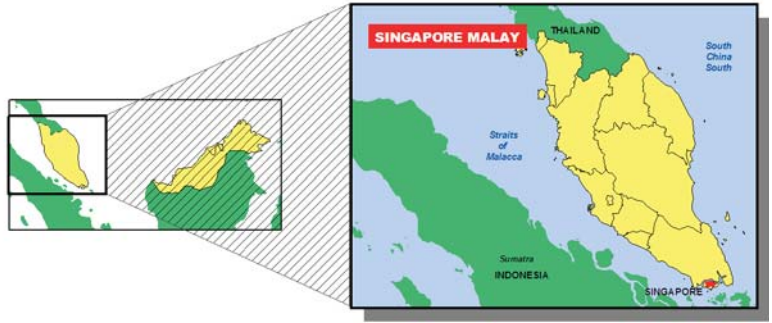
The Orang Pantai Timur observe all Islamic holidays with special emphasis being given to the main three: *Hari Raya*, *Hari Korban*, and *Haji*. A point of distinction with other Malay peoples is that Orang Pantai Timur emphasize *Hari Korban* (sacrifice day). Animals sacrificed include goats, cows, water buffalo, and even imported camels.

Funerals are also consistent with Islamic beliefs. A corpse will be washed and then wrapped in white cloth. The body will be buried the same day as the death. The family of the departed observes prayer rituals for seven nights after the death. If the deceased was a male, the remaining widow or widows must remain in the home for sixty days following the funeral. No such restrictions exist for widowers.

What are their needs?

Although the east coast is rich in oil revenues, the Orang Pantai have not benefited. Terengganu and Kelantan are among the poorest of Malay states. Economic development remains a political battleground with the Orang Pantai stuck in the middle. May the few local believers offer hope and blessing to the Orang Pantai people.

SINGAPORE MALAY



Population	Major Religion	Language
400,000	Islam	Bahasa Malaysia

Who are the Singapore Malay?

The Singapore Malay constitute fifteen percent of Singapore's multi-racial population. They are widely dispersed all over the country of Singapore. They immigrated centuries ago, mostly coming from Peninsular Malaysia and parts of the Indonesian archipelago such as Java and Sumatra. Despite being the first inhabitants of the country, they are not the largest group due to the arrival of Chinese and Indian immigrants in later years.

The Singapore Malay speak Bahasa Malaysia which is considered one of the major languages of Singapore.

What are their lives like?

More than half of Singapore Malay depend on employment in the public sector. There are few who are in high-level political or civil service positions and in the armed forces. Some are employed in foreign-owned factories. The Singapore government's drive to break up racial communities and resettle village dwellers in urban housing and apartment complexes had a great effect on the Malay and their ways of living.

Evidence of the unification of Malay patterns of living with those of the rest of the population of Singapore shows the Malay birth and death rates are now declining, which originally was quite high. Malay women are working outside their homes more than ever before. Some women are marrying later, bearing fewer children, and divorcing less frequently.

The Malay despite being a minority in Singapore are a vital force in Singapore. Among the qualities of the Singapore Malay are their strong sense of community, their superb spicy cuisine, and their Islamic religious values.

The Singapore Malay culture is a combination of the culture of Malaysia and Indonesia.

Intermarriages is allowed as long as both share the same religion. Most common intermarriages are between Malay and the Mamak.

In the past several decades, Singapore has experienced significant economic growth. Such economic growth and success has affected Singapore Malay. Families once held together with strong community ties are now experiencing troubled marriages and rebellious teenagers.

What do they believe?

The Malay in Singapore are Sunni Muslims. Islam is the major influence in everyday life and is the medicine of the Malay society. The Malay are devoted to prayer and study the Qur'an (Islamic Book) and observe the Islamic festivals such as *Hari Raya Aidiladha* (pilgrimage performed by the Muslims to the holy city of Mecca), *Hari Raya Aidilfitri* (the end of fasting month), and Prophet Mohammad's birthday (Muslims began celebrating his birthday after his death to remind them of the Prophet's fight to spread and uphold Islam).

What are their needs?

In recent years in Singapore many have had economic hardship but among the hardest hit have been the Malay people. The Singapore Malay have often been in the majority of those unemployed.

Pray that more believers would help their fellow Singaporean Malay who are struggling economically and find creative ways to bless them. Pray that the Good News could help mend some of the broken hearts and families of the Singapore Malay.

SABAH COASTAL CLUSTER

The Sabah Coastal Cluster includes a total of eighteen ethnolinguistic people groups. The majority of these people live along the coastal regions of Sabah and are also scattered in Brunei. Certain groups tend to predominate in certain regions, particularly in the coastal areas of the Kota Kinabalu, Tawau, Semporna, Lahad Datu, and Sandakan districts. In recent years, more and more have moved to cities and towns in search of employment. The total population of these eighteen people groups is 512,000.



A Bajau Lady

Some of these groups arrived in Sabah as early as the sixteenth century. However, in recent years, others have joined them from the Philippines and Indonesia. They make up about two-thirds of Sabah's total population.

Apart from the Malays, Chinese, and Indians, the government generally classifies all other coastal people into one cluster called

Bajau. In actuality, there are many different coastal groups: a variety of Sama and Bajau groups, the Bisaya-Tutong groups, the Iranun, the Tausug, the Bonggi, the Chavacano and the Molbog. All but the Chavacano peoples have profiles in this cluster.

The People and Their Identity

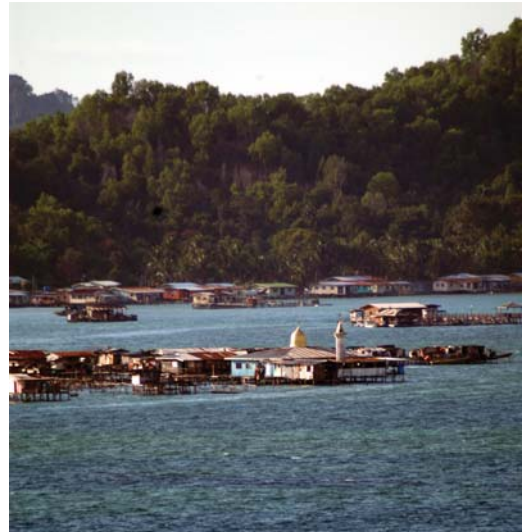
Collectively, outsiders have often mistakenly identified these people groups as Malays. Also, when outsiders casually ask who they are, many of these peoples might reply "Malay." Such a response is in direct correlation to these peoples' not wanting to jeopardize their bumiputra ('people of the land') status. Being recognized by the government as a bumiputra affords those groups the added benefit of free medicine and education not to mention special employment with government services.



A Village in Kota Kinabalu

However, in actuality, these people groups take pride in retaining their distinctive cultural identities. Additionally, these groups display much variation in their cultures, languages, and customs and are distinct from those people groups in the Malay Cluster.

Although intermarriage between these groups frequently occurs, they still retain the use of their original languages. They also prefer their specific cultural names—for



A Bajau Fishing Village and Mosque

instance, a wife may say, "I am a Bajau," and at the same time say very specifically, "My husband is an Iranun."

Traditionally, the majority of these coastal people groups were traders, fishermen, farmers, and craftsmen. Many are still sea-oriented and continue to derive their livelihood primarily from the sea. Some of the communities have become proficient in cultivating wet rice and fruit trees, and rearing livestock.

Those in the cities find positions in a variety of wage-earning jobs such as security guards, factory workers, and various roles in the service sector. A number of the coastal people have received tertiary education that has enabled them to advance to professional positions in the government and private sectors.

Some of the coastal people still live a nomadic lifestyle, but most have settled in fishing villages on the coast and on many of the offshore islands. Some live in extensive villages built on stilts over the sea, while others build their houses on riverside terraces or coastal plains.

Religion

The coastal peoples of Sabah are predominately Muslim. They receive religious instruction from Islamic teachers and observe religious celebrations that directly are tied to the Islamic calendar. Examples include the festival of Aid-ilfitri—popularly known as Hari Raya Puasa, or simply Hari Raya ('Day of Celebration')—to mark the culmination of Ramadan, the holy month of fasting.

Despite the influence of Islam, many still indulge in animistic beliefs and practices that are neither prescribed nor endorsed by Islam. They are usually associated with the spirit world. Many believe in spirits that may cause misfortune and sickness or provide miraculous power for the living.

Language

The coastal peoples speak a number of different languages with complex chains of dialects. Many of the languages are related to languages spoken in the Philippines. For instance, the Bonggi speak a language that is distantly related to the Molbog language in the Philippines. The Sama people groups speak languages very similar to ones spoken in the southern Philippines. The Tausug originated from the Sulu region of the Phil-



Bajau Men at a Harbour in Sabah

ippines. However, even though they retain their own distinctive languages, many of them also use Malay as a second language.

Culture

As is the case with most people groups in Sabah and Sarawak, these people groups observe hierarchical relationships. Whether they are living in towns, villages, or over the sea, they respect people who are higher in their social network system.

Some of the people groups in this cluster have been effected by the territory lost by the Brunei Sultanate in the 19th century. This lost territory eventually became part of the state of Sabah, Malaysia.

Conclusion

The coastal peoples of Sabah constitute an important group in the nation's multicultural fabric. Many of the coastal groups are undergoing a transformation from being sojourners to settlers and now citizens of Malaysia, their adopted country. However, a majority of them live below the poverty level. Their communities seriously need infrastructure development in addition to the great needs of health care and education.

A majority of the coastal groups are warm and friendly people. The Sabah Coastal Cluster peoples see themselves as distinct peoples with a strong sense of ethnic identity and community.



Kota Belud Mosque



Young Coastal Fisherman



Coastal Houses

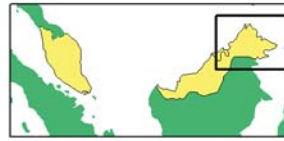


A Bajau Man

SABAH COASTAL CLUSTER



BAJAU



Population	Major Religion	Language
80,000	Islam	Borneo Coast Bajau

Who are the Bajau?

The Bajau peoples are classified by the government as Bajau, which is a group of predominantly Muslim people living along the west coast of Sabah. The Bajau subgroup includes the West Coast Bajau, and the Bajau Bukit (Papar).

The language of the Bajau comprises a chain of mutually intelligible dialects which has been influenced by the Malay language. It is sometimes referred to as Borneo Coast Bajau. This language is mutually unintelligible with the Sama (East Coast Bajau) languages spoken on Sabah's east coast and in the region of the Sulu Sea.

The origin of the Bajau peoples is not certain, however, there is a documented report of their presence in the Kota Belud district in the 1850s and 1860s. Today their settlements spread along Sabah's coastal regions from Kuala Penyu of the Kuala Penyu district in the southwest to Terusan of the Beluran district in the northeast. The Tempasuk plain in Kota Belud, where the largest group of Bajau live, is their cultural heartland.

What are their lives like?

The Bajau were once sea-nomads dwelling in boats, harvesting fish and other marine resources. These days, they have increasingly become land-dwellers and have become proficient in wet rice cultivation and livestock rearing. Some have developed into excellent horsemen. They grow small crops for personal consumption or for supplemental income as well as for engaging in trade. Businesses are growing in number but tend to be small and mostly related to food selling.

Increased opportunity for and appreciation of education has helped some Bajau to secure positions in a variety of wage-earning jobs. Improved

transportation has enabled many of them to work in other parts of Sabah and Peninsular Malaysia. Work opportunities are scarce for those remaining in the villages.

What do they believe?

The Bajau practice Islam and their religious holidays are directly tied to the Islamic calendar. For instance, they observe the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, during which time Muslims fast from dawn until dusk. Many Bajau have merged Islamic practices with their own local traditions, such as the reading of Arabic prayers at the beginning of a traditional celebration.

One such celebration is called the *kenduri arwah*, which is a feast practiced in honor of deceased family members. At such feasts, *sedekah* 'alms' are given to the *pakir* (the prayer leader); those who are remembered during the prayers accrue merit for the afterlife.

They also observe celebrations that are not related to the Islamic calendar. For instance, feasts may be given at a baby's hair-cutting ceremony, and to celebrate a boy's circumcision. Smaller feasts are held to honor the fulfillment of a vow, or to request divine protection in the warding off of sickness or other danger.

What are their needs?

The Bajau communities need infrastructure development in the areas of health and education. More medical workers, facilities, and services are needed. Many of their youth do not complete their schooling. Pray that God would send people to help them with these health and education needs. Pray, too, that their spiritual needs would not be neglected.

BISAYA-TUTONG



Population	Major Religion	Language
55,000	Islam and Animism	Varieties of Bisaya

Who are the Bisaya-Tutong?

The Bisaya-Tutong peoples comprise several distinct people groups related by name and to a lesser extent language. The most populous group among them are the Tutong, who are located in Brunei along the banks of the Limbang River south of Tutong and into the northern part of Sarawak, East Malaysia. The Tutong are considered closely related to the two groups which call themselves Bisaya, one located in Brunei and one located in Sarawak. Similar, but more distinct, are the Bisaya of Sabah, found around Brunei Bay in the Kuala Penyu and Beaufort districts, and the Tatana people, also located in the Kuala Penyu district. The Bisaya-Tutong people groups speak languages which are classified as Bisaya, a subgroup of the Dusunic family of languages.

The Bisaya-Tutong are culturally diverse and live in small groups interspersed among other peoples. They have adapted many of their cultural features from these peoples. Little is known of their history. In the past, their reputation was a violent one. There was much inter-tribal warfare, and the Bisayan warriors beheaded their enemies to gain power.

What are their lives like?

A typical Bisaya-Tutong village which accommodates 30 to 200 people is located along a riverbank and contains a number of rice granaries. These villages are permanent settlements made up of small, long rectangular houses built on piles 10-15 feet above the ground. Three or four families usually live together under one roof.

The diet of the Bisaya-Tutong consists of rice and a variety of fruits and vegetables. Most houses have a small garden to supply food necessities. Both wet and

dry rice are cultivated in burned clearings, and other crops, such as chilies, maize, cucumbers, pumpkins, yams, gourds, and various fruits are also grown.

The men are said to be very skilled in carpentry and woodcarving. The women tend to the house and gardens, and gather ferns, fruits, and medicinal plants. They trade with the Chinese for cloth, metal goods, and pottery.

What do they believe?

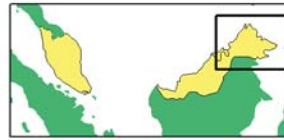
It is said that most of the Bisaya-Tutong converted to Islam many years ago. Yet many animistic customs linger, especially among those of the older generation. In some villages, they still hold occasional ceremonies to appease the spirits of the dead that are believed to be associated with a collection of skulls from their headhunting days.

It is said that in hilltop Bisaya graveyards, one can spot interesting items that have been valued by the departed soul. Rusting foot-operated sewing machines, run-down wall clocks, and other machine-made items, such as plates, cups, and store-bought shirts can be seen. These items were placed on the graves at burial for the departed soul to use in the next life.

What are their needs?

Most of the Bisaya-Tutong have never had an opportunity to hear the good news. Pray that the good news and other study materials will be translated into their language so they can fully understand His truth. Pray that believers in other areas will reach out to these people in practical ways, demonstrating God's care and love for them.

BONGGI



Population	Major Religion	Language
2,000	Animism	Bonggi

Who are the Bonggi?

The Bonggi people are mainly found on Banggi and Balambangan Islands at the northernmost point of Sabah, Malaysia. Non-Bonggi and other outsiders normally refer to them as “Banggi” or “Dusun Banggi.”

The Bonggi are a peace-loving, non-violent group. Historically and contemporarily, they tend to avoid conflicts. The Bonggi speak the Bonggi language, which is distantly related to the Molbog language in the Philippines.

What are their lives like?

The majority of the Bonggi work as subsistence farmers and subsistence fishermen. They are only small-scale producers depending on simple technology. They plant cassava, maize, banana, papaya, sugarcane, tobacco, *tuba* (*derris elliptica*), and sweet potatoes. Coconut farming is their main source of cash income. They use hook and line, small nets, poison, and spears for fishing.

Bonggi communities consist of scattered homesteads with no unifying social centers. Many Bonggi chew betel nut, which has become a part of their identity; sharing betel ingredients gives them a chance to interact.

A *pakng lima* ‘headman’ is appointed by the government mainly to settle disputes and legal issues and to help communicate to the government on behalf of the village people any of their needs such as health services or building a dock. Intermarriages are allowed but not favored; on the other hand, marriages to a first cousin are permitted.

What do they believe?

The majority of the Bonggi are influenced by animistic beliefs and various superstitions. They resist other religious beliefs, which they see as foreign to their own customary laws. There are many customs pertaining to dominating the spirit world. One example is if a Bonggi can obtain strands of someone’s hair, or a tooth, or used tobacco or dirt from a footprint, and bring it to a *kuakng batu* ‘an evil rock spirit’, then the evil spirit will have the power to make that person sick. The Bonggi believe that babies and small children should wear amulets to protect them against evil spirits.

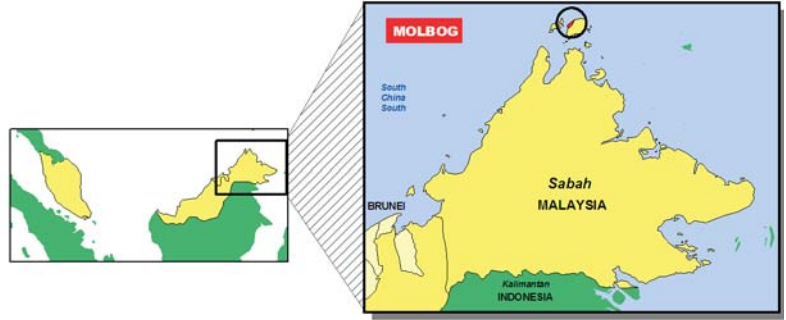
The Bonggi follow certain beliefs in treating illnesses. One example of a common taboo is not to eat any food that is red in color once a person is inflicted by an illness that causes red rashes. Therefore, food such as crabs, papaya, red chili, and watermelon are forbidden for the person with such an illness.

What are their needs?

Modern farming and fishing methods and technology could be introduced to the Bonggi people. Developing an infrastructure such as good land and sea transportation could provide them opportunities to sell farm produce in neighboring places. Pray for believers who have knowledge in these areas to help the people.

There is also a need for education as their illiteracy rate is still quite high. Pray for teachers to help in educating and providing good teaching materials to the Bonggi children and youth.

MOLBOG



Population	Major Religion	Language
7000	Islam	Molbog

Who are the Molbog?

The Molbog are found on Banggi Island in Sabah, Malaysia. The Banggi South Channel separates Banggi Island from the mainland of Sabah. The Molbog are sometimes called Balabak in Sabah, a name that describes their place of origin – Balabac Island, located at the southern tip of Palawan in the Philippines. The greater population of Molbog people still resides on Balabac Island. Balabac Island is visible from Damaran and Maliyu, the two Molbog villages on the west coast of Banggi Island.

In terms of dialect and cultural practices, some have said the Molbog are somewhat related to the Tidung, an indigenous local group located on the northeast coast of Sabah. However, some Sama, Bonggi, and Tausug words are also found in the Molbog language.

What are their lives like?

The Molbog livelihood includes subsistence farming and fishing. They farm commercial coconut, tapioca, and fruit trees. Some people make their living by raising livestock and occasionally perform barter trading with the people on nearby islands of the Philippines and at market centers in Sabah.

The Molbog people highly value their relationships with relatives and friends through mutual sharing and giving. Inter-marriage between the Tausug and the Molbog has influenced the Molbog toward Islam. Currently, Molbog young people are free to choose their own marriage partners as long as both share the same religion.

What do they believe?

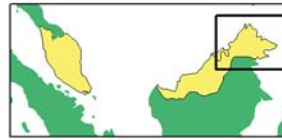
The majority of the Molbog people practise Islam. Islam for them is a way of life just as it is for all of the Muslim groups. The Tausug traders in the past brought the Islamic faith that the Molbog people adopted as their own. They follow the Islamic prayers and celebrate the Islamic religious festivals such as *Hari Raya Aidiladha* (which marks the end of the period during which Muslims make the journey to Mecca to perform the haj, and also commemorates the willingness of the prophet Abraham to sacrifice his son Ishmael for Allah) and *Hari Raya Aidilfitri* (the end of fasting month).

Despite being strong followers of the Islamic faith, their faith is also associated with many indigenous interpretations and practices. The Molbog have a reputation among the Bonggi of being *pugai* specialists where *pugai* means “to put a love charm/spell on someone.”

What are their needs?

The Molbog people need developing infrastructure such as modern sea transportation to help facilitate the selling of farm and fish products to neighboring places and markets. Those living in villages typically don't earn enough income for medical and educational supplies. Illnesses such as malaria are a concern to the people. Pray that God will meet the Molbog people's needs through believers who are able to provide the skills and resources that they need. Pray that these acts will demonstrate the love of God.

SAMA PEOPLE GROUPS



Population	Major Religion	Language
125,000	Islam	Sama-Bajau

Who are the Sama?

The Sama people groups, who live in the East Malaysian state of Sabah, are officially classified under Bajau. The Bajau are predominantly Muslim peoples. They speak as many as seven different mother-tongue languages which belong to what is known as the Sama-Bajau subgroup of Malayo-Polynesian languages.

The Sama people groups are generally referred to in Sabah as the East Coast Bajau. The government does not distinguish one Bajau group from the other. While outsiders call them Bajau, they most commonly refer to themselves as Sama.

Most of the Sama peoples originated from the Sulu Archipelago in the Philippines. Their languages comprise a complex chain of dialects, most of which can be identified with Sama languages spoken in the Philippines. The Sama languages can be divided into three subgroups: the Northern Sinama, the Southern Sama, and the Central Sama.

Sama settlements are found mainly along Sabah's eastern coastal area and particularly in Tawau, Semporna, Lahad Datu, and Sandakan districts. One Sama settlement is located away from the east coast on the Gaya Island of Kota Kinabalu. Many of the Sama peoples of Sabah maintain close association with the Bajau peoples of the Sulu region as boat travel is relatively easy and common throughout the region.

What are their lives like?

The majority of Sama are still sea-oriented. Many continue to derive their livelihood primarily from the sea. Fishing is their major economic activity besides seafaring trade and some farming. Copra is the major cash crop, though copra holdings are small. Trade comes in the form of dried fish, sea

cucumbers, pearls, pearl shell, and other marine items.

Sama settlements on stilts sit directly over the sea or along well-protected stretches of shoreline. Houses are crowded together in great numbers and are connected by narrow wooden bridges. Each house usually has one rectangular room with an attached kitchen. Households are grouped into larger units based on location and family ties.

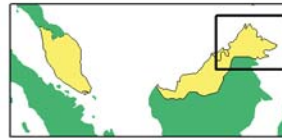
What do they believe?

The Sama are predominantly Sunni Muslims. Islamic practices, such as fasting during Ramadan, are closely observed. Daily prayers at the surau 'prayer room' and the weekly Friday prayers in the mosque are performed. Many of them, however, still participate in religious practices that have been retained from traditional customs. For instance, spirits of the dead are thought to remain in the vicinity of the graves, requiring expressions of continued concern from the living. They believe that *Allah* permits the annual return of dead souls to the earth. They honor these souls by cleaning their graves and by offering special prayers in some kind of Islamic context such as the reading of Arabic prayers.

What are their needs?

Many of the Sama people live below the poverty level. They need help especially in the areas of health and drinking water. Better infrastructure in the areas of education and transportation is also needed. Ask God to send people to help the Sama with these needs and be a channel of God's love and blessing. Portions of the good news exist in many of the Sama languages; pray that the Sama will have access to them.

TAUSUG



Population	Major Religion	Language
110,000	Islam	Tausug

Who are the Tausug?

The Tausug, meaning 'people of the sea current', are also known as Suluks or Sulu in Sabah. Originally from the Sulu Archipelago in the Philippines, they migrated to Sabah in the 18th century and have now become established Sabahans. The Tausug people can be found mainly in coastal area communities in eastern Sabah.

In the past, the Tausug made their living as pirates but now rely on agriculture, fishing, and livestock raising to sustain their lives. They are distinct from the Bajau as they speak their own language, also called Tausug, and by aspects of their own culture.

What are their lives like?

The main means of livelihood among the Tausug people are farming and fishing. Some farmers still use swidden agriculture, by which fields are cleared by slashing down the trees and brush, letting them dry, and then burning them. The soil, fertilized by the ash, is then planted with rice. Their main crops include dry and wet rice, coconut, coffee, yams, cassava, corn, and various kinds of fruit. Fishing is done from motorized boats in offshore waters using fishnets, hook and line, or bamboo traps. They also raise livestock, including water buffaloes, cattle, goats, chickens, geese, and ducks.

On special occasions and weddings, they perform their traditional dance called *daling-daling* (a dance in which dancers wear curved metallic nails on the finger tips) and sing *Sulu pantun* 'Sulu poems' accompanied by a musical instrument called *gabbang* 'bamboo xylophone'.

The typical Tausug house is built in a rectangular shape; the walls are constructed with timber or bamboo beams and enclosed with coconut or nipa

palm leaves. It has a thatched roof and sits on stilts six to eight feet above the ground. The house is surrounded by a series of raised porches leading to a separate kitchen. Usually, a wall is built around it for protection.

What do they believe?

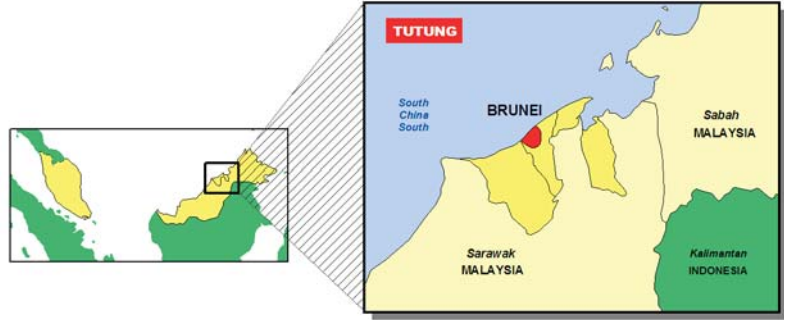
Sunni Islam is the majority religion of the Tausug. As the children grow, they have tutors that give them religious instruction from the Qu`ran (Islamic Holy Book). Despite the influence of Islam, they retain some of their animistic beliefs and practices associated with the spiritual world. They believe in environmental spirits that may cause either good fortune or sickness.

Their view of life after death mixes Islamic beliefs with non-orthodox beliefs in spirits. They believe that a person has four souls which leave his body when he dies. The body of the deceased goes to hell, where the punishment of his sins will be revealed according to his wrongdoings while he was living.

What are their needs?

Many of the Tausug people are living below poverty level. More efficient farming methods and more innovative fishing techniques will help raise the standard of living among the people. There is also a need for improved health care. Pray that God will send helpers to the Tausug to help meet their spiritual needs and be a channel of blessing. A translation has been completed in the Tausug language. Pray that God would give the Tausug access to it and give them receptive hearts.

TUTUNG



Population	Major Religion	Language
12,000	Islam	Tutung

Who are the Tutung?

The origin of the Tutung people (also referred to as Tutong 2) is not certain, but they claim to have lived in Brunei Darussalam for many hundreds of years. They are the “most original” of the country’s indigenous people. They are related to other ethnic communities in the Baram-Tinjar subgroup. They live around the sleepy coastal town of Tutong.

The Tutung take pride in their language and use it regularly for intra-ethnic communication. However, they also speak the common Brunei Malay language. In mixed marriages, many use Brunei Malay with their children.

What are their lives like?

The Tutung communities no longer live in village styled settlements but have adopted individual family houses. They live in small but well established towns with modern styled homes that are still stretched along the coastal land of Tutong.

Their main settlement in Tutong is a little over 40 km west of the capital city. The town has witnessed little of the development that the discovery of oil has brought to other parts of the country. It has a much slower pace than other Bruneian settlements.

Traditionally, the Tutung made their living from seafaring and trading. Villagers fish on a daily or overnight basis, returning to the village to eat and to sleep. For many, fishing was the primary source of livelihood. Trade also occupied a central place in the Tutung economy, and historically, the Tutung were highly valued for their specialized seafaring skills.

Today, however, many of them no longer engage in traditional occupations. The educated Tutung commute weekly or monthly to lucrative jobs in Bandar Seri Begawan and other coastal towns. Medical

and educational services are relatively well developed and are largely financed by the oil-rich government of Brunei Darussalam. Education is free for the Tutung people. Public medical institutions charge a nominal fee of one Brunei dollar for every consultation and dispense medicine free of charge.

What do they believe?

Tutung are traditionally animists, but nothing is ever told about their former way of life. the Malay Islamic Authority of Brunei Darussalam includes them as a Muslim group. Therefore, all Tutung are considered Muslims at birth.

Tutung people claim to be Muslims, adhering to traditional Islamic practices and beliefs. Theirs is a religion of works based on their belief in one God, *Allah*. Their religious duties include praying five times a day, fasting, and giving alms to the poor.

What are their needs?

No written resources are available in Tutung language. Pray the workers will be sent that will invest their lives to help provide written form of the Tutung so that the people will have access to materials to read in their own language.

Pray for workers to be sent who will invest their lives in the Tutung community. Pray for receptive hearts among the Tutung.

SABAH INTERIOR CLUSTER

The Sabah Interior Cluster includes the Kadazandusun, Murut, and Paitanic sub-cluster people groups. As such, these three sub-clusters include a number of people groups who sometimes overlap in geographical area, though small differences in the customs, habits, and even physiques of the different groups are apparent. These various people groups are the original inhabitants of the places in which they live, or have at least lived there for hundreds of years.



View of Mount Kinabalu (Sabah, Malaysia)

They are distinguishable from the Sabah Coastal Cluster in that they generally live in areas away from Sabah's coastlines. Communities live along the lowland rivers and on plains, and up through steep hill ranges to 1,300 meters (4,300 feet). Certain groups tend to predominate in particular regions—for instance, the Rungus have a strong influence in Kudat.

The People and Their Identity

These indigenous peoples generally regard themselves as belonging to certain lineage groups, but through time internal migration has brought about intermingling. They have an extremely strong cultural, emotional, and spiritual attachment to their land. Moreover, they show a strong sense of belonging to their respective groups. As a result, they find identity and take pride in belonging to a particular people group.

Traditionally, the peoples of the Kadazandusun sub-cluster derived their livelihood from farming, living in large kinship groups in longhouses and working the fertile hills and plains of north and west Sabah. Their principal crop is irrigated rice, which they supplement with



A Kadazandusun Girl

the semi-nomadic slash-and-burn agriculture that produces dry rice, corn, and sweet potatoes. The peoples of this sub-cluster speak related Dusunic languages and share similar animistic belief systems.

The Murut sub-cluster lives in the far reaches of the interior and the southern region of Sabah bordering Kalimantan and Sarawak. They still live off the land by hunting, fishing, gathering, growing vegetables, or keeping their own animals. Until recently, the Murut were a remote and isolated group of peoples who observed a semi-nomadic lifestyle.

Although many of the peoples in the Sabah Interior Cluster have become successful rice producers, many of the younger generation have followed a wave of modernization and moved to bigger towns, diversifying successfully into various professions.



Kadazandusun Children

Religion

Traditionally, all the interior peoples were animists. Some of these various people groups have turned to the Christian faith. Some have turned to Islam. However, many still maintain their strong cultural identity and heritage, keeping to their traditional beliefs. As such, rituals and festivals that pay reverence to mythical and legendary heroes and deities are still practiced. Examples include the grandly celebrated *Pesta Kaamatan* or Harvest Festival.

These interior peoples believe that all things are interconnected physically and spiritually. Human existence blends with nature and spirits in a state of balance. Occasionally the spirits interfere with the human spirits, thus causing harm. A special mediator (priestess for the Kadazandusun) acts as a go-between in the spirit world

in order to restore balance. They also believe in the after-life—enjoyment for those who do good but suffering for those who do evil on earth.

Because of their strong relationship with and respect for the forces of nature, they very much depend upon their geographical surroundings. As a result, their rituals and ceremonies emphasize the need to stay in harmony with nature. They strongly believe that the birds, animals, weather, and trees will bring prosperity or hardship.

Language

The interior peoples speak many languages and dialects. Most of their languages have never been written down. When communicating with other people groups they often speak the common Malay, which is the medium of instruction in all national schools. As more and more are attaining education, many prefer to speak Malay (and sometimes English) to using their own language. Older people still speak their respective mother tongues, and for those young people who remain in their home villages after they finish school, there is a desire to regain their culture and language.



A Lotud (Tuaran Dusun) Lady Preparing Dinner in Her Home

Culture

The interior communities maintain close relationships by actively participating in the gatherings, rituals, or ceremonies related to the birth of a child, the death of someone, weddings, and harvest festivals. Community members are quick to lend a helping hand to others in need without being asked.

These peoples value their cohesiveness and very tightly-knit relationships. This spirit of togetherness is often exhibited in the longhouse community. However, many of the interior peoples have left communal longhouse dwellings, choosing instead to live in modern houses.

Thus, the community spirit among them is declining.

Conclusion

Although modern industry is changing Malaysia, a considerable proportion of the interior population still relies on the land for survival. For many communities, the traditional methods of agriculture, fishing, and hunting have stood the test of time and are used in much the same way as they were

centuries ago.

The diverse landform, soils, climate, and vegetation provide a diverse agro-ecosystem for many of the land-based indigenous communities. Apart from subsistence farming, they also rely on the natural resources of the forests and rivers. Their cash income is derived from surplus food crops, cash crops, jungle produce, and fish sold in the market.

But modern development is fast depleting the natural resources of the interior peoples, making traditional food resources more scarce. Introduction to more modern methods of farming may enable them to be more productive, and there may be ways to improve their crops that will increase their sale value. The peoples of the Sabah Interior Cluster historically are important minority groups within the cultural fabric of Malaysia. Time will tell how modern development and other changes will impact other aspects of their lifestyles.

Although changes have already influenced their lifestyles, they still take pride in belonging to their respective people groups.



A Tagal Murut Lady

SABAH INTERIOR CLUSTER



KADAZANDUSUN PEOPLE GROUPS



Population	Major Religion	Language
480,000	Roman Catholic/ Animism	Various Kadazandusun

Who are the Kadazandusun?

The Kadazandusun people groups are the largest indigenous grouping in Sabah. The Malaysia 2000 census placed their number at 479,944 or about 18.4% of the total state population.

Although the census counts them as a single people group there are in fact more than twenty ethnolinguistic people groups within the number above. The largest of these are the Central Dusun, Coastal Kadazan, Labuk-Kinabatangan Kadazan, Bundu Dusun, Rungus Dusun, Tambunan Dusun, Kimaragang and Tempasuk Dusun. Although these various people groups are scattered across more than half of the state in the western, northern and central portions, most of them live in the interior, usually along one of the many rivers rather than in coastal areas. An exception are the Coastal Kadazan who live along the west coast in the Penampang and Papar Districts.

The Coastal Kadazan dialect is the most well-established Kadazandusun dialect even though they are not the largest people group numerically. This may be due to their close proximity to the capital of Kota Kinabalu, and the fact that their language is used in some Sabah newspapers and radio broadcasts. It is also taught in primary schools.

What are their lives like?

The Kadazandusun people groups are all primarily agriculturalists with rice growing supplemented by vegetable gardening and animal husbandry. Many have also found jobs in the timber industry that has boomed in the last two decades. Village life is usually communal, but those in urban areas tend to be less so. Although many hold on to certain aspects of their culture, the lifestyle of the Kadazandusun in the urban and developed

areas is quite different from those in the remote rural areas.

What do they believe?

The Kadazandusun were traditionally animists but have been influenced by both Christianity and Islam. Many of those that the government counts as Christians come from a church tradition where any child that is born into a family that calls itself Christian is also considered to be Christian.

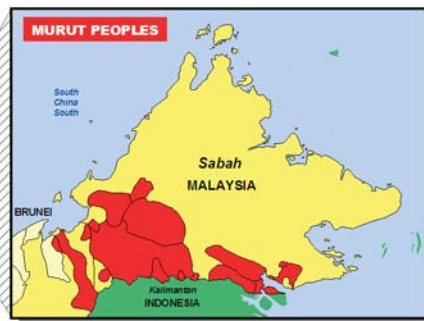
Those holding to traditional religion today believe in a spirit world that is especially important in the cycle of rice cultivation as well as major events in the cycle of life. Although believing in a supreme being who created everything, they also attribute spirits to many things in nature such as birds, animals, and plants. The "rice spirit," in particular, figures prominently in their beliefs and practices. Some of the Kadazandusun people groups are noted for their use of *bobohizan* 'priestesses' for controlling the spirits.

What are their needs?

While many of the Kadazandusun have experienced the benefits of an improving educational system and the modern economy, those who live in rural areas in particular have not experienced the same level of progress. For those in the mainstream of modernization, a different problem exists as they try to maintain their cultural heritage and identity.

For those trusting in traditional religion, whether it is animistic or nominally Christian traditions, the greatest need is for them to hear and respond to the good news. Pray that many people would believe and have a vital and personal faith.

MURUT PEOPLE GROUPS



Population	Major Religion	Language
136,000	Roman Catholic/Islam	Murutic languages

Who are the Murut?

The Murut comprise several people groups that are scattered in parts of Borneo Island including Brunei, Kalimantan (Indonesia), and the East Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak. Their largest numbers are in Sabah but some also inhabit the rural Temburong District in Brunei. They were among the last tribal groups on Borneo to renounce headhunting. The largest Murut people groups are Tagal, Tidung, Timugon, Sembakung, Paluan, Bookan, Kalabakan, and Serundung Murut. The Sabah Murut population is around 135,000 while around 1,200 are found in Brunei.

The literal meaning for Murut is 'hill people'. The Murut were formerly shifting cultivators moving their settlements every few years. Each people group has their own dialect, but most are also conversant in Malay which is the national language in Brunei and Malaysia.

What are their lives like?

The Murut used to live in communal longhouses, usually near rivers. Today, they have abandoned this style of living for individual family houses. These modern-style Murut villages are still located in the areas of their former longhouse communities. They are a very hospitable people.

Traditionally, they used the rivers as their highways. They planted hill rice and tapioca, and hunted and fished for a living. The men were skilled hunters, using blowpipes, spears and hunting dogs. Today, cultivating hill rice is their main occupation. Saw milling, timber processing and military careers are other means of livelihood.

Generally speaking, the Murut in Brunei have participated in the economic prosperity and modernization of Brunei Darussalam over the past few

decades. The Murut in Sabah have also had increased opportunities resulting from modernization, although those who live in remote locations have not benefited as much from these changes.

What do they believe?

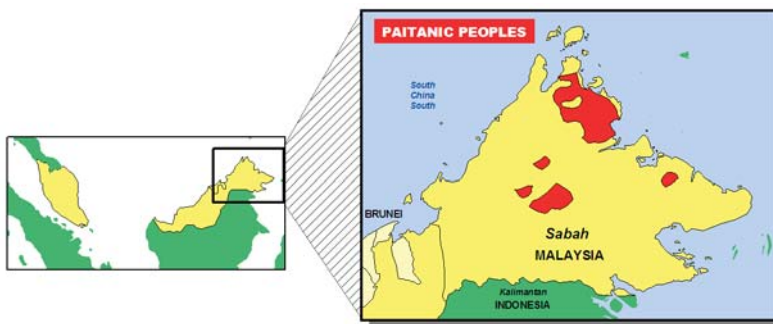
Many of the Murut peoples in both Sabah and Brunei characterize their entire people group as being Christian. But, this is often done to distinguish their culture from their earlier culture and from the predominant Muslim culture than to characterize individual beliefs.

Many of those that call themselves Christian are nominal believers. Among church members there is a mix of Roman Catholic and Protestant affiliations. Brunei statistics reveal that the Murut community is 58% Muslim, 30% "tribal religionists" (animists) and the rest Christian. Malaysian census data count the Murut in Sabah as about 82% Christian, 13% Muslim, and 5% other. These numbers can be misleading since they count all those in a household as having the same belief as the head of the household.

What are their needs?

Opportunities for better education and economic improvement are limited in the more remote areas. Those choosing to pursue better opportunities are forced to move out of their local culture. Pray that in the face of local restrictions believers will persevere and will also share the good news. His Word is available in some of the Murutic languages. Pray that non-believers, as well as the many nominal believers, would respond to His Truth as they hear and read it.

PAITANIC PEOPLE GROUPS



Population	Major Religion	Language
55,000	Islam / Christianity / Animism	Various Paitanic

Who are the Paitanic?

The Paitanic people groups in Sabah include the Tambanua (Tombonuo), Linkabau, Abai Sungai, Upper Kinabatangan, Kalabuan, Dusun Segama, and Sinabu Dusun. Linguistically, the Tambanua and Linkabau are closely related and the Upper Kinabatangan, Kalabuan, Dusun Segama, Sinabu, Lanas Lobu, and Tampias Lobu are similar. The Abai Sungai dialect is not closely related.

According to the 2000 Malaysian census, the total population for these peoples was 52,508. The Tambanua is by far the largest at 24,266 with all the others being under 10,000. The Tambanua and Linkabau are found in the Beluran (Labuk-Sugut), Pitas, and Kota Marudu districts in northern Sabah. The Abai Sungai are found along the lower Kinabatangan river in the eastern part of the Kinabatangan district. The Tampias Lobu are found in three villages in Ranau around the town of Tampias. The Upper Kinabatangan, Dusun Segama, and Sinabu are primarily along the upper reaches of the Kinabatangan River. The Lanas Lobu (including Rumanau) are found in the Keningau and Kinabatangan districts.

What are their lives like?

Most of these peoples are primarily agriculturists with rice being the most important crop. The family and the village are the basic structures around which these peoples center their lives. Families provide for most of their individual needs by rice farming or fishing and equally sharing the work load. The family has the use of village land based on its residence in the village, but it does not actually own the land.

One of the distinguishing features of many villages is their role as a ceremonial unit. Ceremonies are performed for the health and welfare of an individual,

and the village as a whole. During some ceremonies, the village pathways are sealed off and outsiders kept away to ensure trespassing does not disturb those spirits.

What do they believe?

Traditionally these peoples were animists, although both Christianity and Islam have taken root. Animistic practices have become intertwined with Muslim customs in some villages. *Allah* is thought to be incomprehensible and unreachable, while demons are in contact with man daily. Shamans use chicken sacrifices in an attempt to placate these spirits when their displeasure becomes apparent in the form of sickness.

Christian outreach has made progress through means of community development and education. Muslim outreach carries out similar activities, such as working in wet rice production and cash crop expansion, in order to expand the influence of their religion. Animistic practices still exert a powerful influence even over those professing to be Christian or Muslim. Most of the important village ceremonies are attended by all, regardless of religious affiliation. Christian substitutes for harvest, fertility and village renewal ceremonies have not been widely accepted and most villagers still are active in traditional rituals associated with animism.

What are their needs?

Community development work is seen as a viable way to bless the community and to help these groups adapt to their changing world. Pray that believers will provide health care, nutrition, literacy, and agriculture programs, while at the same time be able to share the truth of the good news. Portions of the Word are available in only some of these languages.

SARAWAK INTERIOR CLUSTER

Sarawak has a population of more than two million. The Sarawak Interior Cluster makes up forty four percent of the population. It consists of three primary sub-clusters, those being the Upriver Peoples sub-cluster, the Iban sub-cluster, and the Bidayuh sub-cluster. As such, several ethnolinguistic people groups are included in each one of these sub-clusters. The Upriver Peoples sub-cluster is made up of at least twenty-five people groups. The Iban sub-cluster has at least four people groups located in Sarawak and Brunei and other related groups living in Kalimantan. The Bidayuh sub-cluster consists of six people groups located in Sarawak and other related groups living in Kalimantan.

The Upriver Peoples sub-cluster have a population of 110,000. They live upriver in Sarawak's vast interior while some are found in Brunei. People often refer to these peoples as *orang ulu* 'people of the headwaters'. These are all Sarawak natives who are not Iban, Bidayuh (Land Dayak), Malay or Melanau. They consist of five percent of the population of Sarawak and generally live in the higher elevation interior regions.

The Iban people groups number over 650,000 and are mostly located in the interior areas along the river valleys of Batang Ai, the Skrang River, Saribas, the Rajang River in Sarawak and in some parts of Brunei.

The Bidayuh people groups account for 132,000 and are mostly located in the districts of Bau and Serian.

The People and Their Identity

The Sarawak Interior Cluster comprises forty-one people groups, each embracing their own unique, rich, and diverse language, customs, and culture. They show a strong sense of belonging and take pride in their respective people groups. They are warm and hospitable towards other local peoples and foreigners.

Most of them were once fierce headhunters. Taking a head was an important rite of passage and source of honor among the men. They believed that magi-



Penan Houses in the Interior of Sarawak



An Iban Longhouse

cal powers emanated from severed heads. The young women often encouraged or even dared young men to take someone's head before accepting them as lovers.

Today, more and more of the younger generation are educated and migrating to the urban areas to find a better way of living. Many work in East Malaysia and Brunei's towns and cities in the timber and oil industries. They return to their villages only during public holidays and harvest seasons. Older folks prefer to live in their villages, while there are still some who dwell in the forests, living a semi-nomadic way of life, such as the Penan people.

Most of these peoples prefer to live in longhouses. A traditional longhouse is home to many families. Some of the longhouses are built on stilts along the riverbanks and may have as many as twenty five doors. Each family has their own family room, and the whole community shares the veranda.

Religion

Sarawak has unique and colorful festivals such as the *Gawai Dayak* 'Harvest Festival', *Gawai Kenyalang* 'Hornbill Festival' and *Gawai Antu* 'Festival of the Dead'. The most common celebration among these people groups is the *Gawai Dayak* 'Harvest Festival'. This harvest festival is a time to give thanks to the gods and spirits for the bounty of the land. With centuries of tradition



Penan People in the Interior

behind it, this native ritual involves communication with the spirit world, ancestral worship and feasting with friends and family of the whole community. It is celebrated on the first week of June marking the end of the rice harvesting season and the beginning of the new planting season. Usually there will be singing, dancing, and drinking of *tuak* 'rice wine' in the longhouses.

Language

While Malay is widely known, these people groups still speak their own dialects. For those who are migrating to cities and receiving formal education, English is increasingly common as a language of communication.



Kelabit Women with Elongated Earlobes

Culture

The interior people groups of Sarawak have their own unique diversity of cultures and traditions. They are fond of personal adornment. Many older women have their hands, arms, legs and feet covered with dense black tattoos. One tradition that most followed is the art of elongating the earlobes. Using heavy brass earrings, the earlobes were made to stretch as far down as the shoulders. It was considered a sign of beauty in both men and women; these days such long earlobes are found almost exclusively among older people.

These people are very artistic and musically talented. The women produce beautiful bead work, with which they decorate everything from sun-hats to baby carriers made out of rattan. The men are master woodcarvers, producing statues, masks, blowpipes, and *klirieng* 'burial



An Iban Lady Working the Field

poles' from tough jungle hardwoods.

When visiting a longhouse, certain rules must be followed. Always ask permission before you enter any room in the longhouse. Shoes or any footwear should be taken-off when sitting or entering a room. It is rude to stretch out the legs when sitting. Don't take photos of

children without permission. Bringing a gift is a good way to establish relationships with the people. Dinners are usually a long and elaborate affair, with everyone sitting on the floor and helping themselves to the food. Longhouse hospitality often includes offering a drink of *tuak* 'rice wine' to guests.

Conclusion

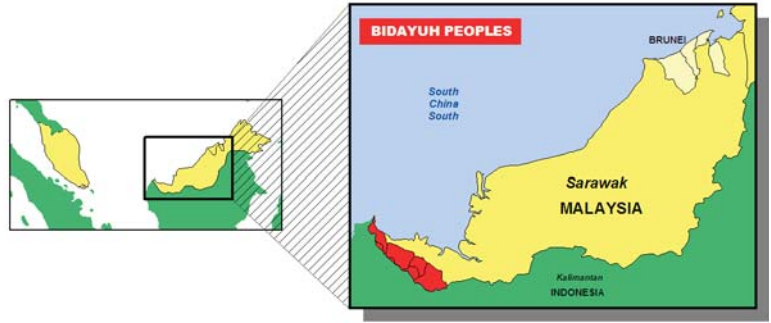
Today, some of Sarawak's interior people groups are showing signs of influence from the western world. Longhouses have taken on a more modern appearance. Modern appliances such as televisions, refrigerators, and other imported goods can be found. Many younger people desire to gain knowledge of the latest technologies and fashions. Education is considered the key to social status and success. Many are going to schools and universities and working as professionals in different parts of Malaysia and even abroad.

At the same time, many of these people still value their distinct cultural customs and traditions. Some still live in close communities, maintaining the traditions of the longhouse. Others prefer a semi-nomadic way of life, preferring to live in the forests and interior regions of Sarawak. In such cases, children do not receive a formal education. Instead, they learn the ways of their ancestors and pass those ways on to their own children. As a result, these peoples continue to find identity in their long historical past.



A Kayan Lady

BIDAYUH PEOPLE GROUPS



Population	Major Religion	Language
167,000	Christianity	Bidayuh

Who are the Bidayuh?

The Bidayuh are the third largest indigenous community in Sarawak after the Iban and the Malay. They include six main dialectical subgroups: Bau-Bidayuh, Biatah-Penrissen, Bukar-Sadung, Padawan-Sembaan, Rara and Salako. All the subgroups were collectively called Land Dayak in the past but were officially named Bidayuh by government action in 2002. Their total population in the 2000 census was 166,756 (about eight percent of the Sarawak population).

Their traditional homeland was in the southwestern tip of Sarawak with ninety-three percent living in the Kuching Division and another seven percent in the nearby Samarahan Division. As late as 1980, nearly all of the Bidayuh were found in 291 villages in the contiguous districts of Lundu, Bau, Kuching, Serian, and Samarahan. More recently there has been increasing movement of the young, especially those with vocational or professional skills, to other parts of Sarawak. Significant numbers are now found in the towns of Miri, Sibu, and Bintulu.

What are their lives like?

The Bidayuh were traditionally longhouse dwellers who made their living by subsistence farming. In recent years many have abandoned longhouses for single houses within villages, but many aspects of their traditional culture and social organization have been retained. Rice farming is still an important part of their culture and economy. The agricultural cycle is marked by important festivals called *Gawai*. Their way of life is structured by their *adat* (customary law). There is a strong sense of cooperation and communal sharing that goes back to the longhouse culture. Economic development and education have brought many of the Bidayuh into the mainstream of modern Sarawak society, but they

have managed to maintain many distinct aspects of their culture.

What do they believe?

Traditionally, the Bidayuh were animists with some influence from Hinduism and Buddhism. While they attribute spirits to many things in nature such as birds, animals, and plants, many who hold to the traditional religion today believe in a supreme god who comes to their assistance in the cycle of rice cultivation as well as major events in the cycle of life.

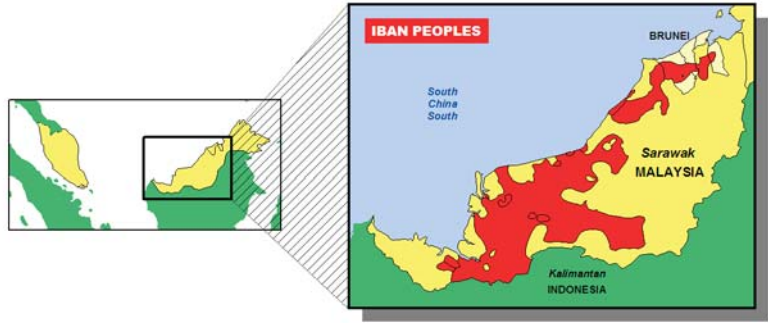
Many of the Bidayuh have become Christians. Although many Bidayuh have come to sincerely believe the good news and do attend church, some remain nominal Christians.

What are their needs?

While many of the Bidayuh have experienced the benefits of an improved educational system and the modern economy, the rural Bidayuh in particular are not experiencing the same level of progress. For those in the mainstream of modernization, there is a challenge to maintain their cultural heritage and identity.

There is growing interest in developing their language for use in schools. Translation of the good news has been done in one dialect, and there is interest in doing so for other dialects. Pray that all Bidayuh would have access to education and the benefits of an improved economy, and that they would have access to the good news whether they are from traditional or church backgrounds so their lives could be transformed.

IBAN PEOPLE GROUPS



Population	Major Religion	Language
480,000	Animism / Islam / Christianity	Iban

Who are the Iban?

The British, who came into contact with the Iban people groups in the 1840s, mistakenly named them Sea Dayak, since they were formerly pirates and fisherman. They were also known as the most fearless headhunters on the island of Borneo. The Iban of today are no longer headhunters but are generous, hospitable, and peaceful people. They are the largest people group in Sarawak and are one of the main indigenous people groups in Brunei.

The people groups under the Iban cluster, in addition to the Iban of Sarawak and Brunei, include the Balau, Remun and Sebuyau. All these Iban people speak different languages which are classified as a subgroup in the Malayic-Dayak family of languages.

What are their lives like?

Farming is the main occupation of the Iban community, but not many are self-sufficient as they must buy additional food to supplement what they grow. They grow cash crops such as pepper, rubber, cocoa, oil palm, and fruits. Some still hunt wild animals in the jungle. Traditionally, Iban hunted by setting traps or using blowpipes, but today many train hunting dogs to run down their prey. They no longer rely on the rainforest's resources to survive. Increasingly, younger Iban are becoming qualified professionals and migrating to major towns and cities.

Traditionally, the Iban lived in longhouses. Some have now abandoned the longhouse style of living. However, many still maintain ties to their ancestral longhouses. Each settlement has two important officials: the *tuah burong* (religious head) takes care of all religious activities; and the *tuah rumah* (village head) is the administrator and custodian of Iban customary law and the arbiter in community

conflicts. However, the Iban are a very democratic and egalitarian people. All adults have a say in how the community is run.

Some of the Iban peoples' unique and colorful festivals are the *Gawai Dayak* 'harvest festival', *Gawai Kenyalang* 'hornbill festival', and *Gawai Antu* 'festival of the dead'.

What do they believe?

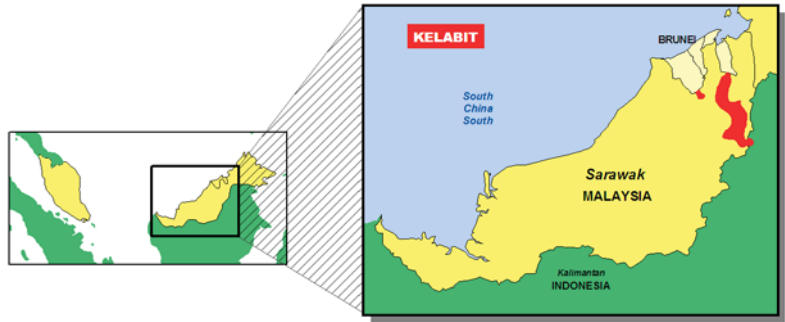
Like most other ethnic groups in Sarawak, the Iban are traditionally animists. Many still hold strongly to their traditional rituals and beliefs, many of which integrate closely with rice planting and harvesting. Rice agriculture is a highly ritualized activity and is really a complete way of life, rather than merely an economic pursuit. Nearly all of their religious ritual has to do with ensuring the success of the crop. Rice is believed by the Iban to have a soul. At the annual *Gawai Dayak*, the rice harvest festival, many Iban gather to witness the rice spirit appeasement ceremony.

Today, many of the Iban are Christians, while a growing number are marrying into Malay Muslim families. It is common to see a mixture of traditional Iban and Islamic Iban families living together in a modernized Iban longhouse.

What are their needs?

Despite living on fertile land with adequate rainfall, food production is insufficient for their needs. The Iban could benefit from improved agricultural training. Pray that God will touch the hearts of local believers to help Iban people who are in need of developing their economic status. The good news is available in one major Iban language.

KELABIT



Population	Major Religion	Language
5,000	Christianity	Kelabit

Who are the Kelabit?

The Kelabit are a small ethnic group in northeast Sarawak. The Kelabit heartland, Bario lies 1,000 metres above sea level in the remote Kelabit Highlands. Bario is accessible only by air transport. Sixteen Kelabit villages are located within this highland plateau, while four other villages are located in the lowlands along the tributaries of the Baram River.

The Kelabit's ancestors were traditionally farmers and headhunters. The Kelabit of today live a more progressive life. Many have migrated to urban areas for work or further education.

The Kelabit are a close-knit community, noted for their cheerful, industrious and refined nature and generous hospitality. Family life and friendships are highly valued in their society.

What are their lives like?

Most Kelabit villages are longhouse settlements. The rural Kelabit plant wet-paddy, producing high quality rice commonly known as 'Bario Rice'. They also cultivate fruits and raise buffaloes, sheep and cattle. The people hunt and fish when the rice-planting season is over.

The level of education among the Kelabit is considerably high. Many work in the civil service and the private sector in major urban areas.

They used to strictly observe a social hierarchy which consists of three classes, namely the *paran* 'aristocrats', the *pupa* 'middle class' and the *anak lun ian ada* 'commoners'. However with the advent of Christianity and education, such classifications are slowly diminishing.

A Kelabit couple may mark their new status as

parents and grandparents by changing their names at a special festive ceremony called *Irau Naru Ngadan*.

The Kelabit are good dancers. Well-known dances include the *Arang Papate* (The Dance of War) and the graceful *Arang Menengang* (The Dance of the Hornbill).

Singing, story-telling and joke-sharing sessions are popular traditional pastimes. Games such as football and volleyball are also popular among them.

Antique beads are highly valued by the Kelabit. These centuries-old valuable beads are not only used as body adornments but also serve as family heirlooms.

What do they believe?

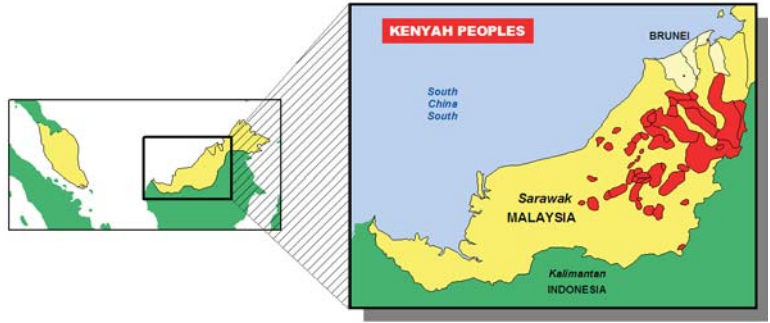
The Kelabit's forefathers were fervent animists. They appeased spirits and depended on the sighting of certain animals to warn them of impending disaster. Certain taboos and bad omens required the abandonment of ripening rice crops, the dissolution of marriages and even the killing of newborn infants.

The arrival of Christianity in the 1940s saw the Kelabit discarding most of their old beliefs. Most Kelabit today are evangelical Christians. Christmas and Easter are two important festivals celebrated as a community.

What are their needs?

The large migration of the younger generation to the urban areas has resulted in a shortage of manpower in the rice fields. The remote location of the Kelabit Highlands often forces schoolchildren to complete their education in far away places. Many villages are now left with only the elderly and the very young. Pray for the living testimony of believers to other people in their area.

KENYAH PEOPLE GROUPS



Population	Major Religion	Language
40,000	Christianity	Kenyah

Who are the Kenyah?

Located in the high interior areas of Sarawak State and West Kalimantan live a people who call themselves Kenyah. There are approximately 40,000 Kenyah which comprise over forty divisions and live in more than 110 communities. One of the Upriver Peoples, they can be found living near river headwaters along the lower and upper reaches of the Baram and Balui Rivers, as well as in big coastal towns such as Miri, Bintulu and Kuching.

The fiber which seems to bind the Kenyah peoples together is the word “Kenyah,” which itself isn’t a Kenyah word but a Ga’ai-Kayan one meaning ‘upriver people’. Only certain groups are able to understand each other’s dialects while others are quite unintelligible. The differences brought about by the many dialects have divided the Kenyah peoples into several groups with varying histories.

What are their lives like?

The Kenyah cultivate dry rice in jungle clearings as their main source of livelihood. Their swidden rice agriculture, supplemented by hunting, fishing and gathering is a common feature of Kenyah society. Wage labor and cash crops are now becoming important additions to their economy as areas become more accessible for trade.

The Kenyah traditionally lived in villages comprised of multiple longhouses. Kenyah villages are almost exclusively located at the confluence of two rivers, providing easy access to current and future farm land since transportation is by river or foot.

The Kenyah have three different social classes. These classes are the *paren* ‘aristocrats’, the *panyen* ‘commoners’, and the *panyen amin* or *lipen* ‘slaves’. The *paren* exercise leadership in Kenyah communities and the *panyen* form the majority of the population.

Many Kenyah traditions are still strong but the practice of elongated earlobes is dying out. This used to be the most distinguishing feature of Kenyah women. The younger generations of educated Kenyah are migrating to urban areas seeking outside employment.

What do they believe?

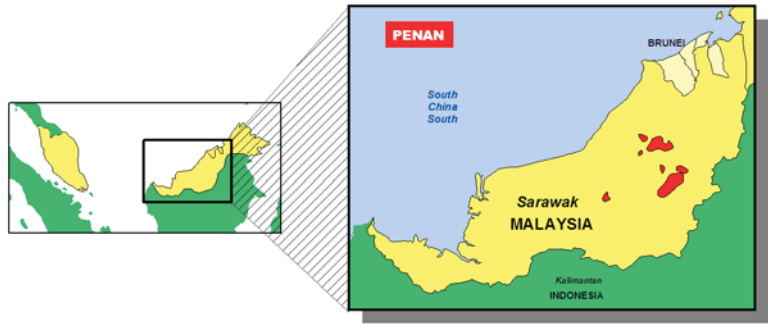
In pre-modern times, the Kenyah all adhered to traditional animism. Even though there has been a Kenyah conception of a Creator God, *Penyelung Agung*, the deity responsible for creating the world was given little importance in day to day ritual matters. Instead there were a multitude of spirits, each with their own characteristics and responsibilities, whom the Kenyah believed intervene in human affairs.

Traditional animism and the Bungan cult are nowadays rarely practiced. Although a minority of Kenyah groups are followers of Islam, the overwhelming majority of Kenyah communities have accepted Christianity, though some traditional Kenyah animistic beliefs have taken root in the church.

What are their needs?

The Kenyah have skills and abilities that can be developed for twenty-first century living. They need professional management of small-scale industries in order to help improve their livelihood. This may help younger generations from migrating to urban areas. Additional research of their language and cultural diversity will provide understanding important for translating the good news appropriately for them. Pray that local believers will have a burden to assist them with opportunities such as developing home industries that will help the Kenyah gain a better standard of living.

PENAN



Population	Major Religion	Language
10,000	Animism	Penan

Who are the Penan?

The Penan are one of the few remaining nomadic peoples who made their home in the rainforest of Borneo's interior. Today, only a few Penan maintain such a nomadic lifestyle. The Malaysian government has built longhouses for them to settle in. Most of the Penan are located around Baram (in the Miri Division) and around Belaga (in the Kapit Division). Smaller populations can be found in the Bintulu and Limbang Districts.

There are several distinct dialects of Penan, which are similar to the Kenyah languages but not mutually intelligible with them. However, some of the younger generations are beginning to learn Malay in order to communicate with other people groups.

What are their lives like?

The Penan who now live in longhouses cultivate large plots of terraced rice fields. While they have taken up sedentary agriculture as their main livelihood, the change from their traditional hunter-gatherer lifestyle has been difficult. They still hunt wild animals and collect rattan, fruit and other food plants in the forests, and they still depend on the jungles to collect trade items such as camphor, *jelutong* 'wild rubber', *damar* 'a type of resin', *gaharu* 'incense wood', and rattan for making baskets, hats, and bags. Their diet includes fish and prawns from the rivers.

The Penan are generally gentle and soft-spoken. They are closely knit as a community, and they share whatever food they get from the forest. The traditional hunting weapon of the Penan is a *keleput* 'blowpipe'. It is made from straight-grained wood, drilled by a long metal rod and uses darts dipped in poison called *tajem* 'poison obtained from a jungle tree or plant'.

Older Penan, due to their nomadic lifestyle, have

not had access to education. They cannot speak the national language and can neither read nor write their own language.

What do they believe?

The Penan still practice a system of animistic or traditional beliefs. They believe that every animal, tree, river, stream, and rock in the forest has its own spirit. In order to survive and prosper in the jungle, they must maintain harmonious relations with the spirits.

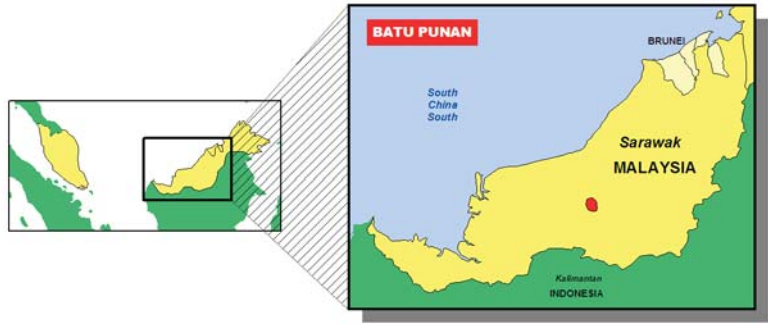
To the nomadic Penan, death is taken seriously. They believe that the soul of the dead should rest peacefully. As a result, children and adults should not make any noise near burial sites. After a dead person is buried, they will move out from that location to another location, and they will no longer mention the dead person's name. Afterwards, if a Penan wishes to mention the dead person, they will only refer to the burial site of the dead person.

What are their needs?

There is a great need for language development and education, both for older Penan and for the younger generation. Pray for more teachers to offer their skills and knowledge to these people in order to help them improve their livelihood and standard of living. Pray too that the results of such efforts would also give the Penan access to God's good news.

Many Penan still do not have legal documents such as birth certificates and Malaysian identity cards. As a result, many of them still find it difficult to look for better job opportunities and to make it possible for their children to receive an education. Pray that the Penan will gain access to all the benefits of being Malaysians.

PUNAN



Population	Major Religion	Language
1,000	Animism	Various Punan

Who are the Punan?

The Punan may have been the original inhabitants of the Niah area and may have descended from the people who used the Niah Caves in Sarawak for 40,000 years. They live a more settled life than the Penan.

Some people assume that the Punan and Penan (another people group in Sarawak) are the same since they have similar lifestyles. They are distinguished by language variances and some physical characteristics. The Punan have a darker complexion, wear their hair in a different style, have natural body hair, and don't put tattoos on their bodies. The Penan, on the other hand, pluck their facial hair, eyebrows, and eyelashes, and tattoo their bodies.

There are several main Punan dialects, though their populations are relatively small. The Punan Bah-Biau are found in central Sarawak around Merit on the Rajang River. The Punan Batu 1 (linguistically very different from Punan Bah-Biau) have settled west of Long Geng, southeast of Belaga.

What are their lives like?

The Punan are mostly agriculturists and skilled laborers. Some work in oil palm plantations and in the logging industry. In farming, they use the slash and burn method, clearing and burning their fields. The soil is then fertilized by the ashes to make it suitable for planting rice. They practice the art of making the *parang* 'long knife', which they may have adopted from the Kayan and Kenyah people groups in Sarawak.

They are well known for their singing and chanting. They sing even late at night. Some songs are sung to the spirit world, while other songs are for pleasure and storytelling. The mouth harp, which is made from a sliver of palm wood and is stored in a small bamboo

case, is the most common traditional instrument of the Punan. The harp is played by holding it in the mouth and plucking it with the index finger. Young and old, men and women, enjoy playing the instrument for entertainment. It is also a way for the young to communicate their desire and interest in one another.

What do they believe?

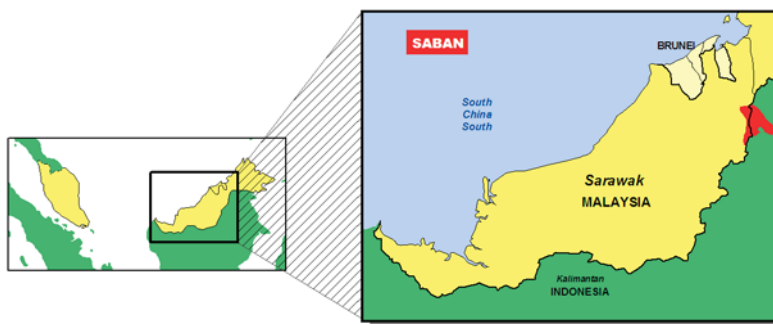
Some Punan have practiced Islam since the Malays, who arrived in the Niah area from Brunei, converted some of them, probably in the 18th century. Still, the Punan are predominantly animists. For instance, when the Punan find something from the forest while they are hunting or gathering materials, they will chant a prayer to a deity called *Bungan Malan*. In respect to the spirits, one has to humble oneself, and ask forgiveness and blessing from *Bungan Malan*. Originally, *Bungan Malan* was a Kenyah deity, and the Punan have adopted this belief.

The *manang* 'medicine man' holds great influence among the Punan. They believe that the *manang* can help them cure their illnesses.

What are their needs?

The Punan cannot escape the era of globalization. They need education and skills to help them adapt to the quickly changing world around them. Pray for teachers and educational materials to help educate the Punan. They also need assistance to improve their farming techniques in order to improve their basic livelihood. Pray that motivated believers will help them gain access to the good news in their own language.

SA'BAN



Population	Major Religion	Language
1,000	Christianity	Sa'ban

Who are the Sa'ban?

The Sa'ban are a small people group living in the Punang Kelapang region in the remote Kelabit Highlands of northeast Sarawak. Long Banga is the main Sa'ban village in the highlands. Many Sa'ban have also moved to urban areas such as Miri for work purposes.

The Sa'ban originally lived in the upper reaches of the Bahau River in east Kalimantan. Migration to Sarawak began around 1900 and continued until the late 1960s.

Despite sharing many cultural similarities with the neighbouring Kelabit, the Sa'ban are a distinct people who even today seldom intermarry with outsiders.

Historically their warriors were renowned for their bravery and steadfastness in battle. The Sa'ban are an industrious people. A strong desire exists among them to improve their standard of living.

What are their lives like?

A typical Sa'ban village consists of houses built in an alignment similar to that of a longhouse. Nowadays, individual houses are also built in the villages. Farming is a major economic activity. They practise shifting paddy cultivation. Coffee and sugarcane are planted as cash crops.

Many Sa'ban have taken up jobs in urban areas. They also work in the logging and plantation industries.

The level of education among the Sa'ban is high. Schoolchildren normally have to finish their higher secondary school education in faraway towns. A few individuals are university and college graduates.

The Sa'ban live in extended families. The adoption of children among close relatives is common.

Sa'ban society consists of aristocrats and commoners. Formerly there was also a slave class. Village heads are usually elected from the aristocratic class.

A Sa'ban couple changes their names upon the births of their first child and first grandchild. Parents also address their children using special terms. Certain traditional practices of elongating earlobes and tattooing among both men and women have almost died out. The practice of keeping antique jars and beads as heirlooms continues even today.

What do they believe?

The Sa'ban previously practised animism. Deep in spirit-worship, they kept the skulls of their enemies in their longhouses.

In the early 1950s, the first Protestant Christian missionaries went to the Sa'ban people. The Sa'ban responded positively and the people today are predominantly Christians. Christmas and Easter celebrations are looked forward to as a time of festivities and family reunions.

What are their needs?

The migration of the younger Sa'ban generation to urban areas will doubtlessly bring drastic changes to their social structure. Efforts need to be taken to preserve their cultural identity in the future.

The geographical isolation of the Sa'ban poses a problem for more community development to be carried out. There is still a need to improve transportation links with the outside world. Pray that believers would share the hope that is within them.

SARAWAK COASTAL CLUSTER

The Sarawak Coastal Cluster includes a total of five ethnolinguistic people groups. The majority of these people live along the coastal land of Sarawak. However, some live in the northern interior of Sarawak near Brunei.



A Melanau Man

The Sarawak Coastal Cluster includes the Melanau, Narom, Lelak, Kiput, and the Daro-Matu people groups. The Melanau and Daro-Matu peoples live in close proximity to one another in the central coast area of Sarawak, while the Narom, Lelak, and Kiput live in northern Sarawak near the Brunei border.

These peoples number over 127,000, with the Melanau being the majority totaling about 113,000.

The other four groups are much smaller, the Narom numbering about 3,000, the Lelak consisting of about 300, the Kiput numbering about 3,000, and the Daro-Matu numbering about 8,000.

The People and Their Identity

These peoples economically rely on fishing, boat building, and growing and processing sago. Farming rice, fruits, and vegetables, and tapping rubber also supplement their livelihood. They settle near coastal areas, building their houses on or near rivers to allow easy access to the sea and effortless transport of sago logs.

Some have abandoned longhouse style living in favor of Malay style village houses. Moreover, intermarriage with Malay persons is common. Although they have adopted Malay cultural forms in religious and lifestyle practices, they still take pride in maintaining their own particular cultural identities. As a result, they prefer to be referred to by their specific cultural names and still speak their original languages.



A Melanau House in Mukah, Sarawak



A Melanau village in Mukah, Sarawak

Religion

Formerly, they were animists, observing various taboos and conducting rituals to appease the spirit world. Today, many embrace the Islamic faith and some have acknowledged the Christian faith. Nevertheless, they have not totally abandoned their animistic beliefs. Some still seek advice from a *bomoh* 'shaman' when needing healing for a sickness. Others believe in wooden "sickness figures" which they use in traditional healing rituals.

Language

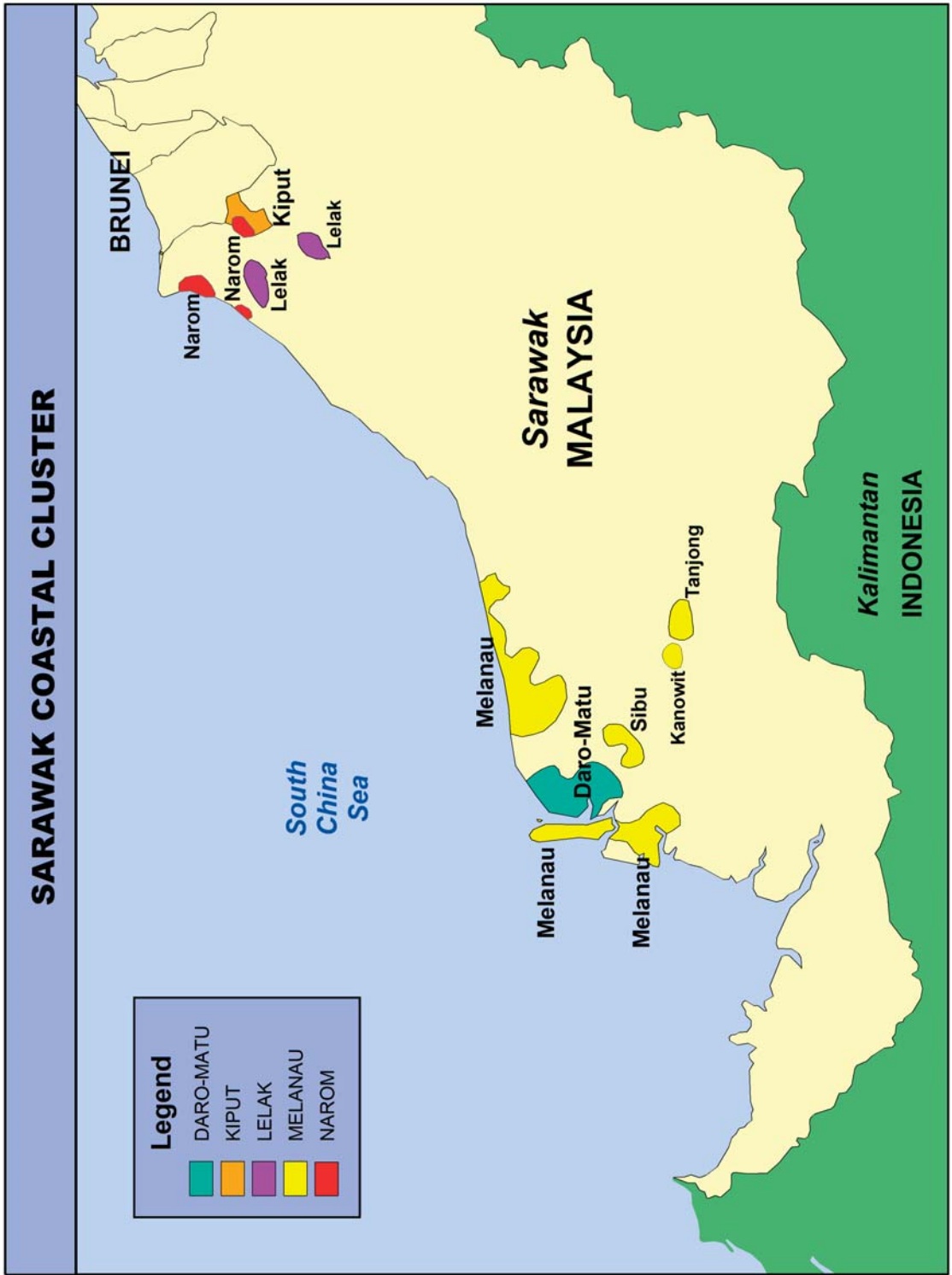
Malay is the primary trade language spoken among these peoples. However, they use their own indigenous dialects when speaking with other members of their respective people group.

Culture

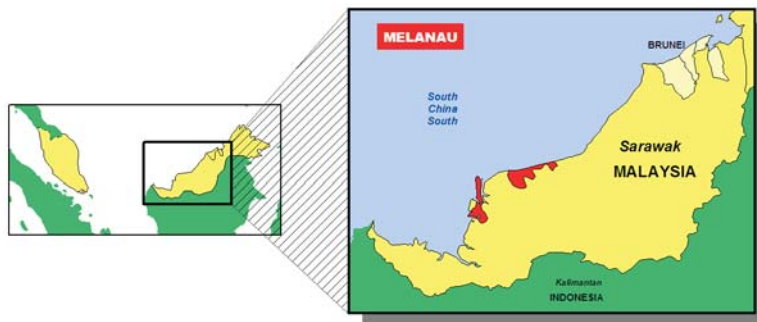
Islamic beliefs and practices largely influence the Sarawak Coastal Cluster peoples, especially in relation to birth, marriage, and burial practices. They value close relationships within their community. They also value respect for their elders as well as other people within or outside their community.

Conclusion

The people of the Sarawak Coastal Cluster were among the first settlers of Sarawak. Their rich cultural heritage provides yet another dimension to the multi-cultural, multi-religious, and multi-linguistic flavor of Malaysia. Preservation of this cultural heritage is, however, not their greatest need. More importantly, they need to discover how the good news will enhance their rich cultural heritage.



MELANAU



Population	Major Religion	Language
113,000	Islam/Christianity	Melanau

Who are the Melanau?

The Melanau are considered among the earliest settlers in Sarawak. The name Melanau was not used by the Melanau to refer to themselves until recently. They call themselves *a-likou* meaning ‘people of the river’. Legend has it that the name Melanau was given by one of the Sultans of Brunei to the inhabitants of the coastal swamp flats and riverbanks of central Sarawak.

The Melanau live in a low-lying swampy plain covered by dense tropical forest in the coastal region of Sarawak. They are mostly located in and near the towns of Mukah, Matu, Daro, Dalat, Bintulu, Kanowit, and Sibul.

Because of their group affiliation, Melanau derive their identities through people such as parents, friends, relatives, and teachers. The self is a part of the community, the family, the clan, the village, and the bureaucracy. A person’s family is the primary unit that defines Melanau roles, responsibilities, and status in the community.

The Melanau language consists of various dialects. However, most of Melanau people use the dialect from the Mukah area to communicate with those from other dialects.

What are their lives like?

The Melanau are mostly farmers, fishermen, sago producers, and traders. Cultivation of sago palm, wet rice, coconut, and rubber supplements their economy. They are also regarded as being fine boat-builders and fishermen. They consider education a priority, and some Melanau have thrived in politics, business, and public life.

The Melanau are described as open, friendly, outgoing, and non-aggressive people. They value

their relationships with friends and family members. *Gotong-royong* ‘mutual assistance’ is still practiced, especially during weddings, funerals, and farming.

Whenever someone dies, the dead person’s personal belongings are buried together with the body. The *peligin* ‘mourning period’ usually lasts almost a month. Inter-marriage among those of different religious beliefs is common and accepted.

What do they believe?

Modern Melanau are the most religiously diverse and tolerant community in Sarawak. It is normal for the Christians, Muslims, and Animists to live peacefully in one place or community. They respect one another’s beliefs and even celebrate one another’s feasts and festivities.

Traditional beliefs and practices continue to flourish among the people. A shaman can be either a man or woman who is thought to be “a master of spirits.” The Melanau still seek help from a shaman if they are sick or bothered by spirits. One Melanau celebration is the *Kaul* festival, which includes a ceremony to appease the spirits of the sea, land, forest, and farm.

What are their needs?

Many of the Melanau need better fishing techniques in order to sustain an adequate income in the fishing industry. Pray for people skilled in modern techniques in fishing to help the Melanau people improve their livelihood. They have great potential for tourism considering their rich culture and natural environment. Many Melanau still lack access to the good news. Pray that believers will commit to helping them have the good news in the language that is most appropriate for them.

MIGRANT CLUSTER

The profiles included in this book account for only a few of the migrant worker people groups among many others. The Migrant Cluster includes profiles on the Filipino, Indonesian, Vietnamese, Nepalese, and Singaporean Indian people groups.

Reports in the media indicate Malaysia has the largest foreign workforce among ASEAN countries. Singapore's foreign workforce is not far behind. Foreign workers are estimated to account for around fifteen percent of Malaysia's workforce.

Partly as a security measure related to terrorism dangers, the Malaysian government determined early in 2002 that recruitment of foreign workers would be carried out on a Government-to-Government basis. At that time the foreign workforce was listed at around 800,000 with close to 600,000 of those being from Indonesia. If illegals had been counted, in reality both numbers would have been significantly higher.

Since that time a number of MOU's (Memorandum of Understanding) have been arranged with several countries including Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Laos, Nepal, Philippines, Thailand, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Cambodia, and China, in which workers are prequalified in their home country and arrive in Malaysia with official certificates of eligibility for employment. These workers can stay for 2 to 5 years depending on the particular terms of the MOU's. By early

2006 migrant workers numbered 1.8 million working the sectors of manufacturing, plantations and agriculture,

services(including housemaids),and construction.

Although the numbers are quite dynamic, an early 2006 estimate for foreign workers include Indonesian 1,200,000, Nepalese 200,000, Indian 136,000, Vietnamese 81,000, and others 200,000. These numbers include both skilled and semi-skilled workers employed in the above mentioned sectors. They also include smaller numbers of professionals from both Asian and Western Countries.

The People and their Identity



Indonesian Construction Worker

Since the vast majority of migrant workers come from Southeast Asian countries and cultures, they find identity in Southeast Asian values. For years, scholars (Burling 1965; Mulder 1996) have claimed that Southeast Asian communities demonstrate certain region-wide cultural themes. Niels Mulder (1996:230-233), an independent anthropologist for over thirty years in Southeast Asia, proposes that Southeast Asian com-

munities revolve around the concept of order. According to Mulder, order is both a moral and social concept. If people respect the moral and social order per se, then they will receive a reward. If they do not, disorder will result.

When migrant workers arrive in a new country and encounter a new culture, they experience disorientation. They soon discover the roles they once played are no longer valid. They have basically become separated from their old social structure and are placed into a new social



Sri Lankan Restaurant Worker



Indian Immigrant Worker



Burmese Car Washer

structure. They find themselves not knowing the new social structure with its expectations. When this happens, they enter a period of scrutinization of their central values and axioms of their home culture. Until they can begin to function within the domains of the new social structure, they will remain in this period of liminality and state of confusion.

In order to deal with this state of confusion, migrants will often retain the most meaningful parts of their home culture, whether that be the food they eat, the music they like, or the clothes they wear. Moreover, they can often be found congregating together in public places.

For many of these workers, their living conditions are dependent on their employers. Employers in all sectors provide housing and transportation in fulfillment of some of the requirements of the government agreements. Even so, housing is often crowded and without sufficient basic necessities. For the most part, housing conditions are often less than adequate. This is especially true for those migrants working at construction sites.

Working conditions can include long hours and be physically demanding. It is not unusual for migrant workers to work up to sixteen hours per day seven days a week.

Isolation in their job site also occurs. They are often not included as a part of the larger community and find themselves even isolated from their own people group. In addition, separation from families back in their home country is a hardship facing all foreign workers whether unskilled or professionals.

Religion, Language and Culture

The religious beliefs of migrant workers depend mostly on the country and the people group from which they come. Many of the Indonesians are Muslims while those from Bangladesh include both Hindus and Muslims. Those from Myanmar, Vietnam, Thailand, and Japan are predominately Buddhists although the variants of these in some cases are distinctly different from Buddhist practices normally found in Malaysia and Singapore.

As expected, language and culture vary depending upon the country and people group from which they come.

In recent years, there has been significant church growth amongst migrant worker populations.

Conclusion

Foreign workers need access to all the normal social services plus some specialized services related to their separation from families and their isolation in a foreign culture. In addition, some need protection from unfair exploitation by unscrupulous employers.

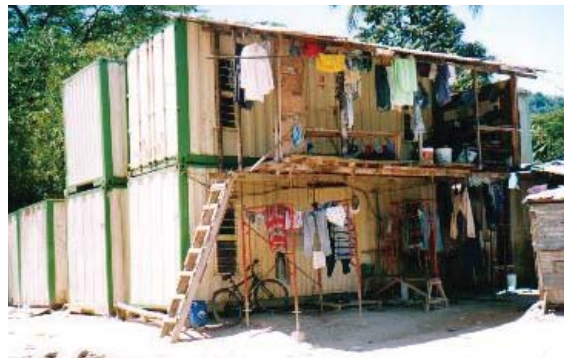
To meet their needs, Christians can become a voice to ensure that exploitation does not take place. They can also reach out to meet migrant peoples felt needs, especially during their initial adjustments.

During the period of adjustments and confusion, and questioning traditional values and home culture. Christians need to take advantage of this unique opportunity to bless and meet the many needs of these displaced peoples.

The rapid pace of development is bringing many peoples to Malaysia and Singapore. This influx of migrant workers from many nations is occurring within the neighborhoods of Christians and local churches.



An Indonesian Maid

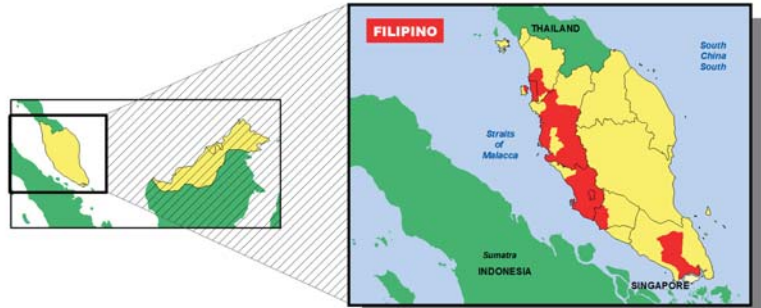


Living Quarters for Migrant Construction Workers



Vietnamese Factory Worker

FILIPINO



Population	Major Religion	Language
430,000	Roman Catholics/ Animism	Tagalog

Who are the Filipino?

The Filipinos are people from the Philippines and constitute one of the largest migrant groups in all of Malaysia. They reside both in Peninsular and East Malaysia, predominantly living in the urban areas. Due to the poor economic situation of their country, they entered Malaysia hoping to be able to earn sufficiently to provide basic necessities for their families back home and to have a better life.

Since they came from different parts of the Philippines, they speak different dialects. Even for those who have obtained Malaysian citizenship, they still speak their own dialect whenever they meet someone of the same people group. The most common dialect is Tagalog, the Philippine national language.

What are their lives like?

The Filipinos are involved in various occupations. The majority of them work as contract workers in different parts of Malaysia but some have settled in and married the locals. Those who have obtained Malaysian citizenship are able to work in the private sector and are often involved in trading. Migrant workers are mostly factory workers, domestic helpers, entertainers, teachers or professors in schools and universities, furniture makers, construction workers, and professionals in medical or engineering field.

Divorce is common among the migrant workers since they are separated from their families for a long time. Most of them have not been legally divorced in the Philippines. But there are those who have remained faithful to their spouses back home.

Most of the Filipinos are warm and friendly. They are mostly open towards each other, willing to share their problems and worries.

During their free time or day-off, those who have friends often meet in certain places such as churches, rented houses, or in some recreational areas. They love to chat, talk about the latest news or gossip, cook traditional food, and eat together.

What do they believe?

Many Filipinos are Roman Catholics with a mixture of animistic beliefs. Many of them are considered Roman Catholics at birth and therefore only follow the customs and traditions they learn. Some of these customs include attending the Catholic mass and reciting the rosary (prayer to the Virgin Mary using a beaded-type of necklace). They also believe in holy objects such as holy water (water blessed by the priest), praying to images or pictures of Jesus and Mary. The Catholics worship the Virgin Mary as a divine being who could intercede for their personal needs to Jesus. Moreover, they believe that touching certain images will bring them blessings. Finally, they believe in and venerate people who are now dead and have reached "sainthood."

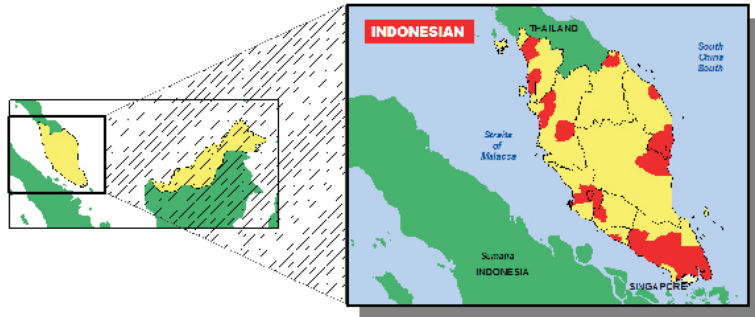
What are their needs?

Pray that local believers will help meet the needs of the unemployed Filipinos. Pray that those who are without work will turn to the Truth for help.

Pray that God will raise up teachers for the Filipino children who are not able to go to school to get proper education.

Pray for those Filipinos who have come to be believers grow into leaders that share the good news to their family and friends in Malaysia and in the Philippines.

INDONESIAN



Population	Major Religion	Language
750,000	Islam	Bahasa Indonesia

Who are the Indonesian?

Indonesians have historically represented a large portion of the Malaysian foreign workforce due to the close proximity of some of the large (and highly populated) Indonesian islands with Malaysia. Indonesians predominantly reside in the urban areas of Peninsular Malaysia. The large island of Sumatra is just a ferry ride across the narrow Straits of Malacca and the Indonesian province of Kalimantan borders the Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak on the island of Borneo. Partly as a security measure related to terrorism dangers, the Malaysian government determined early in 2002 that recruitment of foreign workers would be carried out on a Government-to-Government basis. At that time the foreign workforce was officially listed at around 800,000 with close to 600,000 of those being from Indonesia. In reality, the number of Indonesians working in Malaysia at that time may have substantially exceeded the numbers above. The Malaysian government took proactive steps to remove Indonesians working illegally and actively manage the number of Indonesian workers as well as those from other countries. The current estimate for the number of Indonesians is 750,000. These workers are predominantly in non skilled or semi-skilled occupations such as domestic help, agriculture, grounds keepers, street cleaners, and construction.

What are their lives like?

For many of these workers, their living conditions are dependent on their employers. Large employers in all sectors provide housing and transportation in fulfillment of some of the requirements of the government agreements. Even so, housing is often crowded and without sufficient basic necessities. Working conditions can include long hours and be physically demanding. Isolation in their job site or living quarters sometimes occurs. Separation from families back in their home country is another hardship. Abuse

of domestic help is quite common.

What do they believe?

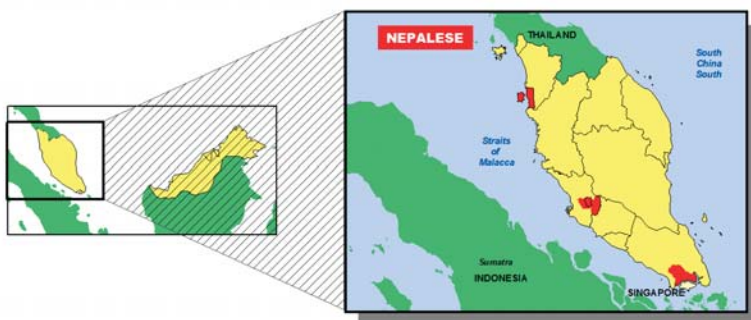
The religious beliefs of Indonesian migrant workers reflect the local culture from the parts of Indonesia that they come from. Practically all are Muslim but many come from backgrounds that include remnants of ancient tribal beliefs with animistic or spiritistic practices. Many of these people working as live-in domestic helpers situations in Malaysia will get exposure to the religions the households they work in. This includes Buddhism, Hinduism, Catholicism, and Evangelical Christianity.

What are their needs?

The Indonesian migrant workers need good access to all the social services plus some specialized services related to their separation from families and their isolation in a foreign culture. In addition, some need protection from unfair exploitation by unscrupulous employers. In recognition of this, a special agency called the Foreign Workers Service and Counselling Centre (PPKPA) has been established and is opening offices in all 13 Malaysian states. Foreign workers who register with the Centre will be entitled to insurance coverage, legal advice, social services and, most importantly, a place to go to when they have been abused or exploited. However, probably only a small fraction of the Indonesian migrant workers actually are registered in the program.

Their greatest need is for the Good News. Pray that these workers will hear and respond to the Truth while they are in Malaysia.

NEPALESE



Population	Major Religion	Language
200,000	Hinduism	Nepali

Who are the Nepalese?

Nepal, which is located between two giant nations, China and India, is a small land-locked country. Economically, Nepal is considered as one of the least developed countries. Therefore, quite a considerable number of Nepalese work abroad due to the absence of employment within the country.

The Nepalese migrant workers are people from Nepal who have come to Peninsular Malaysia, especially urban areas, to earn more income. There are about a hundred thousand legally employed Nepalese workers in Malaysia. However, an estimate of another hundred thousand Nepalese work as illegal immigrants in the country for reasons such as closure of factories or when manpower or placement agencies take advantage of them by retaining large portions of their salaries that is why they prefer to find a job on their own.

Nepali is the major language spoken. They also speak different dialects since they all come from different places in Nepal.

What are their lives like?

Majority of the Nepalese who come to Malaysia work in plantations and factories such as electronics, cosmetics, steel, and furniture. Others work in restaurants as cooks, shopping malls, printing press, and as security guards. Most of the Nepalese who go abroad are educated male from middle class families. They go abroad with a hope of earning much within a short period of time.

Generally, the work contract that most of the Nepalese get is about two to three years. Once the second year is over, the employers or business owners will provide an airfare for them to go back to their country if they want to. If the business owners pay and treat them well, they tend to stay another year to work.

The Nepalese are warm and friendly people. They value their relationship with each other and would help other fellow Nepalese when they are able to.

Many of the Nepalese migrant workers go through a lot of challenges in coming to Malaysia. The loan sharks at manpower agencies prey on the vulnerable and the desperate. Usually, the family of the worker has to sell land or take on a huge loan to be able to send abroad the relative who wants to work abroad. They have a big responsibility to pay back whatever they owe to their relatives that's why they need to work hard.

What do they believe?

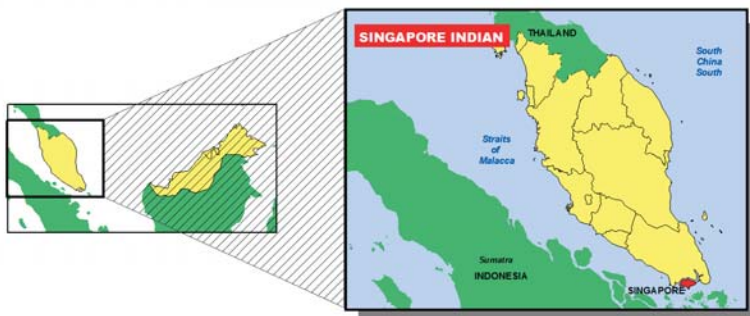
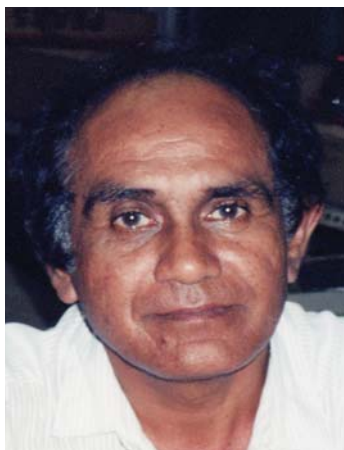
The Nepalese adhere to Hinduism. Despite being far from their country, they still celebrate festivals such as the *Dashain* (celebration of great victory of the gods over the wicked demons which falls either in October or November) and *Deepavali* (festival of lights). For these festivals, they can ask the employers for at least one day holiday.

What are their needs?

Many Nepalese are cheated and exploited by manpower agencies who take away a large amount of the workers' earnings in illegal deposits or commissions, often up to three times the actual cost of a job. Some are not treated very well by business owners and are forced to work hard with very low salary.

Language is also one of the challenges that the Nepalese face since most of them cannot speak English or Bahasa Malaysia, Malaysia's official language. As a result, some factory owners are sending them back to Nepal and are getting workers from China into Malaysia to work in their factories. Pray that God will raise up local believers in Malaysia to help with the legal issues concerning the welfare of the Nepalese migrant workers.

SINGAPORE INDIAN



Population	Major Religion	Language
30,000	Hinduism	Tamil

Who are the Singapore Indian?

Majority of the Indian migrant workers living in Singapore come from Tamil Nadu villages in southern India. These Indian migrant workers are scattered throughout Singapore in approximately three hundred work sites. Many workers are educated and literate, while others are illiterate. Those who are educated have received a secondary to a university level education. Most of the Indian migrant workers are married and have left their families behind to seek employment opportunities since there is a lack of job opportunities in India. They come with the promise of employment and are willing to make this sacrifice with an expectation of sufficient earnings to support their family back home. The vast majority of Indian migrant workers are male. However, there is also evidence of illegal immigration of Indian women to Singapore in the capacity of domestic help.

What are their lives like?

Life in Singapore is tough for migrant workers. They generally work six to seven days a week under the hot sun in risky and sometimes life-threatening situations. On most Friday and Saturday nights in Singapore's Little India neighborhood male workers meet on their evenings off work. Hundreds of workers come together along Serangoon Avenue to socialize, eat and phone home on special calling booths late into the night.

Migrant workers cannot get sick or they can receive a pay cut or not receive overtime wages if they miss work. Some workers are not able to settle their loans during their two-year contract and return to India in debt to their agent.

Due to hard work, pressure, loan repayment, new-found freedom or loneliness, many migrant workers will resort to alcoholism, prostitution, and gambling.

Some migrant workers live in well-built flats, but a majority are poorly housed and live in small shacks or containers. Migrant workers can be exploited by their employers who take advantage of loopholes in the legal system. Most Indian workers earn a low income. Work permits are only valid for two years and it is not guaranteed that their permit will be renewed. Some workers in shipyards can go without work for several months.

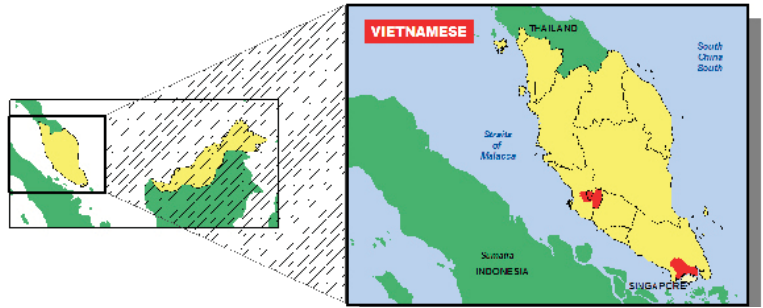
What do they believe?

Most of the Indian migrants adhere to Hinduism. A few of them embrace Islam and Christianity. Some major religious sites of the Hindus are Kalamman Temple, Sri Srinivasa Perumal Temple and Chettiar Temple. The annual Thaipusam festival is a unique public event that sees Hindu devotees trek barefoot through several downtown Singapore streets, with a peacock-feather decorated structure, called a kavadi, mounted over their head. This Thaipusam processional goes all day long and is a festival of thanksgiving.

What are their needs?

Most Indian migrants might state their problems as over-worked, exploited, lonely or overlooked by Singaporeans. They need a day off every week, better medical and dental care, safe working environment, better housing and adequate wages. Pray that more believers in Singapore will take an interest in migrant workers. Pray for more of those who will love them in Christ and are willing to care for the personal needs of these workers. Several businesses have responded by addressing the medical and needs of some of these workers. Pray that this might continue and grow. Pray for believers to have a burden to help people who are going through these crisis in their lives.

VIETNAMESE



Population	Major Religion	Language
80,000	Buddhism/ Animism	Vietnamese

Who are the Vietnamese?

Vietnamese migrant workers are an important component of Peninsular Malaysia's foreign workforce. Partly as a security measure related to terrorism dangers, the Malaysian government determined early in 2002 that recruitment of foreign workers would be carried out on a Government-to-Government basis. At that time the foreign workforce was listed at around 800,000 with only a handful being from Vietnam.

Since then, a number of MOU's (Memorandum of Understanding) have been signed or are still being negotiated with several countries including Vietnam. The MOU with Vietnam was one of the first to be negotiated and since its signing, the number of Vietnamese workers has grown rapidly. The agreement allows up to 200,000 Vietnamese workers to come to Malaysia each year. Although the broad terms of the agreement allow these workers to stay up to five years with possible extensions of an additional five years for those deemed as being "experienced" in areas of more acute needs, most are coming on two or three year contracts. The Vietnamese government grants licenses to labor-export companies to recruit and train these workers. The manufacturing and construction sectors in Malaysia already are using many such workers. Although the numbers are quite dynamic, a 2003 estimate for Vietnamese (mostly Kinh) foreign workers was 80,000.

What are their lives like?

For many of these workers, their living conditions are dependent on their employers. Large employers in all sectors provide housing and transportation in fulfillment of some of the requirements under the government agreements. Even so, housing is often crowded and lack sufficient basic amenities. Working conditions can include long hours and be physically demanding. Isolation in their job site or living quarters

sometimes occurs. Separation from families back in their home country is a hardship facing all foreign workers whether unskilled or professionals.

What do they believe?

The Kinh of Vietnam are the majority people group in Vietnam and the group from which most of these workers in Malaysia came from. They have a mixed religion that includes Buddhism as well as ancestor worship and animism. Urban dwellers may be influenced more by Buddhism while rural dwellers may be more influenced by ancestor worship and animism. The migrant workers probably reflect the same influences depending on their background.

What are their needs?

Foreign workers need good access to all the normal social services plus some specialized services related to their separation from families and their isolation in a foreign culture. Since most of the Vietnamese work in larger companies with high visibility, they may be less likely to be unfairly exploited than some of the other migrant worker groups.

Malaysian believers and some faith-based organizations have already found ways of ministering to the needs of these immigrant workers through English classes, Bible classes, legal assistance, and other supporting activities. These efforts are not only aiding the workers, but are broadening the vision of the Malaysian family of God to new opportunities.

Their greatest need is for the Good News. Pray that these workers will hear and respond to the Truth while they are in Malaysia.

CHINESE CLUSTER

Viewed from a linguistic perspective, the Chinese Cluster consists of the Cantonese, Hokkien, Teochew, Hainanese, Hakka, and Brunei Chinese people groups. These heterogeneous people groups are descendants of immigrant Chinese from different provinces in China. Earliest evidence of their arrival traces back to Cheng Ho, a Chinese eunuch, who brought a Chinese settlement to the state of Malacca in 1408. However, large-scale Chinese immigration occurred during the mid 19th and 20th centuries when tens of thousands of Chinese, driven by poverty and despair, migrated out of the coastal provinces of China to Malaysia, Brunei, and Singapore.

The peoples of the Chinese Cluster number over eight million. They form the second largest cluster behind the Malay Cluster. They also constitute Malaysia and Brunei's second largest peoples and Singapore's largest peoples.

The People and Their Identity

Traditional Chinese peoples find identity in position, education, pragmatic practices, effort, frugality, thrift, courage, meritocracy, flexibility, diligence, adaptation to change, wealth, being responsive to economic opportunity, and hard-work. Unlike the peoples of the Malay Cluster who view work as a means of living, the peoples of the Chinese Cluster view work as a way of life. As a result, many of their values are associated with commercial endeavors and related in some form or fashion to wealth. During the Lunar Chinese New Year, they bless one another by saying Gong Xi Fatt Chai (Wish you prosperity).



*A Teochew Fisherman
Mending a Net*

Chinese were historically divided along occupational lines. Traditional identification of the various dialect groups with occupation was very common. Import-export and wholesale dealers

were mostly Hokkien, grocers were mostly Hokkien and Teochew, blue-collar technical workers and goldsmiths were mostly Cantonese, proprietors of Chinese medicine shops and tailors were Hakka, and coffee-shop operators were mostly Hainanese.

However, over a period of time, this general stereotype based on occupational structure and specialization has broken down. In rural or semi-rural areas, they are tinminers, rubber and oil palm estate laborers, fishermen,

livestock breeders, and vegetable farmers. Within the urban centers they are factory workers, clerks and professionals, traders, and merchants.

Religion

When asked what religion they believe, most Chinese will respond with "Buddhism." However, this is not quite true.

Their religion is a syncretistic collection of culture, beliefs, and rituals passed down through generations that incorporate elements of Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism, all of which are mixed together with ancestral veneration.



*A Hokkien Lady asking
for a "Blessing"*



Gods in a Chinese Temple

In fact, no one single system of Chinese religious beliefs and practices exist. It is safe to say that there are as many facets and shades of Chinese religion as there are Chinese settlements, clans, and sub-clans. Though Chinese people are quick to affirm their ethnic identity, pluralism emerges in the expressions and practices of religion.

As a result, traditional Chinese are polytheistic – that is, they believe in many gods. They worship cai shen ye (the god of wealth), guan yin (the goddess of mercy), and guan gong (the ancient sainted General better known as the god of loyalty). They worship deceased ancestors, spirits, and ghosts. They also worship certain local deities that are adopted by the various communities and dialect groups.

Religious worship plays an important role in Chinese community. They worship at home, temples, and anywhere they think is proper to worship.

They observe many religious festivals. Chinese families celebrate the boisterous Lunar Chinese New Year. Many Chinese participate in cultural festivities like the colorful Dragon Boat race, the Moon Cake festival, and the processions of the various deities.



Dragon Ornament at a Chinese Temple

Cheu insists that “the Chinese have always been tolerant towards other religions” (1993:xvii). He further alleges “this tolerance is unequivocally reflected in their willingness to widen their religious boundaries, almost indefinitely, to accommodate or incorporate other religious elements into their belief system” (Cheu 1993: xvii). In most contexts, the Chinese have widened their religious boundary to incorporate local deities into their pantheon of gods thus resulting in no one single system of cultural expression, practice, and beliefs.

This wide diversity in religion is a result of what is known as assimilation. Assimilation refers to “a blending process whereby two distinct groups form a homogeneous group” (Martin and Franklin 1973:123). Assimilation occurs in societies where a people group who are usually subordinate economically, culturally, or politically, either out of choice or necessity, incorporate, adapt, and adopt the ways, language, and customs of another people group in inter-people group contacts. Much assimilated has occurred among the Chinese, finding expression in their religious practices and beliefs, the languages they speak, and the customs and traditions they deem important.



Singaporean Chinese at McDonalds

Traditional Chinese do not make a sharp distinction between religious and cultural beliefs, practices, and customs. Instead, they view religion and culture as a whole system that structures and organizes their perception of the world. In other words, life is experienced as a whole

with religion as an indwelling and inseparable part. This holistic perspective does away with the validity of such distinctions as sacred versus profane.

Language

Chinese are divided along lines between those who predominantly speak a Chinese dialect and those who predominantly speak English. Although they maintain many traditional values, English speaking Chinese are normally less appreciative of Chinese history, superstitions, customs and festivals as compared to those who speak a Chinese dialect.

For the most part, there is no common spoken language among those Chinese who predominantly speak Chinese dialect. Instead, they speak a number of different Chinese languages or dialects. Where a particular Chinese dialect is the lingua franca of the region, they will speak that dialect. In places where there are many Chinese dialect groups they use Mandarin, which is the medium of instruction in Chinese schools.

Culture

The peoples of the Chinese Cluster may look alike but adhere to different customs and traditions.

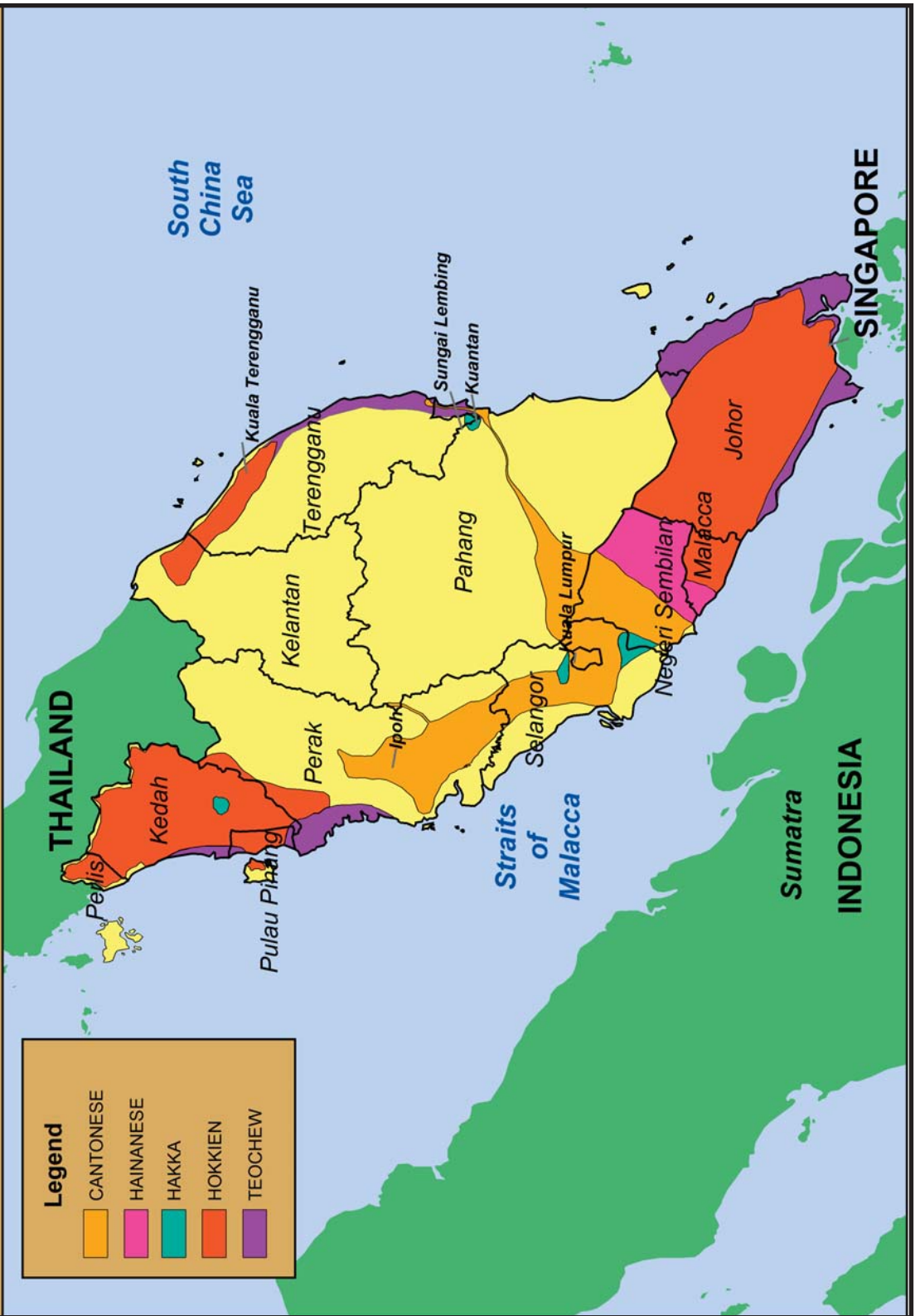
In fact, they find themselves at a place in time that they can choose from a smorgasbord of choices and those choices come available to Chinese from different vantage points, as reflected through different local contexts. As a result, some settlements maintain a very traditional cultural flavor while others have adopted a more modernistic cultural flavor.

Conclusion

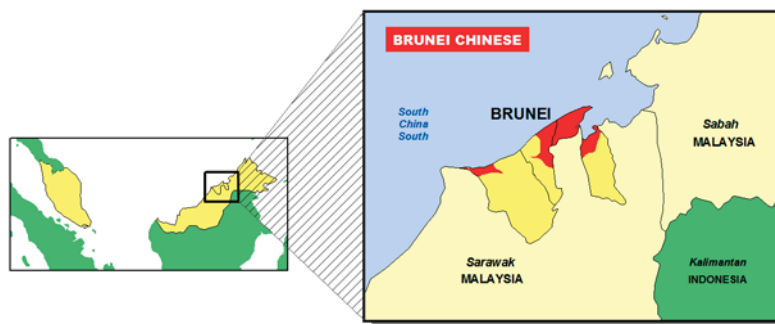
As the above discussion on the Chinese reveals, the peoples of the Chinese cluster are not homogenous. Instead, they are heterogeneous with many co-cultures residing near one another geographically. Nevertheless, they form a single cluster in relation to other non-Chinese peoples. Furthermore, they view themselves as Chinese with a distinct Chinese culture.

They have undergone a transformation from being sojourners to settlers, and later, citizens of their adopted country. As citizens, they are conscious of their Chinese identity and also their distinctiveness as one of the many people groups in Malaysia, Singapore, or Brunei. In the following profiles, each people group is unreached.

CHINESE CLUSTER



BRUNEI CHINESE



Population	Major Religion	Language
55,000	Buddhism	Mandarin

Who are the Brunei Chinese?

The Chinese are a minority race in Brunei. Their first arrival in the country is not certain but there were 736 Chinese in 1911. They originated from Mainland China. Later, many from Sarawak, Singapore, and Hong Kong came to work in the oil industry while other Chinese settlers pursued agriculture in the rural areas.

Today, most of the younger generations of Chinese are citizens of Brunei. Most of them refer to themselves as Brunei Chinese and they would no longer call China home. However, it is not true that they have cut themselves off from their roots because relations between the Chinese community in Brunei and their counterparts in China are still very strong through the Chinese Embassy in Brunei.

Besides speaking the various Chinese dialects, about 16 percent of the Chinese people use English as their first language while some 30 percent of them are Mandarin speakers. Mandarin is widely used as a means of daily communication between the Chinese people. The Chinese community is constituted of all the major dialect groups—the Hokkien, Cantonese, Hakka, Hainanese, and Teochew. They are concentrated mainly in the Brunei Muara district, which is the center of government and business.

What are their lives like?

The Chinese community generally feels insecure because many are still considered foreigners even though they were born in Brunei. But they being the biggest minority group, continue to dominate in the field of commerce.

Generally speaking, they conduct much of the country's commercial activity that has prospered Brunei. Some of them hold key governmental positions, including the position of Permanent Secretary. Yet, many are

reevaluating their position in Brunei because they are not favored in areas such as government employment and tertiary education.

The Chinese in Brunei coordinate their activities through associations. The associations make annual donations to schools, though they are not directly responsible for establishing the eight Chinese medium schools (5 primary and 3 secondary) in the country. They also contribute to charity, welfare, religion, recreation, and sports.

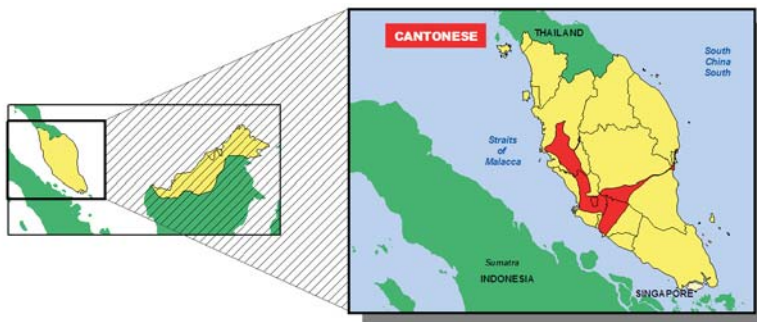
What do they believe?

The majority of Chinese in Brunei practice traditional Chinese religions while a small minority are non-religious. About 15 percent are Christians but many of these are nominal believers and a smaller proportion deeply committed to the Christian faith. Traditional Chinese religious practices in Brunei incorporate elements from Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, and other animistic beliefs. They also include practice of the customs and traditions from all the various Chinese dialect groups. An important focus of Chinese religious life has been the Buddhist Tenyun Temple built by Quemoy Hokkiens in 1918.

What are their needs?

Economically, most of the Chinese have better lives when compared with the native people in Brunei. But this does not mean that there are no poor Chinese. Many still need proper health care. They need to repair their dilapidated homes, and their children need formal education. Among the more successful Chinese, materialism can lead to indifference to their own spiritual needs and to the physical needs of the less fortunate. Pray that God would call out resourceful and committed believers to help meet both spiritual and other needs.

CANTONESE



Population	Major Religion	Language
1,200,000	Chinese Folk Religion	Cantonese

Who are the Cantonese?

Cantonese is the second largest Chinese dialect spoken among Chinese in Malaysia. A majority of Cantonese speaking Chinese are the descendants of immigrants who came from the Chinese provinces of Guangdong and Guangxi in the mid 19th and early 20th centuries.

Cantonese as a spoken language tends to sound more aggressive and rude than the other Chinese dialects. Cantonese is the Chinese lingua franca in cities and towns such as Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh, Kuantan, Seremban, and Sandakan. The Cantonese are one of the most urbanized groups with more than 80 percent living in towns. In the central region of Peninsular Malaysia, it is easy to find Chinese conversing in Cantonese. They are the majority Chinese people in the states of Negri Sembilan, Perak, Pahang, and Sabah.

What are their lives like?

In the past, the traditional stereotype of the Cantonese, as well as other Chinese groups, was that they were thrifty, expedient, hard working, and prudent. They were also regarded as shrewd in business and able to quickly learn new skills, which for the most part, are those of small traders and crafts people. However, a better way to describe the Cantonese is that they have adopted a pragmatic solution to the problem of struggling to thrive. They place great importance and value on education because they view education as a means to improve their standard of living. Today, the Cantonese together with the rest of the Chinese communities are one of the most academically competitive groups in the country.

As they are favored in the public service, private sector is the main source of employment for almost the

whole Chinese population inclusive of the Cantonese. Presently, Cantonese people are no longer restricted to work in positions like blue-collar technical workers and goldsmiths but are employed in all sorts of trade and services.

What do they believe?

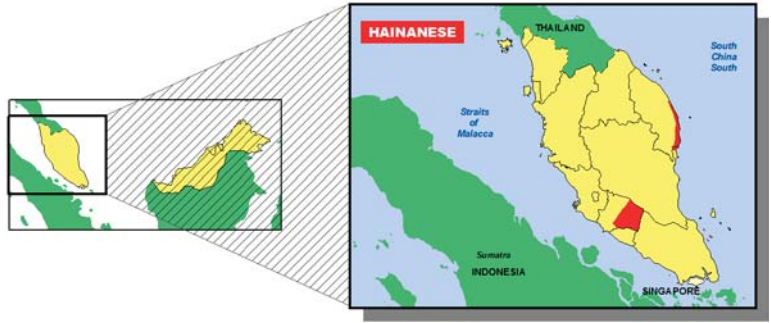
Like other Chinese groups, the majority of Cantonese profess faith in Buddhism but what they practice is correctly called Chinese folk religion. It incorporates traditional Chinese practices such as the belief in deities (bodhisattvas) who help people gain salvation.

Most Cantonese households have the deity Guanyin (the goddess of mercy) on the family altar. Guanyin is believed to have compassion for people in need. Religion, like other aspects of their life, is pragmatic and relates to the everyday issues of life. At the time of offering incense it is a routine for the Cantonese to ask Guanyin and the other deities or spirits for blessing, protection, good health, etc. More than 5% of the Cantonese are professing Christians.

What are their needs?

Most Cantonese place great importance and value on education and skills. They believe that sufficient education and skill improvement can help them improve their standard of living. In spite of professed beliefs in either Buddhism or Christianity, the risk of materialism replacing recognition of true spiritual needs is great. Pray that God's children will be reawakened to His Truth and be motivated to become His instruments in demonstrating the transforming Power of the good news. Pray that the Cantonese will see the love, grace, and mercy of God in the commitment and service of these instruments.

HAINANESE



Population	Major Religion	Language
50,000	Chinese Folk Religion	Hainanese

Who are the Hainanese?

Hainanese speaking Chinese constitute the smallest dialect among Chinese in Malaysia. Originally, Hainanese ancestors left the Chinese island of Hainan off the coast of Guangdong in the mid-19th and early 20th centuries in order to seek a better life in Malaysia.

The Hainanese dialect is linguistically part of the Min speech group, to which the Fujian dialects and Teochew also belong. Hainanese became a distinct speech group when early Chinese settlers from the nearby Fujian and Guangdong provinces came and assimilated with the original tribal inhabitants of Hainan island.

The spoken dialect of the Hainanese in Malaysia is very much the same as those in Hainan Island but it has loanwords borrowed from other languages. Spoken words may vary in pronunciation and tone. The Hainanese speaking Chinese are one of the most urbanized with more than eighty per cent living in towns. They are found all over the country but are more concentrated in the states of Selangor and Malacca.

What are their lives like?

In the past, the traditional occupational identification of the Hainanese group was coffeeshop operators. Presently, many Hainanese speaking Chinese hold positions in commerce, manufacturing, construction, banking, finance, capital services, and major industries.

Hainanese culture, especially the moral and intellectual aspect, draws from Chinese culture. For instance, parents are expected to train up their children to be good scholars and the young must respect the elder and the elder must love the young.

What do they believe?

For most Hainanese speaking families, their religion is no different from the other Chinese groups—a syncretistic mix of several beliefs and practices. They practice a religion mixed with Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, and ancestor worship. They label this as Chinese religion. They also worship different deities and visit various types of temples.

The goddess of Mazu, a communal deity, is popularly worshipped by the Hainanese. In fact, many Hainanese associations have their origins in Mazu temples and today it is still common to see Hainanese associations having Mazu altars. Mazu's birthday, which falls on the 23rd day of every third lunar month, is an important occasion of Hainanese communal religious celebration.

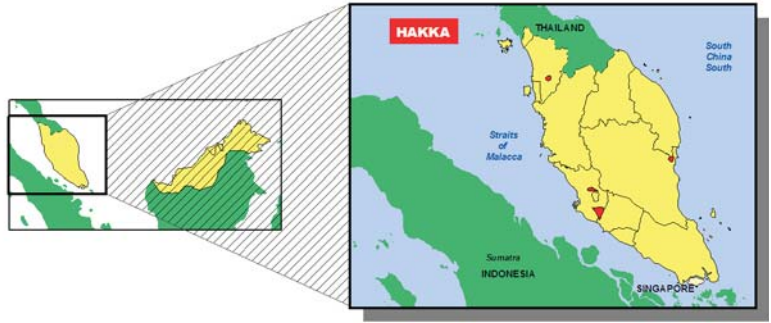
Mazu, popularly referred to as Tianhou or the heavenly queen, is traced by a myth to Putian of Fujian Province in China. She was a filial young woman by the name of Lin Moniang of the Song Dynasty. After her young death, it was believed that she saved people in distress at sea and so she was worshipped as their goddess of the sea.

A small percentage of the Hainanese are Christian.

What are their needs?

Though the Hainanese perceive themselves as having made it, many in fact are still very poor. Many Hainanese think that good education will pave the way for a better life. Pray that followers of the Way will encounter receptive Hainanese in their quest and be able to point the way to the truly abundant life.

HAKKA



Population	Major Religion	Language
250,000	Chinese Folk Religion	Hakka

Who are the Hakka?

Hakka speaking Chinese are the sixth largest Chinese dialect spoken among Chinese in Malaysia. Originally, the ethnic Hakka trace their ancestry to the early immigrants who came from the various provinces of Southeastern China. The early immigrants were from northern China. They had migrated to become sojourners in the southern provinces between the 4th and 18th centuries. Thus, they are called Hakka, Kechia, or Khek, which means “guest people” in Chinese. Although the Hakka dialect may contain elements from both Mandarin and Cantonese, it is a distinct language in its own right.

Hakka speaking Chinese are widely dispersed throughout Malaysia usually in more rural areas. Chinese speaking Hakka can be found in the states of Kedah, Negri Sembilan, Perak, Pahang, and Sabah.

What are their lives like?

The early Hakka settlers in the 18th and 19th century were gold-miners, tin-miners, and cash crop farmers. They were also proprietors of Chinese medicine shops and tailors. Today, with the rapid socio-economic changes in Malaysia, they work in a variety of professions. They are businessmen, lawyers, doctors, tour operators, and also factory workers.

The Hakka, a very distinct group of people, are regarded as very conservative, honest, hardworking, and independent.

A traditional Hakka family would include a husband and wife, their married sons with their wives and children, and daughters, if unmarried, all under one roof.

What do they believe?

Most of Hakka community consider themselves Buddhists. But what they generally practice is the same Chinese religion of the other dialect groups. Their religion is actually a collection of ancient beliefs and rituals that incorporated elements of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism passed down through generations. Most Hakka households have an icon of the warrior deity Guandi (a deity renowned for his loyalty, righteousness, courage, and sense of brotherhood) continuing a practice of the early immigrants, they often pray to Guandi for divine power to stay united.

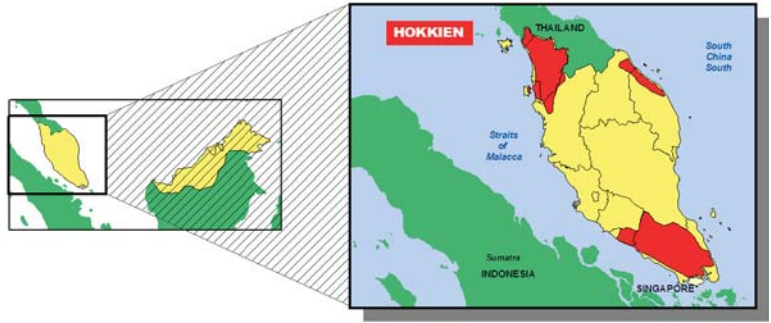
Like the Chinese of other groups, the Hakka typically fear dying outside of their own homes. After all (they reason) how can their spirit be expected to find its way back to where it can be cared for? That’s why you’ll find very sick Hakka people checking out of the hospital and moving back home before they die. A small percentage of the Hakka are Christian.

What are their needs?

Rapid socio-economic changes in Malaysia are driving many Hakka to live away from their communities. They want good education, higher wages, and a better lifestyle. These same socio-economic changes may also lead to changing recognition, or lack thereof.

Pray that resourceful and committed believers will be enablers to the Hakka in their search for a better life. At the same time, pray that the Hakka might see God’s love in these enablers and that His love would flow back to their own communities.

HOKKIEN



Population	Major Religion	Language
1,500,000	Chinese Folk Religion	Hokkien

Who are the Hokkien?

Hokkien is the largest Chinese dialect spoken among Chinese groups in Malaysia. Originally, the Hokkien people were the descendants of the earliest Chinese settlers on the Peninsula who originated mainly from Fujian (also called Min) Province in China. Presently, the majority of Chinese in Malaysia, no matter their ethnic background, use Hokkien as a trade language to converse with other Chinese in particular regions.

However, most Chinese in these particular regions no longer speak a pure form of the various Fujian dialects. Today they speak a Hokkien which contains a number of loanwords from Malay and other Chinese dialect groups.

The Hokkien dialect is the lingua franca for the Chinese in Johor, Malacca, Penang, Kedah, Perlis, Terengganu, Kelantan, and Sarawak. As such, the Hokkien as a trade language is the majority Chinese language in these states.

What are their lives like?

In the past the main occupations of the Hokkien were traders and merchants in the import-export industry and wholesale dealers and grocers. Presently, in the rural or semi-rural areas, Hokkien are tin-miners, rubber and oil palm estate laborers, fishermen, livestock breeders, and vegetable farmers. Within the urban centers they are factory workers, clerks and professionals, small-time shopkeepers, and businessmen.

As with the other Chinese groups, the Hokkien regard surnames (first name) within the family as important in retaining kinship and family identity. Sons take on the surname of the father to perpetuate the family line. In the family the supreme head is the father, or if the family has several generations living under one

roof, the supreme head could also be the grandfather or great grandfather. On the death of the family head the wife takes over as a supreme head and she is allrespected like her departed husband.

What do they believe?

Most of these peoples grow up in an environment of idol worship, ancestral worship, and strong teachings of filial piety. Their religion, no different from the other Chinese groups, has a multitude of stories, performances, rituals, customs, beliefs, sacred objects and places, deities, festivals, and folk practices.

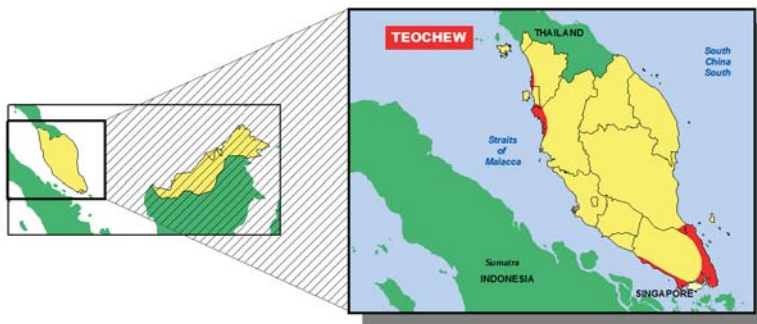
The main deity in a Hokkien temple is Fazhugong or Zhanggong shengju. This deity with unkempt long hair and carrying a sword, originally came from the Yongchun district (of Fujian province, China). A notable sight in Hokkien households is the display of three or more generations of ancestral tablets at the family altar, besides other deities. For the typical Hokkien family, a distinct ritual follows when a death occurs—holes are made to the deceased's pockets to prevent him or her from taking away the family's wealth.

A small percentage of the Hokkien are Christian.

What are their needs?

The Hokkien people believe that good education is the stepping-stone on the path to success. Yet, not many have received formal education beyond secondary level. Formal education and vocational training in a wide variety of skills would be helpful. Pray that these needs to be met and also that He would awaken believers to the needs around them.

TEOCHEW



Population	Major Religion	Language
400,000	Chinese Folk Religion	Teochew

Who are the Teochew?

Teochew speaking Chinese constitute the fifth largest Chinese dialect spoken among Chinese in Malaysia. Originally, the ethnic Teochew ancestors came from the vicinity of Shantou in northern Guangdong and southern Fujian in China. Additionally, they were known as the Chaoshan people or people of the mountains of Chao. The term Teochew (Chaozhou in phonetic Mandarin) came from the name of the ancient riverside city of Chaozhou in China, a major port in that region.

The Teochew dialect is essentially the language of the Chaoshan people. It evolved from the Hokkien dialect and is therefore a part of the Minnan subgroup to which Hokkien also belongs. In Malaysia, there are a number of Teochew variants (each peculiar by sub-region) with sometimes vastly different pronunciations and or tones.

Teochew speaking Chinese throughout Malaysia are concentrated in certain regions. As a result, their dialect is often the primary language spoken. Major concentrations of Chinese speaking Teochew are found in Kedah and north Perak states.

What are their lives like?

The early Teochew adventurers came to Malaysia in order to seek a better life. In the past, they specialized as grocers. With rapid socio-economic changes in Malaysia, Teochew people work in many professions, interacting with people of other races. In the states of Kedah and north Perak, Chinese speaking Teochew are predominantly fisherman. Traditionally, Teochew, like all other Chinese groups, lived with their nuclear or extended families. Although there are still a good number of Teochew villages existing in some parts of Malaysia, many members of these communities are moving to

developed towns and cities in pursuit of social and economic advancement.

What do they believe?

Teochew speaking Chinese are very particular about their safety both at work and at home. They often use the Mandarin phrase *churu ping'an*, which ensures one's safety on undertaking a journey or on returning home. Therefore, it is not uncommon for a typical Teochew speaking Chinese family to place the paintings of two door deities called *Qin Qiong* and *Yuchi Gong* (AD 618-907 Tang dynasty's top two generals of emperor Taizong who stood guard outside his bedroom door) on their doors to protect the family. Teochew villages in every rural area establish a small shrine for *Tudigong*, which is the earth god. He is also enshrined in every Teochew household, shop, and temple. *Tudigong* is a local deity who keeps track of all births and deaths in the area under his jurisdiction and he accompanies the newly departed soul to the courts of purgatory to await judgment. Teochew speaking Chinese also worship or offer sacrifices to *Tudigong* when their children are illness or have offended the deity. A small percentage of the Teochew are Christian.

What are their needs?

Many Teochew are drawn away from their communities in order to find a new and better lifestyle in the cosmopolitan cities. However, many others still live in isolated fishing villages. Pray that God's will minister to those Teochew speaking Chinese who are shifting to urban areas and are search for meaning in life. Pray also that God will send similar ministers to the Teochew back in their isolated fishing villages.

PERANAKAN CLUSTER

The Peranakan cluster consists of the Baba Chinese of Peninsular Malaysia, the Thai Chinese of Peninsular Malaysia, and the Eurasians of Peninsular Malaysia. *Peranakan* is a Malay word that is derived from the root *anak* (child). It originally meant womb. It has the meaning of “to accept as one’s own child or children,” “to take in and incorporate as one’s own child or children,” and “to absorb into the group.”



Thai Chinese Girls

Before the large scale influx of Chinese during the 19th and 20th centuries, many Chinese had already assimilated into local indigenous cultures. They also intermarried with Malay, Thai, Malay-Thai, or European people.

One such peranakan-type people group is the Baba Chinese. They are sometimes referred to as the Straits Chinese. They mainly live in the state of Malacca (Southern Peninsular Malaysia), with concentrations in the central district of the city of Malacca, near Portuguese Malaysians. Their total number is 230,000.

Another peranakan-type group is the Thai Chinese of Peninsular Malaysia. They are sometimes referred to as Peranakan Hokkien Chinese or Thai Malaysians. They are scattered throughout many villages predominantly in Northwest and Northeast Peninsular Malaysia in the states of Kedah, Perlis, and Kelantan. They number 85,000.

A third peranakan-type group is the Eurasians of Peninsular Malaysia. They are found throughout Peninsular Malaysia but are predominant the urban areas of Johor, Kuala Lumpur, and Penang. Eurasians number over 45,000.

A fourth peranakan-type group is the Malaccan Chitty. They are a small Malay-speaking group of Indian decent and of the Hindu faith.

The peoples of the Peranakan Cluster number 360,000. Although the vast majority reside in the states of Malacca, Kelantan, Kedah, and Perlis in Peninsular Malaysia, they are also scattered in several small settlements in Peninsular Malaysia.

The People and Their Identity

The identity of the peoples of the Peranakan Cluster is intermediate in the sense that they are distinct from the

mainstream or pure Chinese and the indigenous society.

Originally, the term *peranakan* in Malay meant local-born person. Now the term has come to refer to those who have adopted and adapted to the local context on several levels.

With the above in mind, the peoples of the Peranakan Cluster are those people of mixed descent, whether that be Chinese-Malay, Chinese-

Thai, Chinese-Thai-Malay, or Chinese-European. For census purposes, the peoples of the Peranakan Cluster are classified as Chinese. Yet, for all practical purpose, they are peoples whose ways of life demonstrate major assimilation into other cultures or people groups.

Religion

The peoples of the Peranakan Cluster adhere to either traditional Chinese religion, Theravada Buddhism, Hindu or Roman Catholicism with often any one of these being mixed with animistic beliefs and practices.

Language

The Baba Chinese speak a language known as Baba Malay. Their language is a Malay-based language mixed with Chinese, Bahasa Malaysia, and English loanwords. The Thai Chinese speak a mixed language of Hokkien Chinese, Thai, and Malay. Most Eurasians speak English and usually follow Western naming conventions.

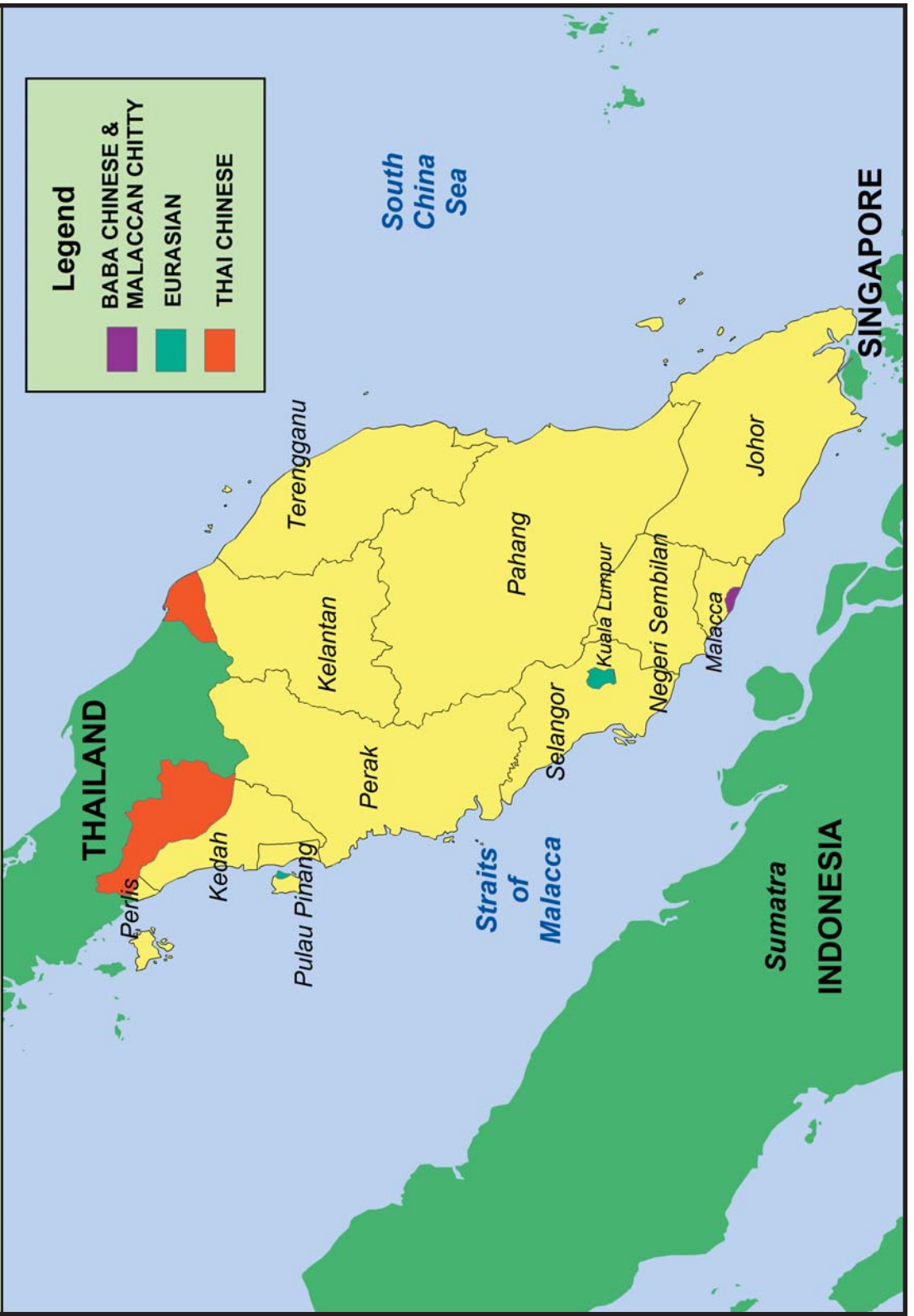
Culture

To a large extent, the peoples of the Peranakan Cluster have adopted and adapted to a Chinese cultural form and are either Malay, Thai, or European cultural forms. Although some might not consider the peoples of the Peranakan Cluster as Chinese, these peoples often refer to themselves as Chinese.

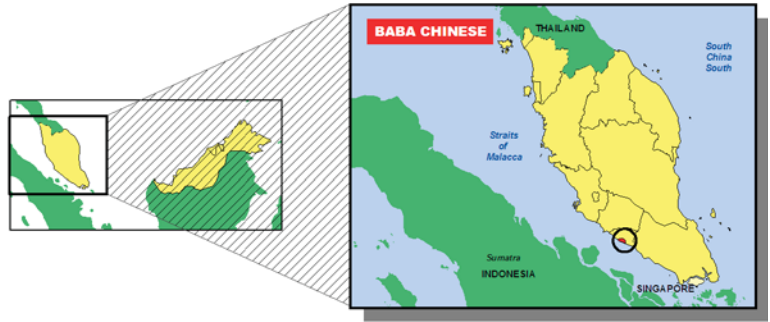
Conclusion

The peoples of the Peranakan cluster live in close proximity to many other people groups. However, the Peranakan are often overlooked. Though the Eurasians and Baba Chinese do have Christians among them, they are without adequate witness of Christ. Few believers have ever taken the initiative to love and share the Good News with the Thai Chinese and Malaccan Chitty.

PERANAKAN CLUSTER



BABA CHINESE OF PENINSULAR MALAYSIA



Population	Major Religion	Language
230,000	Chinese Religion/Christianity	Baba Malay

Who are the Baba?

The Baba Chinese are the descendants of Chinese immigrants that settled in Peninsula Malaysia, primarily in and around the state of Malacca as early as the 17th century. Inter-marriage with the native peoples of the region was common and engendered a unique culture that combined various customs and traditions. Baba Chinese identity and culture became distinct in the 19th century before the British rule, when large numbers of Chinese immigrated to Malaysia. Local Malay people first used honorific terms like Baba to address the men, Nyonya for women, and Bibik for elderly ladies. The most distinct aspect of Baba culture today is their language called Baba Malay. It is a song-like language influenced by Hokkien accents and contains loanwords from Malay, Indonesian, and English. The majority of the Baba Chinese live in the state of Malacca but some are also found in Penang and Singapore. They settled in both urban and rural areas but are concentrated in the Central Malacca District.

What are their lives like?

The Baba Chinese had their time of greatest success, prosperity, and power during the 19th and early 20th centuries. They were the dominant Chinese businessmen and leaders of the Chinese communities. Baba businessmen and leaders could speak English and enjoy cordial relationships with the European rulers. They, therefore, led very illustrious careers and commanded a lot of respect in the field of business, the art, and government. Many are still middle-income salaried bureaucrats because of their close association with current Malaysian culture. The architectural style of Baba homes is very unique – being a fusion of Eastern and Western designs. There are still some Baba homes and buildings in Penang and Malacca.

A typical Baba house has a first living hall for visitors and an adjacent area for the unmarried Nyonya to congregate, one or two courtyards, bedrooms, bridal chamber, and kitchen.

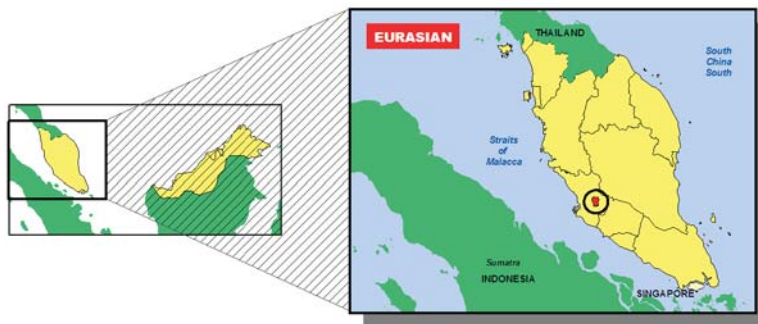
What do they believe?

Most of the Baba adhere to ancestral Chinese religion but a quarter of them are Roman Catholics. They, especially the older generation, observe traditional Chinese religious beliefs and rituals. They worship ancestors and pray to Chinese deities. They celebrate Chinese festivals like the Lunar Chinese New Year and Moon Cake festival on a large scale. In general, their religious beliefs and practices are similar to other Malaysian Chinese, although there are relatively more Baba who worship at the graves of Muslim saints called Keramat. In Singapore a significant numbers of Baba Chinese are Christians.

What are their needs?

Although there are many middle-income salaried Baba, this does not mean that the entire Baba society is rich. There are those who are striving in business and others are trying to get out of the poverty cycle—they need any help possible. Pray that these will be successful in their quest to meet financial needs. Pray also that God will call committed followers who are able to relate and respond to the needs of the Baba Chinese.

EURASIAN OF PENINSULAR MALAYSIA



Population	Major Religion	Language
45,000	Roman Catholic	Malaysian English

Who are the Eurasians of Peninsular Malaysia?

Eurasians, a minority people group in Malaysia, are the descendants of the original Portuguese, British, and Dutch settlers who came with the colonial rulers of the early centuries. These settlers married native women and created a mixed race known as Eurasian, a term used by the British around 1820 to label people with a mix of European and Asian blood. The native Eurasian language was originally known as Christao (a variation of Portuguese with a heavy Malay influence). The present generation of Eurasians, however, do not speak this language. Many speak a local version of Malaysian English.

Eurasian families are dispersed throughout the country. They do not dominate any region or state in Malaysia. Nevertheless, they are more concentrated in the urban areas of Malacca, Kuala Lumpur, and Penang.

What are their lives like?

During the colonial days, the influential Eurasians occupied many civil service jobs—positions usually offered to them because they were able to speak English fluently. Although they now lack outward presence in notable positions, a few Eurasian families continue to occupy positions in the middleclass strata of Malaysia. A good number of Eurasians are still working in civil service positions while others have made their presence in other occupations such as teaching, broadcasting, and working for newspapers. Many are making a living in the business world.

What do they believe?

Eurasians are predominantly Roman Catholic. It is traditional for the Eurasian family to baptize a child within a month from birth and on the first Sunday of the month. Godparents, usually members of the family or good friends, are appointed and are morally responsible for the child's upbringing should anything happen to the parents.

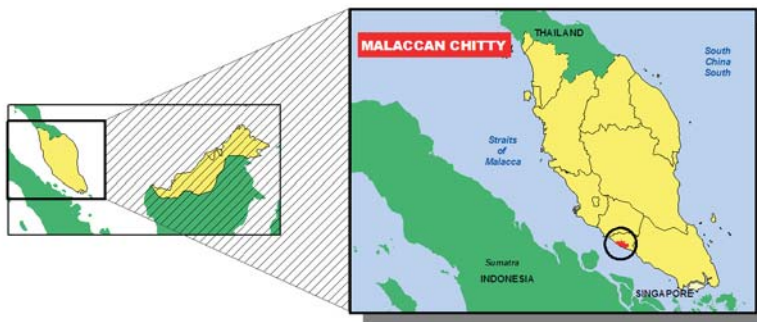
Eurasian celebrations revolve around Christian holidays. Christmas is definitely the most important festival for Eurasians—even in the most humble of homes there will be a Christmas tree of some sort and presents from Santa Claus for the little ones. The Santa myth is so strong that children often leave a plate of biscuits and a glass of water out "in case Santa gets hungry."

In many Eurasian homes, certain rituals must be followed when a death occurs. For instance, they maintain that the spirit of the deceased remains in the house for several days. Thus, on the seventh day, a vigil is kept until midnight at which time the spirit would give some sign of its departure before leaving the house. Some families leave a favorite beverage for the departing spirit. Although many of their beliefs relate to Christian traditions, few relate to a personal faith relationship with Jesus Christ.

What are their needs?

Apart from some cultural differences and traditions, Eurasians have to work to earn enough to meet their needs just like other Malaysians. For this to happen, they require formal education and skills training to secure jobs. Pray that believers who would share the good news and that it will be received by those who may be trusting only in their Christian traditions.

MALACCAN CHITTY



Population	Major Religion	Language
1,000	Hinduism	Bahasa Malaysia

Who are the Malaccan Chitty?

There are less than one thousand Malaccan Chitty in Malaysia, with approximately sixty Chitty families still living in Gajah Burang (commonly referred to as Kampong Chitty). The Chitty are believed to be descendants of wealthy Indian traders from the Coromandel Coast of Kalingapatnam in Southern India. They traveled to the Malay Peninsula during the time of the Malaccan Sultanate in the early 15th century. They began settling in Malacca and marrying local Malay and Chinese women. Some Chitty even take wives from among the Javanese and Batak people of present-day Indonesia. They also adopted the local customs and traditions.

What are their lives like?

Today, the Chitty community is no longer as involved in trade as their ancestors were. The majority are professionals such as nurses and teachers while others own small businesses. The Malaccan Chitty have adopted Malay food, language, dress, and other elements of Malay culture. The present Chitty community strictly upholds old traditions, especially pertaining to marriage and ancestral worship. Being a very close-knit community, the Chitty make every effort to congregate in Gajah Berang during cultural celebrations even though many are now living in other parts of Malaysia.

Just as the Chitty community underwent cultural assimilation from their beginning, they still continue to change. The Chitty do marry outside of their community. The Chitty community holds strictly to the requirement that a couple wanting to get married must both be Hindu. A person of another religious faith who wishes to marry a member of the community is required to convert to Hinduism before the marriage can take place.

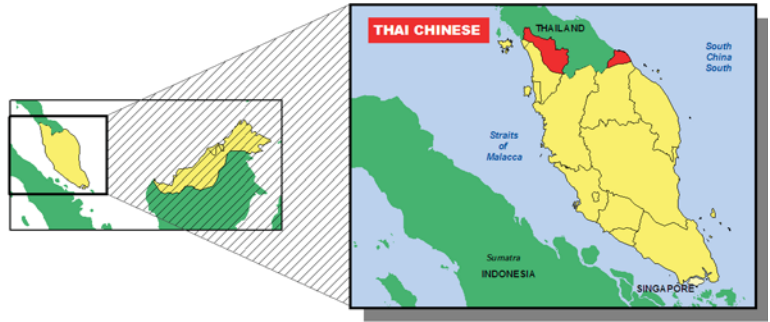
What do they believe?

As staunch believers of the Hindu faith, the Malaccan Chitty community still upholds their religious ceremonies and beliefs uniquely blended with ancestral worship practices. They observe Deepavali (festival of lights), Ponggol (the end of the harvest festival), the Hindu New Year, and other traditional Hindu festivals that are celebrated by Hindu groups in Malaysia. The Chitty do not participate in Thaipusam. However, during the month of May they have a similar festival in their local temple called Mengamay. One celebration that is unique to the Chitty community is the Parchu festival (with prayers, homemade Chitty style food, cigarettes, betel leaves, tobacco, and tea offered to the spirits of ancestors). It is celebrated twice a year with Parchu Ponggol (Bohgi) observed the day before Ponggol in January and Parchu Buah-buahan during the fruit season between June and July.

What are their needs?

Though Malay language, food, and dress have become part of the Chitty culture and way of life, they are making efforts to learn Tamil since it is widely spoken among the Indians in Malaysia. The Malaccan Chitty feel isolated from other Indian communities. Pray that Indian believers will make an effort to reach out and become friends with the Chitty people and share the good news with them.

THAI CHINESE OF PENINSULAR MALAYSIA



Population	Major Religion	Language
100,000	Theravada Buddhism	Hokkien/ Malay/Thai

Who are the Thai Chinese of Peninsular Malaysia?

Thai Chinese are a minority group of acculturated Chinese villagers residing in three northern states Malaysia. They generally have a darker complexion and appearance similar to that of Malays and Thais. The majority of the Thai Chinese have been in their present settlements for four to eight generations and have a long history of interaction with the rural Malays and Thai community.

Originally rural-based and of Hokkien descent, they are known as Cina Kampung, which means “rural or countryside Chinese.” While the mainstream Chinese in the same region call them Hokkien-Siam (Siamese Hokkien), the local Thai population labels them Cin-Thai (Thai Chinese). Recently, local researchers have labeled them Peranakan Hokkien Chinese.

The villagers speak their own version of Chinese Hokkien that has borrowed many Malay and Thai terms. Many speak fluent Malay as well as local Thai. Their settlements exist among Malay and Thai settlements, and are seldom exclusively Chinese. There are at least 60 known Thai Chinese settlements distributed among the states of Kelantan, Kedah, and Perlis.

What are their lives like?

The early Chinese settlers planted fruit trees in addition to engaging in planting ground nut, coconut, areca nut, and tobacco. Padi was also planted and livestock such as pigs, cattle, and chickens were reared. Presently, they work on small-scale agricultural land in the countryside, especially along the Kelantan River and in the upper regions of the state of Kedah. Through their long association with Malay culture, a significant number of them have gained positions as schoolteachers and clerks,

and other middle income salaried jobs.

Their houses in the rural areas are unique—like traditional Malay and Thai houses that are built on stilts, yet their architecture is very Chinese. There are also Malay and Thai influences in their dress and food—a unique combination of Malay, Thai, and Chinese culinary art. Dressing for both men and women in rural areas is the sarong and the women wear a Malay-style blouse called kebaya.

What do they believe?

The Thai Chinese religion is a combination of traditional Chinese Religion and Theravada Buddhism of the Thai variant. They indulge in ancestor and deity worship at home and also pray at Thai Buddhist temples. Besides joss sticks, sacrificial food is offered to ancestors and village deities during festivals.

The community has its own patron deity, and a grand celebration called *ang kong su*, literally meaning the affairs of the deities, is observed during the deity’s birthday. During such a celebration, there are spirit-mediums who perform various religious rites for devotees. In the evening, a Thai Dance-drama called *menora* or the Malay shadow play called *wayang kulit* may be staged.

What are their needs?

Thai Chinese are very much rural Chinese people and are sometimes shut out from the economic prosperity of the urban Chinese. They have also been isolated from exposure to the good news. Pray for committed believers from the greater Chinese community who can see, relate, and respond to all the needs of the Thai Chinese community.

INDIAN CLUSTER

A variety of Indian people groups represent the Indian Cluster. In the 1930s, many Indians migrated from India in search of riches and a better life. Among those who migrated were the Tamil, Malayali, Telegu, Kanarese, Hindi, Sindhi, and Singalese people groups. Other minority Indian people groups included the Gujarati, Punjabi, and Urdu people groups.



A Tamil Indian Making Roti (bread)

Today, over two million Indian peoples reside in Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei. The one and one-half million Tamil Indians represent seventy five percent of the total Indian population and constitute Malaysia's second largest minority

group. In fact, the Tamil influence is felt in the Tamil language being recognized as one of the three official languages in Malaysia being taught in some public schools. The remaining twenty five percent of the peoples in the Indian Cluster are Malayali, Telugu, Kanarese, Mamak, Hindi, Punjabi, Gujarati, Urdu, Sindhi, Singhalese.

Traditionally, Indians worked on the many palm and rubber plantations. However, today Indians work in a variety of professions ranging from factory workers to road side vendors.

The People and Their Identity

Like many other Indian peoples in the world, Indian communities in Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei proudly continue their traditional customs and religions. In fact, they do not dichotomize between the secular and the sacred. Instead, religion plays an important part in Indian identity.

As an example, Tamil Hindus believe in the concept of karma where people go through a series of rebirth. It is their past karma and or destiny that determines their present and controls their future. Practically, Tamil Hindus attribute



A Tamil Offering Prayers

certain unforeseen misfortunes to their karma. More important, they accept the existence of social hierarchy, demarcating the rich and the poor, the upper caste and



An Indian Lady among Many Indians in a Crowd

the lower caste.

Often in daily life, Indians with similar beliefs tend to associate most closely with one another. Indians value being with others who they deem as part of their own group. This sense of belonging is seen in the many Indian associations (e.g. Malayali Association, the Ceylonese Association, the Sikh Association).

Religion

About eighty percent of the Indian people profess Hinduism. Among the Tamil, Malayali, Telegu, Kanarese, Hindi, Sindhi, and Singalese people groups, the majority are Hindu. Minorities among the Gujarati, Punjabi, and Urdu people groups are also Hindu. For the Hindu majority, their "Hinduism" is as much a lifestyle as a religion.

The Indian people groups share many Hindu festivals (Thaipusam, Deepavali, etc.), rituals and ceremonies. However, there are also festivals, rituals, and ceremonies that are unique to each Indian people group and are derived from ancient legends particular to that group. There is one shared festival that has been uniquely adapted in Malaysian and Singaporean culture, Thaipusam. It is very different from the original Thaipusam practiced in India.

For instance, in Malaysia, Thaipusam demonstrates human endurance, self-sacrifice, and the power of mind over matter. The festival is held in honor of Lord Murghrun, the son of Lord Shiva. Thaipusam is a time of purification and atonement, where devotees by the thousands fulfill their vows made to the deities for



Hindu Devotee with Metal Skewer through his Cheeks

prayers answered. Thousands of men express their loyalty by putting vel (metal skewers) through the skin of their foreheads, cheeks, and tongues. They also pierce their chests and backs with hooks hung with offerings of leaves, limes, or metal

containers holding milk. Devotees will walk barefoot many miles, and then ascend hundreds of steps to bear offerings to Lord Murghrun. Year after year they strive in vain to find purification and atonement.

Hinduism is a vast and mystical religion, which worships one supreme reality (expressed in many forms). Hinduism teaches that all souls ultimately realize truth. There is no eternal hell or damnation. Each soul is free to find its own way, and all spiritual paths lead to the supreme reality.

As previously mentioned, Hindus believe in reincarnation in which the soul takes birth in another body (having lived and died before) until all karmas (deeds) are resolved, and “truth” is experienced within, finally reaching the pinnacle of consciousness where man and God are one (*vishvagrasa* - total merger in God). Reincarnation provides many chances after this life to attain *moksha* (permanent liberation from the cycles of birth and death), resulting in *nirvana* (ideal condition of rest, harmony, stability, and joy) and *vishagrasa*. Everyone will eventually attain *moksha*, which can be reached in this life.

In Hinduism, each soul is free to find his or her own way: devotion, austerity, meditation, or selfless service.



Singaporean Indian Hawker

Stress is placed on temple worship, scripture (Vedas), and the guru-disciple tradition. Festivals, pilgrimages, chanting of holy hymns, and home worship are common Hindu religious practices. The Hindu path is defined by love, nonviolence, good conduct, and the law of *dharma* (the right and righteous path).

For Indian Muslims, Islamic faith rather than ethnic heritage is the most important factor in their identity. Significant minorities from each Indian people group are Muslim. Among the Gujarati and Urdu people groups, Muslims are the majority.

The majority of Punjabi follow the Sikh religion. Sikhism focuses upon piety of heart, sincere devotion to one God, social equality, democratic ideals, patriotic fervor and a heroic spirit of valor and self-sacrifice. While the Sikh community is small, they have maintained a strong cultural identity that sets them apart from the other Indians. Inter-marriage with other Indian peoples is still shunned. Sikh parents are known to start preparations of for their daughter’s wedding on the day she is born.

Language

Indians often speak three to four languages. Many, especially those residing in larger towns, can converse in English. However, most Indians speak their own dialect when with others among their people group.

Culture

Although Indians number a little over two million, their impact is felt in many places. They cook a variety of curries. Because of the Indian influence, other peoples eat rich curries. Indians wear vibrantly colored materials, and have a lively culture. They are very generous and hospitable, and they believe in doing well to others.

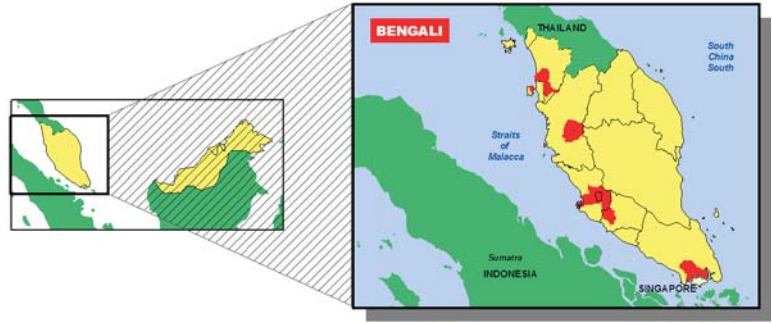
Conclusion

Although a minority in relation to the Chinese and Malay peoples, the Indian peoples impact the cultures of Malaysia and Singapore. Their influence through religion, festivals, and culinary delights is felt in both the rural and urban areas.



A Hindu Fortune Teller with Sacred Mark on His Forehead

BENGALI



Population	Major Religion	Language
2,500	Hinduism	Bengali

Who are the Bengali?

The Bengali began migrating to Malaysia during the early 20th century. They were mainly from Calcutta, Dacca, Chittagong, and Midnapore areas of Bengal in India. Being well educated, the Bengali secured supervisory or medical assistant positions in the Malaysian plantations.

What are their lives like?

Today's third generations of Bengali are mostly professionals in a variety of fields. The Bengali is a small community, yet they have maintained their Bengali language and rich cultural practices. Marriages are still arranged by parents, with consent from the potential couple. Marriages are often arranged with Bengali from other countries. A growing number of interracial marriages among other races and other languages are influencing this close-knit community. Their community is multi-lingual. As part of a larger North Indian Hindu community living in Malaysia, the Bengali often join Punjabi Hindus, Sindhi Hindus, and Gujarati Hindus in many celebrations and temple functions. They are well-versed in Hindi and often use Hindi or English on such occasions. The younger generation is comfortable using English and Malay, although Bengali is still being used at home.

What do they believe?

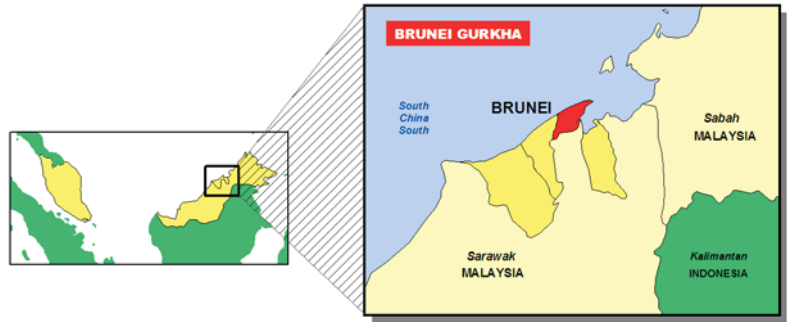
There are approximately 2,500 Bengali Hindus living in Malaysia. Together they celebrate three major Bengali Festivals: Durga Pooja (worship of the goddess of supreme power) usually in October; Kali Pooja (worship of the goddess of destruction) celebrated during Deepavali (a Hindu festival of lights celebrating good over evil) in November; and Poila Boishakh (Bengali New Year) celebrated in April. Durga Pooja is celebrated every year from the 4th to the 9th day of Navaratri (a nineday festival dedicated to

the three main deities Durga, Lakshmi, and Saraswati celebrated by Hindus observing prayers and fasting) in October. The goddess Durga is worshiped as the Divine Mother rather than a god of supreme power during Durga Pooja. During the festival prayers, devotional songs, and evening festivities will take place each day. On the 8th day, young girls who have not reached puberty are worshiped and are likened to the Divine Mother. On the 10th (and final) day, devotees dip clay statues of the Divine Mother into the sea to signify that she is part of the universe once more. Finally, those celebrating will join in Bijoya Dashami (a grand feast for victory) where differences and grievances are forgiven and forgotten between friends and family and rejoicing takes place for the next five days. Lakhi or Lakshmi Pooja (the worship of the goddess of wealth) is celebrated on the 15th day after Navaratri. The Bengali fast until the next day for the prosperity of their community.

What are their needs?

There are social issues that need to be addressed among the younger generations of Bengali. There are groups that have been formed to ensure that the present youth and future generations do not lose touch with their rich cultural heritage, beliefs, and language. Bengali language classes are being held for adults and children who wish to learn. Pray that their efforts to maintain their cultural heritage will not further isolate them. Pray for committed believers who will be sensitive both to the Bengali culture and their spiritual needs as well.

BRUNEI GURKHA



Population	Major Religion	Language
2,300	Hinduism	Nepali

Who are the Brunei Gurkha?

They are the Nepalese men and their families serving with Brunei and British armies stationed in Brunei. The Gurkha are also known as the Gurung. The name Gurkha denotes their status, unsurpassed by any other military elite, as the bravest of the brave.

Originally, the Gurkha were descendants of the Gorkhali community but now they comprise various tribesmen living in the hills of Nepal. Believed to be descendants of the Mongols and Tibetans, they are known for their legendary skills at attacking the enemy with their fierce khukuri blades.

They are deployed in the oil-rich Seria district and the capital city of Brunei. They speak a language classified under the East Gurung cluster. They also speak Nepali, which is Nepal's official language.

What are their lives like?

In Nepal, the Gurkha lived in small villages in hilly terrain and were accustomed to traveling long distances on foot. These villages consist of loosely grouped homes surrounded by farmland. Most of them were farmers—planting vegetables, rice, maize, millet, and wheat. They also raised goats for meat and cows for milk.

In Brunei, a foreign country, the close-knit community lives in barracks and quarters. Two-thirds of the short and stocky hills-men are deployed in the capital city. These older men, formerly active Gurkha soldiers of the British army, are employed as security guards to protect the houses of the royal family and also government and public property. The other one-third of younger men serve as active Gurkha soldiers of the British army stationed in the oil-rich Seria district at the request of the Sultan of Brunei.

What do they believe?

Nepalese are Hindus. They live in the world's only Hindu kingdom and they worship their king as an incarnation of the Hindu god, Vishnu ("protector and preserver of the worlds"). The majority of Gurkha families in Brunei are Hindus. Twenty percent of them claim to be Buddhists, while ten percent are animists and the remaining one percent is Christian.

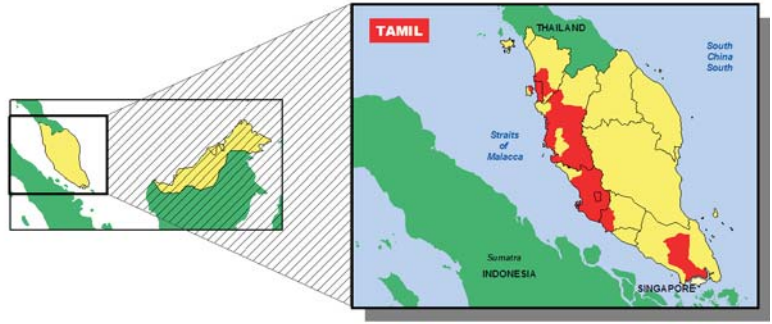
Their system of beliefs is a complex blending of two major religions, Hinduism and Buddhism. Adherents of both religious faiths worship each other's gods and cherish mutual respect for one another, a tradition with a long history. In Brunei, they worship together in the same temple.

They also hold on to their traditional animistic beliefs that non-human objects have spirits. They recognize local gods, goblins, and spirits. They also believe that ghosts and demons haunt the crossroads and rivers. They make offerings to these spirits in order to appease them.

What are their needs?

Presently, the oil-rich sultanate of Brunei provides for the Gurkha community's daily physical needs. But when their work contract ends, they have to readjust into their society back in Nepal. Pray that God will give wisdom to believers who are willing to help prepare the Gurkha for the transition back to living in Nepal. Pray for those who are believers to reaching out to the Gurkha in all their areas of need.

BRUNEI INDO-PAKISTANI



Population	Major Religion	Language
4,300	Hinduism	Hindi

Who are the Brunei Indo-Pakistani?

The ancestors of the Indo-Pakistani in Brunei were originally migrant workers from the subcontinent of India. They came as laborers to work on the construction of buildings, roads, and bridges. The present generations of Indo-Pakistani are citizens of Brunei and have taken residency in the country. Since many peoples of Indian origin in Brunei do not know specifically which language group they belong to, Indo-Pakistani is a general term used by the government to describe these groups – they may actually be Tamil, Gujarati, Hindi, or Punjab. They speak Tamil as a common language as well as their vernacular languages and dialects.

What are their lives like?

Back in India the lives of Indo-Pakistani have traditionally been governed by a rigid system of social classes known as caste (pattern of social classes in Hinduism). One of the main reasons the Indo-Pakistani willingly left their homeland for Brunei was because of the caste system practiced in their country. Under that system, those who are born into the lower castes can never improve their standing in society. They are mostly Hindu Tamils from Southern India. In Islamic Brunei, they receive no special treatment and they do not enjoy the special privilege accorded to the Brunei Muslim Malay. Many laborers work in positions that are shunned by the Brunei Malay. A handful of them find employment as white-collar workers, holding jobs like clerks and hospital assistants.

Islamic influence is strong among the Indo-Pakistani in Brunei. This influence is seen in their clothing. Still, some of the Hindu Indo-Pakistani continue to wear saris (cloths that are wrapped around their waist and over the shoulder or head). Most of them also continue to eat their native Indian foods. Although

the Hindu religion commands vegetarianism, most of the Indo-Pakistani living in this Islamic State eat some types of meat.

What do they believe?

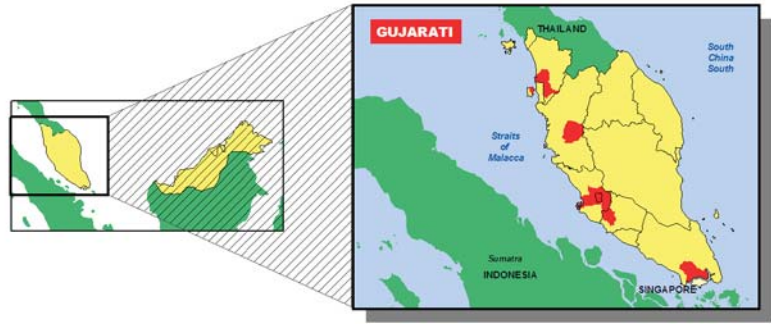
The majority of the Indo-Pakistani are Hindu but close to half the population adhere to either the Islamic faith or Baha'is. A small percentage are Christians. Hindu Indo-Pakistani are polytheistic, which means that they worship many gods and goddesses. The most important gods worshipped are Brahman, the creator of the universe; Vishnu, its preserver; and Shiva, its destroyer.

Hindu tradition remains strong until today in Indo-Pakistani community of Brunei. The community celebrates the Deepavali or Diwali (Festival of Lights) – this celebration marks the triumph of good over evil, the victory of light over dark and it is not called the Festival of Lights for nothing, for it is celebrated with a joyful vivacity, with bright lights and even brighter smiles, as though to underline the traditional meaning and message behind it. Even the word Deepavali is etymologically derived from the Sanskrit word that literally means “row of lights”.

What are their needs?

The majority of the Indo-Pakistani in Brunei Darussalam have to settle for hard labor and low paying jobs. They do not enjoy the privileges of the Brunei Malay people. Pray that local believers will help the Indo-Pakistani in all their needs. Pray that culturally sensitive believers will find ways to minister among each of the Indo-Pakistani groups.

GUJARATI



Population	Major Religion	Language
3,000	Jainism/Hinduism	Gujurati

Who are the Gujarati?

It is believed that Gujarati missionaries from India introduced Islam to Malaysia prior to the establishment of the Malacca Sultanate in 1402. Gujarati traders from Cambay also frequently visited the port of Malacca but did not settle there. Only in the late 19th century did the Gujarati who are mostly businessmen in textile trade, travel to Malacca to settle in Malaysia. This new community grew as more Gujarati came after the 2nd World War.

What are their lives like?

There are approximately three thousand Gujarati living in Malaysia. Their trading broadly covers textiles to tea, palm oil, tin, rubber, cocoa, timber, and coffee. They can be found in other professions as well.

The Gujarati remain community oriented and are interrelated through marriage and families. Marriages are still arranged by parents, with the consent of the potential couple. Marriages are often arranged with Gujarati from other countries.

What do they believe?

The Gujarati of Malaysia are mainly adherents of Jainism and Hinduism with a small minority of Muslim. Jainism strives for realization of the highest perfection of man, free from all pain and the bondage of birth and death. They do not recognize a god or any being higher than the perfect man. Jainism teaches that souls are without beginning, endless and eternally individual. There are three broad categories of souls: not yet evolved, evolving, and liberated (free from rebirth). Jains live a monastic-ascetic lifestyle, show kindness to all, and display great reverence for all life (strict codes of vegetarianism, asceticism, nonviolence even in self-defense, and opposition to

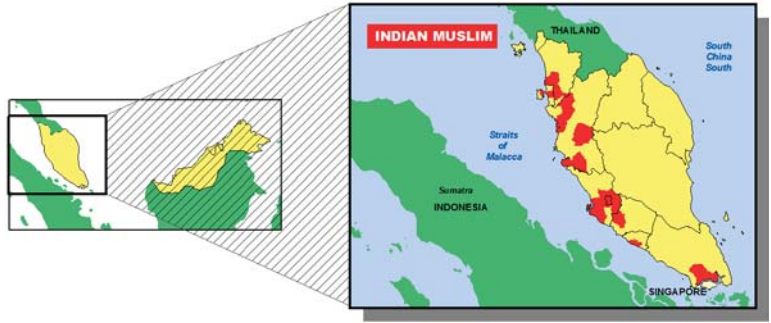
war). Jainism is a religion of love and compassion. The ultimate goal is to become a Paramatman (a perfected soul). This is only accomplished when all layers of Karma (this law teaches that for every event that occurs, there will follow another event whose existence was caused by the first may it be pleasant or unpleasant) are removed. Once removed the soul will rise to the ceiling of the universe, where the soul will abide forever in the solitary bliss of Moksha (pure solitude and endless peace) fulfilling one's destiny as the man-god attainable in this world at the time of death. The nature of the soul is pure consciousness, power, bliss, and omniscience.

Though the Jain follow their spiritual teachings, Hinduism influences many of the social rituals. Hindus celebrate Navarathri (a nine day festival dedicated to the three main deities Durga, Lakshmi, and Saraswati). However, the Gujarati Jains have celebrated it every year since 1965. They also join the Punjabi and Sindhi communities who adhere to Hinduism in this grand celebration. Most Gujarati celebrate Deepavali (the festival of lights) in November. The day after Deepavali is the Gujarati New Year, where prayers are offered to Lakshmi or Saraswati (Hindu deity) to usher in prosperity for the New Year.

What are their needs?

There are Gujarati who feel that they have to strive to do good works in their lives in order to attain Moksha (perfect peace and solitude). Some feel that there is no hope for them to get to Moksha. Pray for believers to encourage these people by being a friend and by showing them that there is a place of hope that is not dependent on their good works.

INDIAN MUSLIM



Population	Major Religion	Language
100,000	Islam	Bahasa Malaysia

Who are the Indian Muslim?

Indian Muslim traders frequently visited Malaysia as early as the 15th century and began migrating to Malaysia in the late 19th century. Though a small number came as indentured laborers, the majority came to start businesses taking advantage of the large migration of Indian laborers who presented a ready market for goods from India. The growth of Penang and Singapore attracted many Indian Muslims from South India (southern Tamil Nadu and central Kerala) and North India (Parsees, Sindhi, Marwaris, and Gujeratis). Their religion enabled them to gain easier access into the Malay settlements to establish their business. It was the beginning of a long alliance between the Indian Muslims and the Malay community, which has consequently influenced their way of life. They came to be known as “Mamak” among the local people and the term is frequently used to refer to them today. Although the term has no derogatory meaning, many of the Indian Muslims prefer to be called “Indian Muslim” rather than “Mamak.”

What are their lives like?

Today, there are roughly a hundred thousand Indian Muslims, the majority of which are Tamil. Among the Urdu people group, Muslims are the majority but among the other Indian people groups in Malaysia they are only a small minority. For the Indian Muslims, Islamic faith rather than ethnic heritage is the most important factor in their identity. However, there are distinctions between the various people groups. For example, the Muslims of Tamil origin have not integrated completely with the Malay community and have a distinct culture.

On the other hand, the Malayali Muslims have integrated substantially with the Malay community and adapted much more to Malay culture. Indian

Muslims observe both Malay and Indian Muslim traditions. They have maintained their unique type of food which is called “mamak”. Many still speak their mother tongue, though they are well versed in Malay. Some mosques even share their message in Tamil. Indian Muslim families are generally very close knit, and remain Community driven.

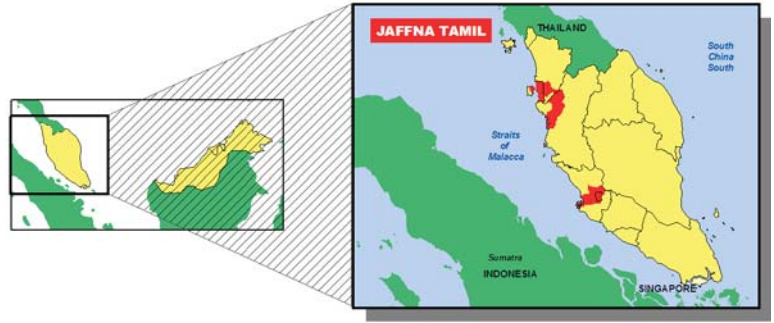
What do they believe?

Islam means submission. Those who submit are called Muslim. There are five pillars for all Muslims adhere worldwide: 1) There is no God but *Allah*, and Mohammad is his prophet. 2) Praying five times daily, kneeling in the direction of Mecca (the holy city). 3) Giving of alms (a share of each Muslim’s income is given to support the mosque and the poor). 4) Fasting throughout Ramadan (the ninth month of the Muslim calendar). 5) Haj (every believer who is able to do so must go on a pilgrimage to Mecca). Islam teaches absolute monotheism and Mohammed’s primacy as *Allah’s* last Prophet on earth. Islam stresses the brotherhood of believers, non-difference of religion and secular life, obedience to God’s Law, abstinence from alcohol, and of good works.

What are their needs?

The Indian Muslims of Malaysia are entitled to many of the benefits that are given to the majority of the Malay Muslims. However, the Malay Muslim, though affiliated by religion, do not view them as equals because they are of different race while the Hindu Indian majorities do not view them as true Indians due to their difference in religion. Pray that local believers will become a blessing to these people by being a friend to them despite religious and racial barriers. Pray that believers will relate and respond to all the needs of Indian Muslims.

JAFFNA TAMIL



Population	Major Religion	Language
25,000	Hinduism	Tamil

Who are the Jaffna Tamil?

As early as 6th century BC, South Indian Tamils migrated to Jaffna and other northern provinces of Ceylon (now Sri Lanka). In the late 19th century, Jaffna Tamil migrated to Malaysia in order to assist the colonial bureaucracy in clerical work. They previously served under British officers, who were posted to Ceylon prior to Malaysia. Jaffna Tamil excelled in mathematics, accounting, and English due to strong missionary schooling. They worked in almost every branch of public administration and in plantation and industrial sectors. Many rose to command senior positions in government services. Many friends and family members from Jaffna soon followed by migrating to Malaysia to find work. They found careers in the railway, postal service, and civil service to name a few.

What are their lives like?

Today, there are approximately twenty-five thousand Jaffna Tamil living in Malaysia. They continue to thrive in Malaysia as professionals in medicine, law, accounting, engineering, computer science, and many other fields. Thriftiness and education has been the key to their success. However, in their pursuit of advanced education to maintaining a high social and cultural status in Malaysia, Jaffna Tamil have neglected to maintain their Tamil Language. They prefer to use English at home and social gatherings. Today's younger generation of professionals are losing some of their cultural identity in Malaysia.

Jaffna Tamil refuse to identify themselves with the wider Tamil community. In attempt to express their own identity in Malaysia, Jaffna Tamil have sought to distance themselves from Malaysia's Indian Tamil community (one and a half million Tamil Indians from Southern India) along class lines. The Indians

detest the Jaffna Tamil's onetime close association with the British colonizers.

Jaffna Tamil traditionally gave away dowry with their daughters at marriage. The moment a girl is born families will naturally begin saving for her dowry. Though not as prevalent as in previous generations, dowry is still prevalent among some conservatives. The caste system is dying out with each new generation of Malaysian Jaffna Tamil.

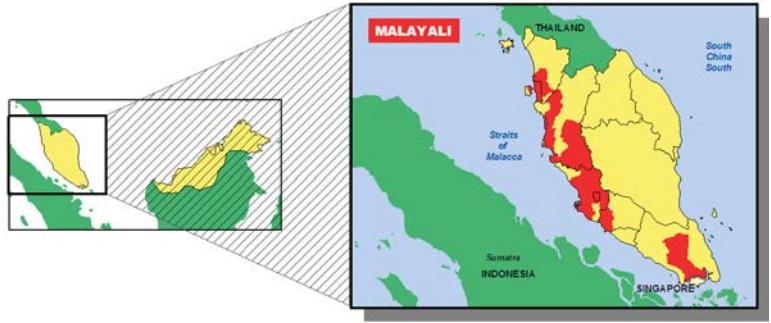
What do they believe?

Traditionally, Jaffna Tamil have always been considered devout Hindus. However, there is a small minority of Christians who converted after the arrival of Portuguese, Dutch and British in Ceylon. Religion has always played a crucial role in the Jaffna Tamil identity. They have built Hindu temples and institutions in Malaysia. The Jaffna Tamil are very strict and ritualistic in their Hindu practices, which can be observed in their complex burial and marriage ceremonies.

What are their needs?

Despite the fact Jaffna Tamil played an important role in development of modern Malaysia, they are frequently overlooked as a people group in Malaysia. They are often viewed as part of the larger Tamil community, whose values and cultures are similar. The Jaffna Tamil's culture and beliefs are beginning to transform with the influence of new ideals on each generation through intermarriages and seeking higher education from other countries. Pray for believers who can relate to the needs of the Jaffna Tamil and minister to them in a way to show them the path to the Prince of Peace.

MALAYALI



Population	Major Religion	Language
135,000	Hinduism	Tamil / Malayalam

Who are the Malayali?

The Malayali have ancestral origins in Kerala and neighboring states in South India. Although there are more than thirty-five million Malayali in India, there are only about 135,000 in Malaysia. Religious faith varies among the Malayali in India. Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, and Judaism are all present. The Christians are well represented, especially by the Church of St. Thomas, a disciple of Jesus Christ who is said to have visited Kerala in 52 AD. The Portuguese introduced Roman Catholicism to Kerala in the 15th century. Islam was introduced to Kerala through Arab traders who came into the ports for spices. One unique distinction among the Malayali community is that regardless of their religious heritage, their own origin as Malayali takes precedence.

The Malayali traveled to Malaysia in the early 20th century seeking a better life. They were initially employed on plantations as conductors, clerks, and hospital assistants. Due to their excellent command of English, the second generation of Malayali became plantation managers or assistant plantation managers, and others professionals.

What are their lives like?

Today in Malaysia, the Malayali are well represented in institutions of higher learning and professional occupations, such as law, medicine, scientific research, engineering, and politics. Unlike the Tamil majority, their language is not recognized as one of Malaysia's people group languages taught in the public school system. Due to the Malayali's zeal for higher education and economic success, the younger generations are losing their mother tongue and customs. The younger generation is more comfortable speaking English than Malayali. Though proud of their heritage, family

beliefs, and traditions, many Malayali are losing a part of their identities. They have managed to keep their language, faith, festivals, and folklore alive. The Malayali language is Malayalam, which is derived from Sanskrit.

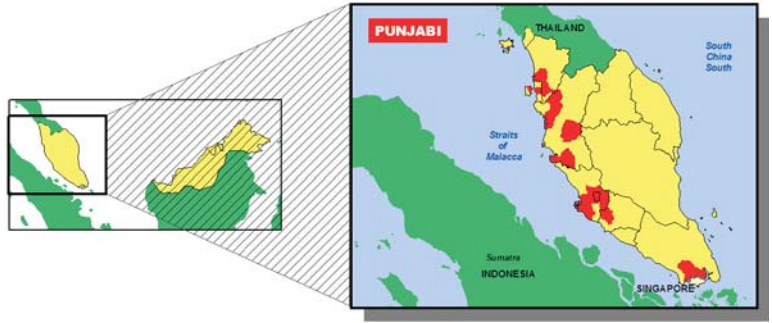
What do they believe?

Malayali have seen their people embrace Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity in Malaysia's multi-religious society, yet they still maintain their Malayali identity. The Malayali, in addition to celebrating festivals of Indian Hindus in Malaysia (Thaipusam, Deepavali, etc.), also celebrate ancient festivals from Malayali legends which still practice distinctly by Malayali Hindus. For example, they consider Onam (celebrated in April) as an important harvest festival, while the Tamils regard Ponggal (celebrated in January) as their harvest festival. Another ancient Malayali festival is Vishu (their astronomical New Year). No Malayali festival is complete without traditional Kaikottucali (a rhythmic dance performed by young girls dressed in white and adorned with flowers) and traditional vegetarian meals, which differ from other Indian cuisine with the Malayali's use of coconut milk.

What are their needs?

Pray for believers among the Malayali to not turn their backs on the larger Malayali community but relate to them in a way that both helps to maintain their cultural heritage and point to the Truth that transcends cultures. Pray for local believers outside the Malayali community to also relate and respond to the needs of the Malayali.

PUNJABI



Population	Major Religion	Language
90,000	Sikh	Punjabi

Who are the Punjabi?

The name Punjabi is used to describe both those who speak Punjabi and those who inhabit the Punjab region in India and Pakistan. There are approximately ninety thousand Punjabi in Malaysia. They first came to Malaysia in the 19th century as British political prisoners. A second wave was brought in by the British to serve as policemen for the British Straits Settlement communities and as night watchmen for industries.

Punjabi are a small minority among the approximately two million Indians in Malaysia. They have preserved a distinct Punjabi/Sikh identity within Malaysian society that sets them apart from the Tamil and other Indian communities that are Hindu. Malaysians commonly refer to the Punjabi community as Bengali, which is a misconception since they are actually from Punjab and not West Bengal. This misconception began because their Malaysian identification cards classify them as Bengali. Most people in Malaysia view the terms 'Punjabi' and 'Sikh' as synonymous. In reality, significant minorities of Punjabi people are Muslim and even smaller minorities are Hindu. Punjabi Muslims identify closely with other Indian Muslims as well as the majority of Malay. Punjabi Hindus and Muslims commonly refer to themselves as Hindustani and Indian Muslim, respectfully. The Sikh see themselves as the only Punjabi that remain distinct from other groups in Malaysian society.

What are their lives like?

Many of the males are characterized by their long beards and neatly wound turbans. Many of the younger generation, however, can be found without beards or turbans. Another distinctive feature relates to food. If you catch the sight or scent of chapati (a traditional type of Punjabi bread) there is sure to be a Sikh nearby.

Subsequent generations of Punjabi in Malaysia realized the value of greater education and pursued occupations in professional fields such as medicine, law, teaching, and business. Some Sikhs are still visible as security guards and police officers.

As the Punjabi in Malaysia become more educated and more integrated into modern Malaysian society, less emphasis is being placed on the ability to read and write Punjabi. However, Punjabi people remain distinct from other people of Indian origins because of their religious beliefs and strong sense of community.

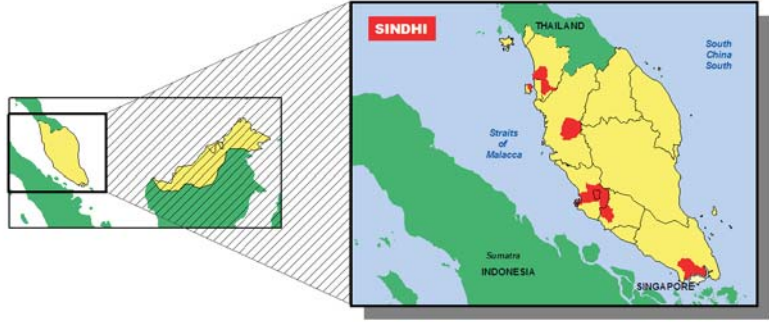
What do they believe?

Punjabi are predominantly followers of the Sikh religion, though there are significant minorities of Muslim and Hindu among them. Sikhism is a monotheistic religion that was founded in northern India during the 16th century. Its teachings have combined elements of both Hinduism and Islam in an attempt to find one god who transcends all religious distinctions. Sikhism stresses the importance of devotion, intense faith in the guru (teacher), the repetition of their god's name as a means of salvation or moksha (release into god's love), opposition to the worship of idols, the brotherhood of all men, and rejection of caste (pattern of social classes in Hinduism) system.

What are their needs?

Punjabi Hindus and Muslims are often misunderstood and overlooked as distinct people groups among their larger religious and linguistic affiliations. Pray that Indian believers will help meet the needs of the Punjabi regardless of which religion they follow.

SINDHI



Population	Major Religion	Language
1,000	Hinduism	Sindhi

Who are the Sindhi?

The Sindhi are considered to be one of India and Pakistan's oldest people groups. They believe their earliest ancestors came from the region where the Indus River flows into the Arabian Sea. They are named after the Indus River, which in Arabic is called the Sindhu River. They come from the Sindh region, which is presently part of Pakistan.

In the 1880s, the Sindhi began establishing themselves in the Malay Peninsula, settling mainly in Penang, Selangor, Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh, Malacca, Johor Baru, and Alor Setar as merchants. With the partition of Pakistan from India in 1947, large number of families moved to Malaysia. The Sindhi formed a small but financially successful North Indian community, catering mainly to the textile and tailoring needs of the colonial market. Unlike other Indian groups in Malaysia during the 19th century who worked in civil administration or plantation work, the Sindhi community had a well-established recruitment agency in Sindh, which employed Sindhi to work with Sindhi firms all over the world, including Malaysia. Newcomers came with the intention of venturing out to establish new work as soon as possible. They worked hard, saved their money, and eventually, started their own business.

What are their lives like?

The Sindhi in Malaysia venture into real estate, electronics, departmental stores, entertainment, food, jewelry, and of course textiles and tailoring. The younger generation is moving into professions such as medicine, engineering, law, and accounting. The Sindhi language is pre-Sanskrit. They borrowed from Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, Hindi, and English. Despite strict observance of traditional norms and values, each generation is losing proficiency in the Sindhi language.

Sindhi prefer to marry within their community due to their cultural, linguistic, and religious upbringing. Marriages are often arranged with Sindhi from other countries. Arrangements are made to bring parties together and if all goes well, the marriage is set.

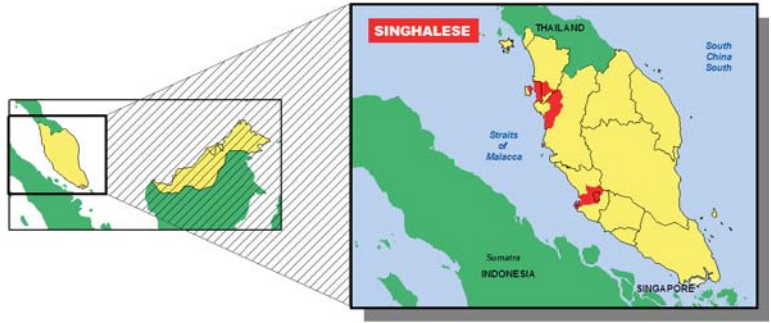
What do they believe?

Almost all of Malaysian Sindhi are Hindu. Only a small minority is Muslim. The Sindhi's religion bears elements of mysticism, Sufism, Sikhism, and Hinduism. Their main deity is Jhoolay La'al-u (an Indus god who is believed to have traveled through out Sindh on a palla fish). The Sindhi celebrate Cheti-Chand (the birth anniversary of their deity) in April, as their New Year. On the beginning of each month of their calendar, the Sindhi observe Chand (prayers and worship) and end with the Aarthi (waving a lit lamp in front of their deity using a herbal oil called Camphor) and dinner.

What are their needs?

Even though some of the Sindhi become successful, there are those who are unemployed or earning very low wages. Pray for the much needed assistance to the Sindhi living below the poverty level. Pray for local Indian believers to relate and respond to the needs of the Sindhi.

SINGHALESE



Population	Major Religion	Language
5,000	Theravada Buddhist	Singhalese

Who are the Singhalese?

Singhalese are believed to be of Aryan descent. They migrated from India (Bengal, Orissa, and Gujarat) to Sri Lanka as early as the 6th century B.C. where they were known as Singhalese. The Singhalese King, court, and people converted to Indian Buddhism in the 2nd century B.C.

Singhalese, mainly jewel merchants, began migrating to Malaysia as early as 1890. Many of these early Singhalese immigrants returned to Sri Lanka after earning enough money. The Singhalese consider themselves Indians. There are no distinct physical features that set the Singhalese apart from other Indians.

What are their lives like?

In the early 20th century, Singhalese youth migrated to Malaysia with intentions of settling down permanently. Unlike the Sri Lankan Tamil, these Singhalese youth had no family or friends already settled in Malaysia to assist them. However, with the growth of Malaysia's rubber plantations and tin industries, there was an increasing demand for railroad transport providing a major source of employment to migrants from Sri Lanka. The Singhalese primarily settled in the Kuala Lumpur and Taiping where they work as drivers, security guards, bus ticket inspectors, and later on as station masters. Those with an excellent command of English work as government employees. On the rubber plantations, they held positions such as conductors, bookkeepers, clerks, and hospital assistants. There were a few Singhalese craftsmen and surveyors.

Today, there are less than 800 families bearing Singhalese names living in Malaysia. With the number of mix marriages with Indians and other Malaysian communities, the number of Singhalese continues

to decrease in Malaysia. The majority of Singhalese prefer to use English and Malay despite efforts of the older generation in trying to maintain their mother tongue. Western clothing is becoming the norm among Singhalese in Malaysia, with the exception of ceremonial functions. Many Singhalese practices such as burial rites have strong Indian influences.

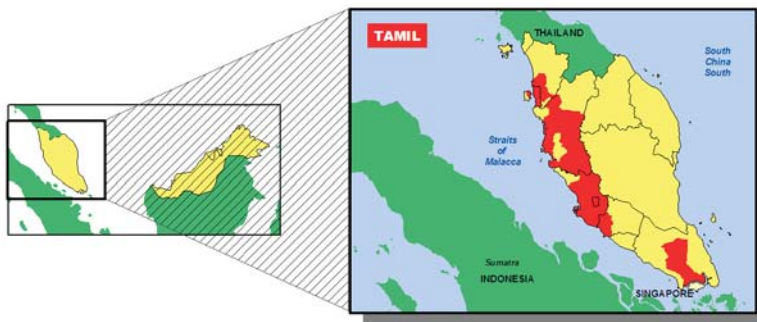
What do they believe?

The majority of Singhalese in Malaysia are Theravada Buddhist and the temple is the focal point of their activities. Minorities of Christian Singhalese maintain their ties through the church. Besides the religious Wesak day (a Buddhists celebration of Buddha's enlightenment), the Singhalese Buddhist community also celebrates the New Year usually on 14th April. New Year's Day begins with lighting a lamp and placing it in a prominent position in the house and it is believed to drive away evil spirits. Certain foods are required, and it is believed that eating these foods on an auspicious day will bring one good fortune throughout the year. This custom is still practiced despite disbelief among people in their community today.

What are their needs?

Though they are proud of their heritage, this small Singhalese community continues to struggle to preserve its cultural distinction as they blend more with the mainstream Malaysian society. As they integrate into the society, pray that they will be open to Indian believers and see the Truth in their lives. Pray that local believers will relate and respond to the unique needs of the Singhalese.

TAMIL



Population	Major Religion	Language
1,500,000	Hinduism	Tamil

Who are the Tamil?

The Tamil Indians first arrived on the Malay Peninsula in the 15th century and were successful as textile and spice merchants. Of these earliest Indian communities, only a small minority survived. They have adopted many Malay customs over the years, including the Malay language, food, and dress. Under the British rule in Malaysia during the 18th century, the great migration started. At first, Tamil laborers from Tamil Nadu and neighboring states in South India were brought in to build roads and railways or to work on tea plantations. Later on, they were recruited to work in the rubber and palm oil industries.

What are their lives like?

Today, Tamil Indians comprise six and one half percent of the Malaysia population and four percent of the Singapore population. Like other Indians, Malaysian Tamil communities proudly continue with their traditional customs, language, and religions. Tamil Indians live in both rural areas and urban centers. Many have successfully ventured into all walks of Malaysian life. Some Tamils are professionals, but the majority have remained manual laborers. What Tamil Indians lack in opportunity, they overcome through creativity. Tamils often speak three to four dialects, cook a variety of curries, wear vibrantly colored materials, and have a lively culture.

What do they believe?

The Tamil in Malaysia are predominantly Hindu. Although many are devout Hindus, many simply follow worship practices without a full understanding their Hindu beliefs.

The Tamil Indians of Malaysia participate in many

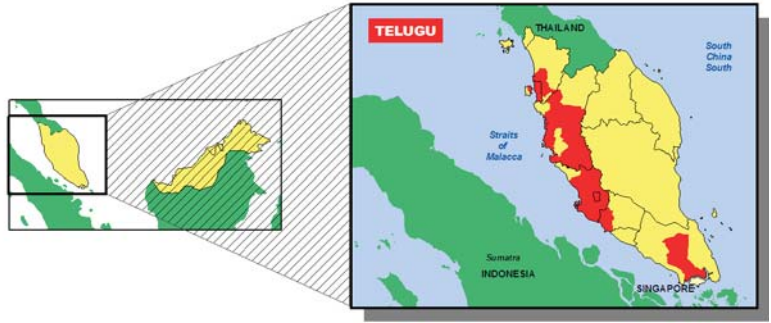
Hindu festivals, rituals, and ceremonies. However, there is one festival that has been uniquely adapted in Malaysia and Singapore—Thaipusam (a demonstration of human endurance, self-sacrifice, and the power of mind over matter). It is very different from the original Thaipusam practiced in India. The Festival is held in honor of Lord Murugan (Hindu deity, the son of Shiva). Thaipusam is a time of purification and atonement, where devotees by the thousands fulfill their vows made to the deities for prayers answered.

Thousands of men express their loyalty by putting *vel* (metal skewers) through the skin of their foreheads, cheeks, and tongues. They also pierce their chests and backs with hooks hung with offerings of leaves, limes, or metal containers holding milk. All devotees will walk barefoot for many miles and then ascend hundreds of steps up the temple to bear offerings to Lord Murugan. Year after year, they strive in vain to find purification and atonement.

What are their needs?

Tamil Indians would state their needs in terms of educational, social, and economic opportunities. The Tamil Indians have been reported to have Malaysia's highest school drop out rate, unemployment, illiteracy, alcoholism, criminal activity, and number of squatters. There is some underlying bias against the Tamils of Malaysia that is subtly expressed by the other major people groups. Pray for local believers of other ethnicities to abandon any such prejudices and work to build relationships with Tamil Indians and support them in their struggles. Pray for local believers to relate and respond to all the needs of Tamil Indians.

TELUGU



Population	Major Religion	Language
90,000	Hinduism	Telugu

Who are the Telugu?

The Telugu of Malaysia have ancestral origins in Andhra Pradesh and neighboring states of South India. The Telugu who migrated to Malaysia were mostly farmers from the lower caste (a pattern of social classes in Hinduism). In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Telugu willingly signed on as indentured laborers with the estate supervisors from Malaysia and left their farms in Andhra Pradesh with hopes of gaining wealth and returning back to India one day.

Though work was hard on the rubber plantations, they found time to plant vegetables and raised animals to supplement their income. They lived simply and saved their money. As years passed many opted to stay in Malaysia and only traveled back to Andhra Pradesh to visit family members or find brides whom they brought back. They used their savings to set up small businesses that eventually brought them out of estate work. In the 1940s, many Telugu ventured back into the estates selling textiles, household items, and food from India.

What are their lives like?

Telugu have now shifted from rural areas to the urban centers. Due to their emphasis on education, a large number of Telugu have moved up the social ladder from their modest beginnings in plantation work. Today, most Telugu are literate and educated. Many Telugu are professionals and have middle level occupations in commerce, the government service, and other professions. Very few families fall below the poverty level.

A few men still wear dhotis (simple white garments wrapped between the legs loosely like a skirt); and the women sometimes wear saris (straight pieces of cloth draped around the body like a dress), especially on

formal occasions. On the other hand, western clothes are the norm for most Telugu.

The caste system is dying out with each new generation of Malaysian Telugu, partly due to intermarriage with other Indian and Malaysian groups. Some of the old Telugu customs seem to have been lost with time and assimilation into Malaysian society, though they still have a distinct culture and language. Most marriages are still arranged by Telugu parents.

What do they believe?

The Telugu are mainly followers of Hinduism. For the Hindu majority, their "Hinduism" is as much a lifestyle as it is a religion. Telugu are mainly Vaishnavites (followers of the deity Vishna). Telugu participate in festivals celebrated by most Indian Hindus in Malaysia such as Thaipusam (a ritual of human endurance, self-sacrifice, and the power of mind over matter) and Deepavali (known as the Festival of Lights). There are festivals distinct to Telugu such as Ugadhi (beginning of a new Hindu lunar calendar with a change in the moon's orbit) celebrated during the month of March or April with Ugadhi patchadi (special vegetarian meals) and Cherathalu (a joyful folk dance).

What are their needs?

Stress has become a part of the Telugu people's lives. Although many have found success, these successes have brought new problems into their lives. Pray that local believers will relate and respond to these and other needs of the Telugu by building relationships and introducing them to the One of Peace.

ORANG ASLI CLUSTER

The Orang Asli comprise at least nineteen distinct people groups. The Orang Asli (OA) people groups differ in language, social organization, economy, religion, and physical characteristics. What they have in common is that they are non-Malay indigenous people; descendants of people who occupied the Malay Peninsula before the establishment of the Malay kingdoms in the second century A.D.

The majority of these people live in the forested land and the wetlands of Peninsula Malaysia. They are concentrated in the states of Negri Sembilan, Pahang, Perak, and Selangor. No OA are found in the states of Penang and Perlis, perhaps because Penang is highly urbanized while the OA are basically rural and forest-based people. In Perlis, the absence of OA is likely due to migration and subsequent settlement of OA in Southern Thailand.



Orang Asli Government Settlement Area

The OA are generally classified for official purposes under Senoi, Proto-Malay (Aboriginal Malay), and Negrito (Semang). Under the Senoi grouping are the Chewong, Jah Hut, Mah Meri, Semai, Semaq Beri, Temiar, and Temoq. The Jakun, Orang Kanaq, Orang Kuala, Orang Seletar, Semelai, and Temuan constitute the Proto-Malay grouping. In the Negrito grouping are the Bateq, Jahai, Kensiu, Kintaq, Lanoh, and Mendriq.

The OA total population as given in the latest census by the Malaysia Department of Statistics 2000 is 132,873. The Senoi population is 72,871 (or 55%), the Aboriginal Malay has 55,852 (or 42%), and the Semang has 4,150 (or 3%). The total OA population is only 0.16% of the total population of Malaysia.

The People and Their Identity

Historically, the basic economic activities of the OA were hunting, fishing, gathering forest produce, foraging along riverbanks, farming, and trade. Today, the OA have equally varied occupations and way of life. The Orang Kuala, Orang Seletar and Mah Meri, for example, live close to the coast and are mainly fishermen. Some



Men and Women Working

have taken to agriculture—rubber, oil palm, or cocoa planting. The Semai, Temiar, Chewong, Jah Hut, Semelai, and Semoq Beri live close to or within forested areas where they engage in hill rice cultivation and do some hunting and gathering in the forest. They also trade in *petai* (green beans), durian, rattan, and resins to earn cash income. Some groups like the Temuan, Jakun, and Semai people have taken to permanent agriculture and now manage their own rubber, oil palm or cocoa farms. A very small number, especially among the Negrito groups (such as Jahai and Lanoh) are still semi-nomadic, preferring to take advantage of the seasonal



Father and Son

bounties of the forest. A fair number also live in urban areas and are engaged in both waged and salaried jobs.

Religion

In recent years, according to government claims (Berita Harian 1993), about one in ten OA has converted to Islam, the religion of the politically dominant Malays. Despite the influence of Islam, many of them still indulge in animistic beliefs and practices that are neither prescribed nor endorsed by Islam. They are usually associated with the spirit world. Many believe in environmental spirits that may cause misfortune and sickness or provide miraculous power for the living.

The majority of them hold to the belief that “all things may be alive.” According to their beliefs, there are good and bad spirits. The mountains, rivers, and places all have spirits. Fear of the spirits of dead ancestors and hunted animals is very strong among the OA, and it is an unwritten law that all animals caught in the forest should suffer no pain. Dead spirits, in particular, are considered responsible for sickness and calamities. It is often necessary to call the shaman (or witchdoctor) of the tribe for help.

The OA believe the surrounding mountains bind their souls. As animists, they feel they are the biological keepers of indigenous plants and sacred shrines. For the OA, their identity is linked to the land—the land is the only link to their origin. Every tree has a name, and every place has identification. For example, if there is a place where an animal died or someone fell in love, they will identify that place with a name that reflects what has taken place there.



Orang Asli Mother with Children

do things with how Malays do them. Yet, despite these contrasts, they tend to see the world through the filter of Malay culture. Thus, for centuries the OA people have lived a ‘fugitive’ existence. They have been seduced or enslaved by an encroaching Malay civilization, which they have resisted and fled.

Nevertheless, the OA have retained much of their tribal identity to the present day because of their relative isolation from the other communities and the forces of change. These peoples observe hierarchical relationships within their communities. With outsiders, they also tend to respect or submit to them as higher in their social network system.

Conclusion

In the past, the OA were economically self-sufficient and politically independent. They were nomadic people and their whole existence revolved in the jungle. They showed no interest in the outside world and only made contact when and how they wished. This isolation began to break down in colonial times in the mid 1950s as plantations and tin mines sprang up in OA areas. Now, they are affected by three main forces of modernization,



An Orang Asli Settlement

which are government-sponsored development projects, government political control, and Malaysia’s growing market economy.



Orang Asli People

Language

Most of the OA tribes speak Mon-Khmer languages showing an ancient connection with mainland Southeast Asia where most Mon-Khmer languages are found. A few of the southerly groups no longer use their aboriginal languages and now speak only Malaysia’s national language—Bahasa Malaysia. However, the

majority of the OA can converse in the national language.

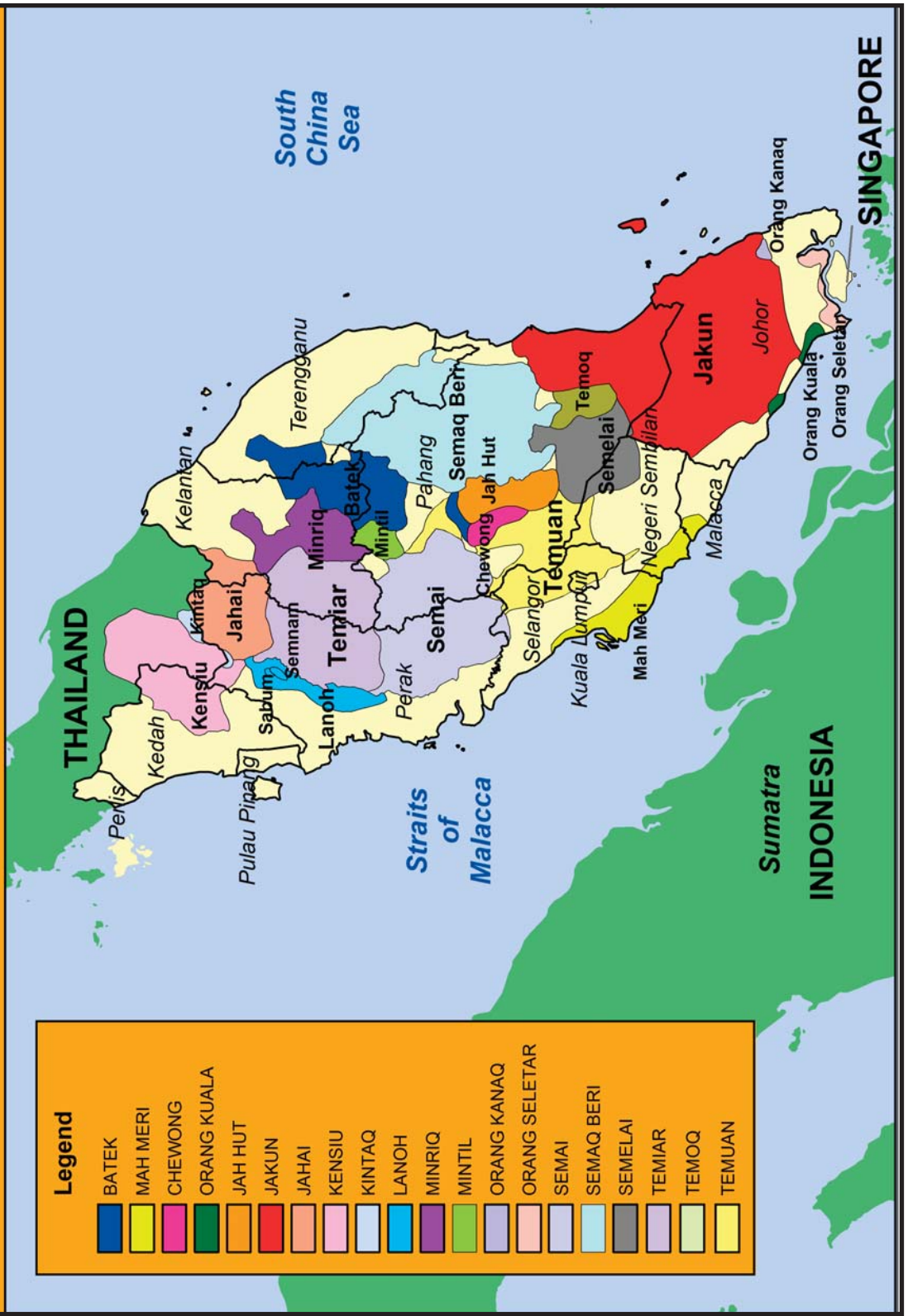


Kensi Lady

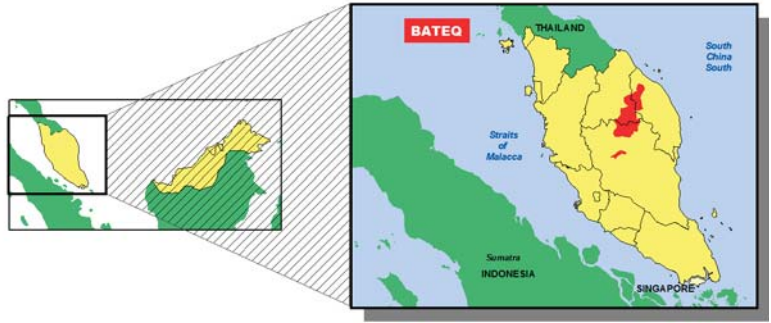
Culture

Almost all the OA communities exist in the shadow of Malay culture. In describing their own culture, the OA persistently contrast how they

ORANG ASLI CLUSTER



BATEQ



Population	Major Religion	Language
1,000	Animism	Batek

Who are the Bateq?

The Bateq (also spelled Batiq or Batek) are one of the nineteen Orang Asli people groups of Peninsular Malaysia. They are part of the Semang (officially called Negrito) subgroup.

When asked who they are, Bateq is what they will usually answer. The Bateq (“people of our group”) are a people little accounting of their history. They are nomadic foraging people who have a very low literacy rate and have little to no formal tradition of story telling.

Their settlements are located in the Kuala Krai district of Kelantan, the Besut district of Terengganu, and the Jerantut and Kuala Lipis districts of Pahang.

What are their lives like?

Traditionally, the Bateq lived in the rain forest in small, nomadic groups. They survive on a combination of hunting and gathering wild foods and trading forest products such as rattan and resinous wood for food, tobacco, and manufactured goods. Surrounded by a household of plastic ware and steel containers, the Bateq of today are no longer the loincloth-clad people of years gone by. The men’s loincloths of pounded bark have given way to shirts and shorts or sarongs, and sometimes long trousers. Blouses and sarongs have replaced the women’s short kilt and strands of fungus which were made from a waist-string of the same material.

Much of the Bateq’s traditionally occupied jungle homeland in Kelantan has been destroyed either by unchecked development of logging activities or logging by the Federal and State governments. The alternative location provided for the Batek is a thousand-acre patch of land surrounding Post Lebir, a government-sponsored settlement on the Middle Lebir River.

The vast majority of the Bateq have fled into the nearby National Park (Taman Negara), which straddles the Kelantan-Pahang border. Some settled along the northern border of the National Park and others withdrew into the interior of the Park to continue their traditional way of life by foraging and trading. Still others have joined the Bateq living near the Park in Pahang where they make their living by trade and wage labor.

Many Bateq remain quite nomadic. Moving between three villages every six months, crops (like tapioca, yams, and groundnuts) are cultivated, harvested and replanted. Tending to crops is the job of women; the men hunt mouse deer, monkeys, gibbons, birds, and harvest bamboo.

What do they believe?

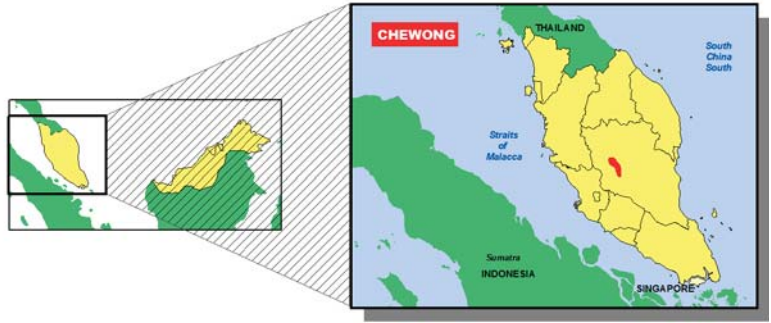
Most of the Bateq who have settled down in permanent villages have converted to Islam. Generally, Bateq are animists who shun their own people who have converted to Islam. Nevertheless, the worldview of the Bateq is still gripped by animistic beliefs.

Some still follow their traditional religion, a complex set of beliefs and practices that connect them to their environment and fellow Bateq through relations with a group of deities that are associated with forces of nature (such as thunder god).

What are their needs?

Much of the Bateq’s jungle homeland has been destroyed by unchecked development and logging activities. Pray that God will provide adequate resources to meet their physical needs. Pray for believers who live near Bateq villages to relate and respond to the needs of the Bateq.

CHEWONG



Population	Major Religion	Language
400	Animism	Chewong

Who are the Chewong?

The Chewong are one of the nineteen original Orang Asli people groups living in Peninsular Malaysia. They belong to the Senoi subgroup. They are actually known as Siwang, but Chewong is a more familiar name because this is how people know them.

The Chewong are found in groups living near the villages of other races and those still living in the jungles. Their settlements are located in the Raub district of Pahang, Perak, Selangor, and Johor.

What are their lives like?

The deep forest areas constitute the Chewong's environment. The forest is a cool place that provides the basis for their subsistence, is a barrier for diseases, and affords relief from the heat of the villages. While some of the Chewong live near Malay villages, others still live deep in the rainforest and live off hunting, fishing, and collecting forest produce.

The Chewong are mainly farmers and hunters. They live close to, or within, forested areas where they engage in hill rice cultivation and grow a little tobacco. Cassava is planted all around the field to deter animals that might otherwise ruin the highly valued rice crops. Small manioc gardens are maintained in the forest and provide supplies for hunter-gatherers. They also trade in petai, durian, rattan, and resins to earn cash incomes. The Chewong men hunt pig, deer, and bear while women catch tortoises, monitor lizards, and porcupines. Women also help make and inspect pig traps in the field. Fishing is carried out in rivers and streams, with hooks, nets, and poison. Fishing by hand brings in the best catch.

Chewong's settlements or camps move and follow

the cycles of land clearing. Each residential unit is the nuclear family or the families of one household, and includes two to six individuals. The extended family is economically self-sufficient and politically independent.

What do they believe?

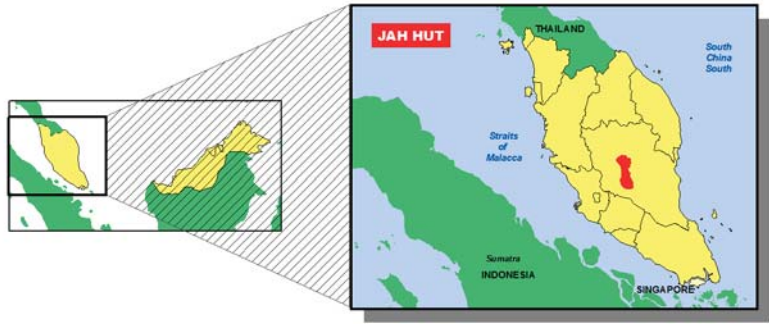
The Chewong believe in the existence of numerous evil spirits that can be kept away by building campfires. One spirit greatly feared by the Chewong is the *bas*, which they believe attacks the human soul for its food. Religious rituals are closely linked to their use of the forest. There are no specific ritual areas but there are traditionally dangerous places, dangerous species, and dangerous periods. Big ceremonies take place wherever there are strong mythological associations.

These associations entail many taboos regarding animals and plants found everywhere in the forest. There is no religious leader and any individual may use trance and chanting to communicate with these spirits, which are an integral part of the human environment.

What are their needs?

Development projects are taking away forested areas where the Chewong once thrived. Pray for adequate government protection for the environment that the Chewong live in will be developed and implemented. Pray also that social ministry will arise from among believers to help meet the needs of the Chewong.

JAH HUT



Population	Major Religion	Language
3,200	Animism	Jah Hut

Who are the Jah Hut?

The Jah Hut (Jah and Hut are two separate words meaning “people” and “no”) are one of the nineteen original Orang Asli people groups of Peninsular Malaysia. The government classifies them under the Senoi subgroup.

Jah Hut villages are located in the foothills of the Jerantut and Temerloh districts of Pahang, Selangor, and Negeri Sembilan.

What are their lives like?

In the past, the Jah Hut people collected rattan and resin from the jungle to sell to outsiders. Like the Mah Meri, they were also known for their fine woodcarving skills. They depended on the forest for building and craft materials—such as poles, bamboo, and thatch for houses and straw or fiber for mats. They used to have a profitable woodcarving industry. However, with the effect of constant relocation and outside parties seizing their land and forests, this rural population is left without a subsistence base. Lacking land, trees, or forest produce, the only thing they have to generate income is their labor.

Today, they have few job options. With limited education and skills, they are generally engaged in the lowest of jobs with little prospect for job improvement or job satisfaction. Ironically, the most readily available jobs for them are in the very industries that displaced them: logging and various plantations.

The Jah Hut are a group of unskilled workers scrounging these days for a living in Malaysian society. They usually work on a contract basis or as pieceworkers rather than as salaried employees. Thus, their employment is sporadic, unreliable, and often takes the workers far from home. Because

they have little control over the conditions of their employment—they must take what they can get—they are often cheated out of portions of their earnings. On the surface they seem to have an increase in the level of cash income. This observation, however, does not take into account the destruction of the free traditional economies in the forest that benefited them in the past.

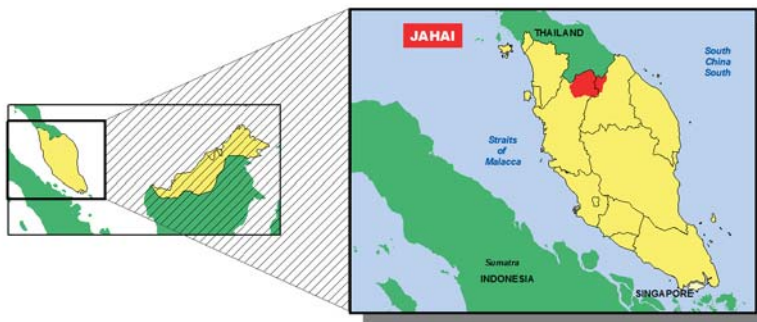
What do they believe?

Their main festival is the “Day of the Spirits” where offerings are made to the spirits to avoid ill fortune. The Jah Hut *puyang* (witchdoctors) and *pawang* (magicians) play important roles in healing sicknesses and dealing with spiritual matters. The Jah Hut custom requires all young boys to be circumcised as a rite of adulthood. They are one of the non-Muslim Orang Asli people groups who practice circumcision. The circumcision functions not only as an ethnic marker but also as a way of uniting the community for a large feast and, if the family can afford it, a drinking party afterward. It is also an opportunity to display wealth and status.

What are their needs?

The Jah Hut people do not place much value on education and skill development. They depend on the forest for income. Developers are taking away land, trees and forest produce and labor seems to be the only source of income for some Jah Hut. Pray that the Creator will call out believers to help meet the physical need of the Jah Hut. Since the Jah Hut have a fairly high percentage of believers compared to many of the other Orang Asli groups, pray for Jah Hut believers to serve as ambassadors to other villages.

JAHAI



Population	Major Religion	Language
1,000	Animism	Jehai

Who are the Jahai?

The Jahai are one of the nineteen Orang Asli people groups living in Peninsular Malaysia. They are classified under the Semang (officially called Negrito) subgroup. They refer to themselves as Jah Jahai or Orang Semang.

The Jahai, like all other ethnic groups of the Semang, are generally of short stature with darker skin and have more curly hair.

Jahai settlements are by the rivers and lakes located in the Jeli district of Kelantan and the Hulu Perak district of Perak. One such settlement is at the edge of the Temengor Lake located in the State of Perak.

What are their lives like?

The Jahai lead a semi-nomadic life. Therefore, it is difficult to establish the number of this migratory indigenous group. Population estimates run from 750 to 1,250. The Malaysian government has tried with little success to get the Jahai people to settle down and farm, although a few of them have accepted this challenge. The government's effort was prompted by the desire to convert the traditionally Jahai animists to Islam.

The Jahai are expert hunters with blowpipes and poison darts. In fact, a pleasurable afternoon for any Jahai boy is spent practicing his blowpipe skills by shooting at tree branches. This is how, along with fish trapping, these tribal people survive as they travel through the rain forests of the peninsula.

Today they seem to enjoy medical and educational facilities and have police protection. They are less mobile than in the past due to the gradual change from shifting cultivation to semi-sedentary agricultural cultivation. Yet, they are still semi-nomadic, preferring to take advantage of the seasonal bounties

of the forest. A fair number also live in urban areas and are engaged in both waged and salaried jobs.

Their staple food is tapioca, which they cultivate around their villages. They collect fruits from the forest and hunt small mammals or fish. They also harvest rattan and bamboo, which has multiple of uses for the Jahai community.

What do they believe?

The Jahai are animists. Black magic and superstitions are very strong among the Jahai. They fear the Karei; a malevolent spirit that they believe brings death and disaster whenever taboos are broken. The headmen and witchdoctors (Tok Halaq) are an influential group of people in the tribe.

The Jahai are steeped in superstitions and taboos that have been developed and preserved for generations because of adverse circumstances. Even with the influence of technology and modern conveniences, the mindset and way of life for many have not changed. Therefore, their customs provide important clues to knowing their mindset.

What are their needs?

Many Jahai families are gripped by poverty. Community development is poor in terms of healthcare and literacy. Pray that believers will reach out to help in compassionate ways that will show them the love of their Creator. Because the Jahai live in the jungle along rivers and lakes, they are very difficult to access from the outside. Pray for individuals who are willing and able to make the sacrifice to respond to the needs of these people.

JAKUN



Population	Major Religion	Language
24,000	Animism	Bahasa Malaysia

Who are the Jakun?

The Jakun are the second largest of the nineteen Orang Asli people groups of Peninsular Malaysia. They are part of the Aboriginal Malay (officially called Proto-Malay) subgroup.

The Jakun are believed to have lived in the Peninsula for 7,000 years. The Department of Orang Asli Affairs labels them *Orang Hulu* (People of the Upriver), a term which the Jakun refer to themselves.

The major Malay attitude towards the Jakun is of two minds. On one hand, they are considered less civilized and skilled in “black magic” (the word *jakun* is pejorative in Malay, implying an uncivilized person) while on the other they are regarded as proof that the country has always been inhabited by people of the Malay type (hence the more polite and official name Orang Asli or “original people”). Jakun settlements can be found in the Malaysian states of Johor and Pahang. In the past, their settlements extended over a much larger area of the southern peninsula.

What are their lives like?

Traditionally hunter-gatherers, the Jakun are now more settled than most of Malaysia’s Orang Asli groups. They live by setting fish traps in rivers and streams. They hunt game with blowpipes and poison darts, and gather fruit and forest products for bartering.

In some areas the Jakun grow rice or tapioca root, but they often prefer to get these commodities, along with tobacco, gambier, and areca nut, from Malay and Chinese traders in exchange for rattan, wax, woods, resin, and camphor they gather in the forest. In many regions, the Jakun have followed a Malay way of life, growing fruit, rubber, and rice as well as rearing animals. It is difficult to say how many Jakun there

are because they have been speaking Malay as their mother tongue for at least 200 years. The people group picture is complicated by the presence of a number of mixed tribes made up of people of different races. Jakun have intermarried with Malays, Chinese, Senoi, and Semang people. A number of them have become nominal Muslims—meaning that the government views them as Malays for census and legal purposes.

What do they believe?

Apart from believing in the existence of spirits and supernatural beings, the Jakun also believe that a “god of the above” controls the skies while a “god of the lower” rules the earth.

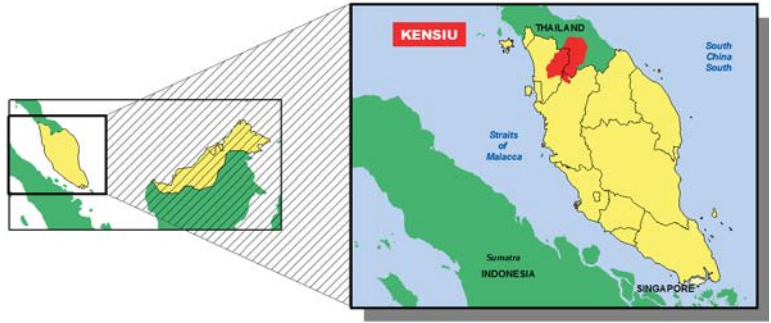
The Jakun *bomoh* or witchdoctor is both feared and respected in their society. He deals with the spirits in each Jakun village and is more influential than the village chief.

If questioned on their religious beliefs, some Jakun who have considerable contact with the Malay people would say that their god is the Lord *Allah*, but there is no semblance of praying to *Allah*. Moreover many are not Muslims in any other respect.

What are their needs?

Many Jakun are in a state of transition. They have given up hunting and foraging for food for agriculture in order to survive. Some will need educational and agricultural assistance during this transition period. Pray that believers will be willing to make time and sacrifices to help the Jakun. Pray that they will relate and respond to all the needs of people.

KENSIU



Population	Major Religion	Language
220	Animism	Kensiu

Who are the Kensiu?

The Kensiu are one of the nineteen Orang Asli ethnic groups living in Peninsular Malaysia. They are classified under the Semang (officially called Negrito) category.

Their language is very close to that of the Kintaq, another Orang Asli tribe with whom they share settlements and have close socio-economic relations. The Kensiu are closely related to the Kensiu of Thailand, and cross-border movement is frequent.

The Kensiu's main settlement is located in the Baling district of Kedah. A few of the Kensiu can be found living in Perak and Kelantan.

What are their lives like?

Racial prejudice from neighboring people groups has caused the Kensiu to avoid contact with outsiders. However, contact with the outside world has brought not only slight improvements in living standards but also changes that are stressful for many. Attempts by the government to modernize the Kensiu have caused drastic changes to their traditional lifestyle, with the infiltration of alien belief systems and values. Many Kensiu find it difficult to cope and have found this transition traumatic.

Kampong Baru Siong is one such settlement located in the Baling district of Kedah. There is very little activity in this small village, which contains approximately 50 houses, a school and a community hall. Many houses appear vacant. The community hall is on the verge of collapse. A few cows and goats graze in a field located within the vicinity of the village. Attendance at the primary school is low.

Many of the settlers have returned to the jungle area along the Malaysia-Thailand border. There they take forest products such as rare wood, resins, honey, and

herbs to the nearest Thai market to exchange for salt, knives, tobacco, cloth, and other necessities from the modern world. Occasionally, they return to the village but stay for only a short period of time.

They are not motivated to attend school. Possibly, they have associated the word "school" with the Malays, whom they have rejected. This apathy to public education has been reinforced by teachers urging them to study Islamic education. Those who live in this village do not permit intermarriage with people outside the community. They marry only their cousin Kensiu living in Thailand or people of the Kintaq community. Those who marry outsiders have to move out of the village.

What do they believe?

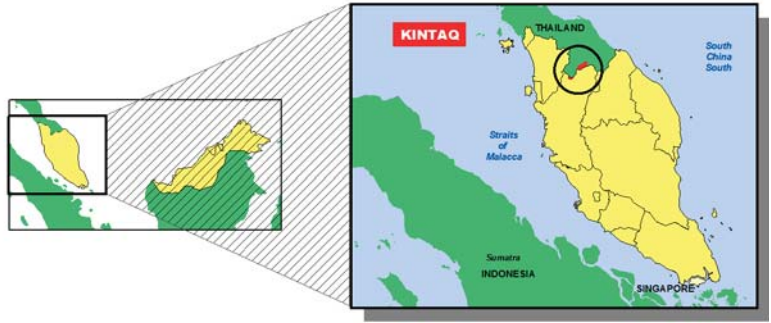
Despite inroads made by Islam, ancient beliefs remain strong in their society. One unique feature of the Kensiu is their Dikir Barat—a rare unique form of singing, which is performed only at important gatherings.

Their philosophy is, "Blessings are for today. Tomorrow is tomorrow's matter". They believe that nature will give blessings. Although they do not believe in any god, they believe the presence of spirits reside in places like bridges, and graves, and trees.

What are their needs?

In fast developing Malaysia, the Kensiu need incentives to improve their standard of living. Their habit of nomadic living makes it difficult to reach them with any education or skills training. Pray for resourceful believers who will take the necessary time and make the sacrifices to help this small, remote group of people. Pray that local believers will relate and respond to each of the needs of these people.

KINTAQ



Population	Major Religion	Language
220	Animism	Kintaq

Who are the Kintaq?

The Kintaq are one of the nineteen Orang Asli people groups living in Peninsular Malaysia. They come under the Semang (officially called Negrito) subgroup. Their language is very close to that of the Kensiu, another Orang Asli tribe with whom they share settlements and have close socio-economic relations.

Most of the nomadic Kintaq have settled down mainly in the jungle areas of Grik in the Hulu Perak district of Perak. A few Kintaq live in Kelantan.

What are their lives like?

Their main economic activities are hunting and gathering jungle produce. They collect forest produce for trade in the local market as well as for their own consumption. Some have learned basic farming, but the harvest is never enough to support their families. A few make their living as employees in plantations and factories.

Like the Kensiu, the Kintaq have very little formal education. They have also resisted schooling because of its association with Malay culture and the Islamic religion. Most of them are illiterate and uneducated. Therefore, they struggle to keep pace with the other people groups in a developing and fast changing Malaysian society.

Traditionally, the Kintaq were nomadic people moving in bands within a defined area. They dressed in rudimentary clothing made from bark, roots, leaves, and fibers of trees and vines. Since commercialization has spread even to the remotest areas in the Malay Peninsula, most have settled down permanently.

Today, they live in standard houses developed by the Department of Aborigines Affairs—a small version of a the rural Malay house. Prefabricated from wooden

timbers and planks, a typical Kintaq house is a rectangular structure on short posts with a veranda at the front, one or two living or sleeping rooms, and a kitchen at the back.

They have also adopted modern clothing for the monthly occasions when they come in touch with the outside world. Their small stature, dark brown skin and curly, kinky hair make them rather easily distinguished from other people.

What do they believe?

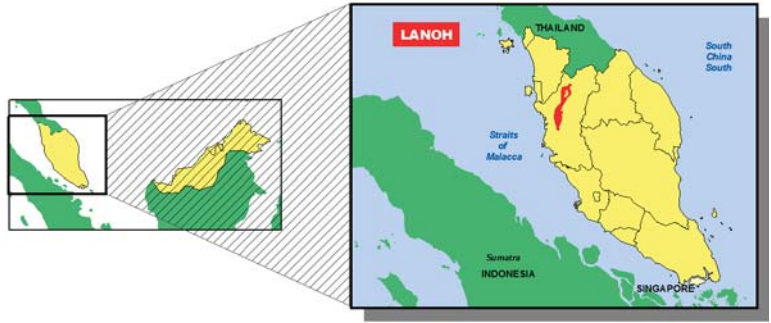
The Kintaq are basically animists. Most of them follow their traditional religion, a complex set of beliefs and practices that connect them to their environment and fellow Kintaq. They have a large body of myths and legends together with a belief in supernatural deities. They also perform diverse religious practices, many of which are borrowed from neighboring tribes. However, they would deny having a certain form of worship and belief.

Like their cousin Kensiu, their outlook on life is “Live for today. Let tomorrow take care of itself.” They believe that nature will give blessings, but they also believe in the presence of spirits in places like bridges, graves, and nature.

What are their needs?

The Kintaq have been left behind in the rising prosperity of the nation. In effect, they are actually becoming even poorer. To make matters worse, they are not receiving any formal education or skills training. Pray that God will call out resourceful believers to help them from even a more difficult situation in the future. Pray for “beautiful feet” that will travel to tell the Kintaq the good news.

LANOH



Population	Major Religion	Language
230	Animism	Lanoh

Who are the Lanoh?

The Lanoh are one of the nineteen Orang Asli people groups living in Peninsular Malaysia. They have been classified under the Semang (officially called Negrito) subgroup.

Lanoh refers to a number of different but closely related peoples such as the Semnam, the Sabum, and the Lanoh Yir. Most are mostly dark-skinned and frizzy-haired. Their features resemble the Papua New Guinean or east African people.

The Lanoh were once a nomadic tribe, but many have now settled down in permanent villages located at the foot of mountain ranges in the Hulu Perak district of Perak.

What are their lives like?

In the past, the Lanoh were hunter-gatherers. They used the caves as shelters during hunting trips. Some of these caves have been discovered in the state of Perak. Charcoal drawings inside the caves' walls depict the daily lifestyle of the Lanoh. Apart from the charcoal drawings, they made pictures by carving away the limestone rock. These "modern" art drawings are about 100 years old. They feature simple men engaged in common activities such as hunting, and riding horses and elephants. A man can be seen carrying a pole laden with coconuts. The drawings also feature animals such as leaf monkeys, monitor lizards, and porcupines—all sources of good food!

The Lanoh are still found in Perak today. A fair number of Lanoh are still semi-nomadic, preferring to take advantage of the seasonal bounties of the forest. They gather their daily supply of needs from the jungle and river.

A few Lanoh also live in urban areas and are engaged

in both hourly-waged and salaried jobs—generally working on rubber and oil palm estates. Ironically, they seem to survive best in isolation. Mainstreaming and attempts to settle them down and convert them to modern living in the industrial world have had disastrous consequences on their lives.

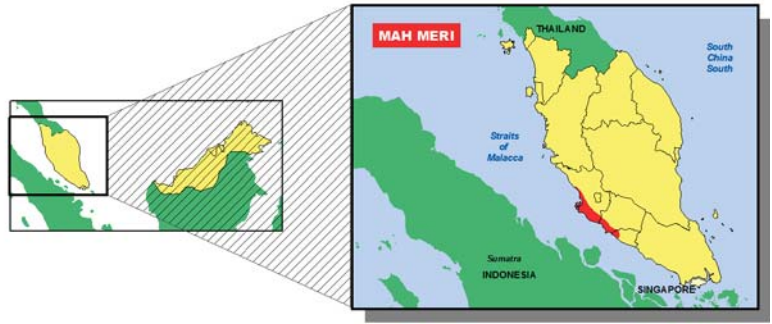
What do they believe?

For the Lanoh people, religious sentiments are based on naturalism—the belief that plants and animals energize the world with their own spirituality, bestowing upon humans a humbling experience of bondage and love for nature. Humans must live in symbiotic union with other living things. Therefore, fear of the spirits of dead ancestors and hunted animals is very strong among the Lanoh people. They also practice an unwritten law that all animals caught in the forest should suffer no pain while in captivity.

What are their needs?

Many Lanoh still gather their daily supply of needs from the jungle and river. But this is often difficult since the forests have become thin. Pray that the Lanoh will continue to find adequate natural resources for their needs. At the same time, pray for local believers who will relate and respond to the inner needs of the Lanoh.

MAH MERI



Population	Major Religion	Language
2,200	Animism	Besisi

Who are the Mah Meri?

The Mah Meri (Mah meaning people and Meri meaning forest), originally known as the Besisi, also call themselves Ma Betisek, which means, “people with fish scales.” The Mah Meri are one of the nineteen Orang Asli people groups of Peninsular Malaysia. They are officially classified under Senoi subgroup.

There is no information on their origin, but the Mah Meri tribe claims to have walked the earth for as long as one can remember. They live in the states of Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, Malacca, and Johor.

What are their lives like?

Living in small wooden houses set in harmony with the surrounding forces of nature, the Mah Meri prefer to remain “forest people.” Hence in their villages, life seems relatively untouched by modern progress. They are known for their woodcarving skills, yet their economic activity remains rooted in agriculture and fishing. They resist employment outside of their community.

The Mah Meri are soft-spoken and trusting with a propensity to laugh in the face of adversity. While the adults carry out their daily economic activities, the children often ride their father’s bicycles and play their favorite games with sticks, seeds, and other objects. Surprisingly, the Mah Meri community has managed to preserve a tradition of spiritual woodcarving that is truly world class in terms of quality of its craft and artistry. The art, which has rich mythological meanings behind the images and symbols, is handed down from father to son. As not many people seem interested in such animistic carvings, the young Mah Meri do not see it as a profitable trade.

What do they believe?

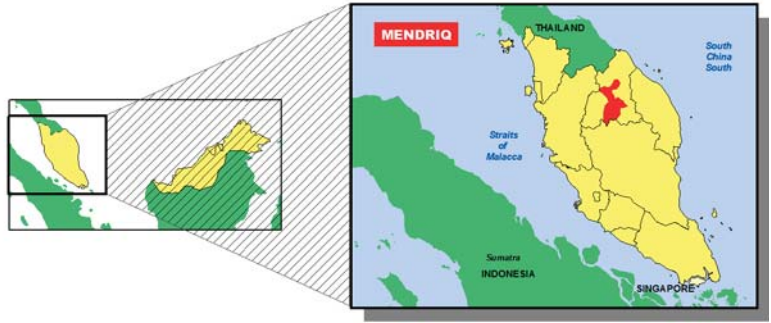
The Mah Meri believe that humans, plants, animals, and even inanimate objects possess spirits, which interact with the daily lives of the Mah Meri. They say that ancestral spirits cursed plants and animals to become food for humans. Yet, paradoxically they also believe illness or injury is caused by offended spirits of plants or animals which have been killed. Natural disasters are the result of transgression of their moral code.

In earlier times, woodcarving of characters or moyang masks and figures from folk stories were used in spirit huts and left in the jungle, as offerings to the forest forces. All Mah Meri agree that the mythological characters are supreme. They believe some of the moyang influence health, illness, and healing. Their main festival is the Day of the Ancestors where offerings and rituals are made to their ancestral spirits. They see dreams as indicators of future events. The Mah Meri are rather resistant towards outside beliefs.

What are their needs?

The physical needs of the Mah Meri are many. They are poor, lacking in proper health care and clean water. They live in dilapidated houses, and their children have very little chance of receiving a proper education. Ask for caring believers who can assist in meeting the physical needs. Pray also for local believers who will relate and respond to the spiritual needs of these people.

MENDRIQ



Population	Major Religion	Language
150	Animism	Menriq

Who are the Mendriq?

The Mendriq are one of the nineteen Orang Asli people groups living in the Peninsular Malaysia. They come under the Semang (officially called Negrito) subgroup.

The Mendriq are believed to be one of the first groups of people to inhabit the Peninsula. Like the Negrito, they are mostly dark-skinned and frizzy-haired; their features resemble Papua New Guinean or East African people. They are generally shorter in stature than other Malaysians.

The Mendriq were nomadic but resettlement projects have forced many to settle down permanently in Orang Asli settlements situated in the Gua Musang district of Kelantan.

What are their lives like?

In the past, the Mendriq were foragers who practiced migratory patterns of settlement by shifting from one area to another to take advantage of the seasonal fruit harvest. Besides gathering fruits, they foraged for food and gathered forest produce for medical use.

Land resettlement has robbed them of their identity and history as well as their economic security. Poverty and loss of their traditional areas (saka) have profoundly demoralized the rural Mendriq. Their saka were not just sources for food, but group identity. Stories of their past are rooted in the landscape of their saka.

Presently, they are growing cash crops but struggle to make enough money to pay for food and other necessities because of the competitive prices of produce. Meanwhile, without access to traditional forest food and with little time and land to grow

subsistence crops, their diet has deteriorated, causing malnutrition.

They resist settling down in reserves. Most individuals lack the education and skills needed for other work and often take labor jobs in a modern market economy. Therefore, whenever supplies of food are not forthcoming, they will stop working on the projects and set out into the forest to forage and collect forest produce.

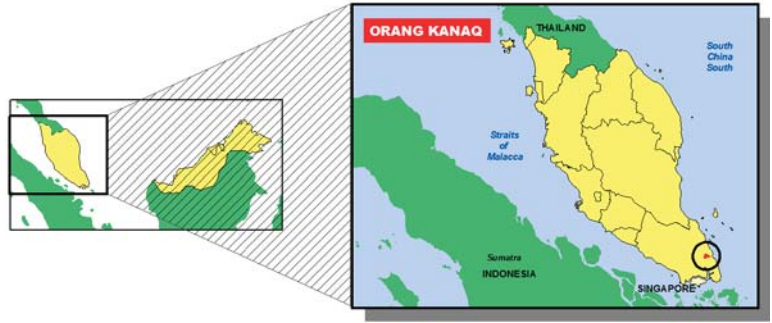
What do they believe?

The Mendriq are animists. They subject themselves to the natural forces of the jungle. They strongly fear the spirits of dead ancestors and hunted animals. Their lives are governed by a string of taboos and superstitions. Every January the Mendriq hold a mysterious ritual called Puja Pantang. This is a three-day ritual where all daily routine activities are forbidden. Outsiders are not allowed to enter the Mendriq settlements during this period. Consequently, the precise nature of this ritual remains unknown.

What are their needs?

There has been significant change in the life, traditions, worldview, and community systems of the Mendriq. This has occurred in conjunction with their contact with people outside the forested domain. They also need to develop their skills in order to face the changes they are experiencing. Pray for believers who will come alongside to be an advocate for the Mendriq as they adjust to a more contemporary lifestyle. Pray for local believers who will relate and respond to all the needs of the Mendriq.

ORANG KANAQ



Population	Major Religion	Language
65	Animism	Bahasa Malaysia

Who are the Orang Kanaq?

The Orang Kanaq are one of the nineteen Orang Asli people groups living in Peninsular Malaysia. They come under the Aboriginal Malay (known officially as Proto-Malay) subgroup. Originally from Pulau Sekanak in the Riau Islands of Indonesia, they were forcefully removed from their homeland when the Johor Sultanate needed to supplement its forest-collection labor force during mid-19th century.

They are the smallest ethnic group among the entire Malaysian population and also the smallest of all Orang Asli tribes. They are considered one of the country's earliest inhabitants though they have been living on the Peninsula for only about 200 years. A small settlement is located in a village called Selangi in the state of Johor.

What are their lives like?

In the past, they were slave-workers tapping trees in the rubber plantations. Today, they lag behind in modern technology and education. They are still working as hard laborers in shrub and rubber plantations. In addition, the Orang Kanaq gather forest produce (such as rattan and fruits). They also fish in the rivers and hunt small animals in the forest with arrows and blowpipes.

The Orang Kanaq in Selangi live in standard Orang Asli wooden stilt houses—a small version of a rural Malay house—developed by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs for all the Orang Asli. Prefabricated from wooden timbers and planks, the house is a rectangular structure on short posts with a veranda at the front, one or two living or sleeping rooms, and a kitchen in the back. It is difficult for the close-knitted Orang Kanaq community to be separated because

they avoid marrying outsiders. They believe that such unions will bring curses upon their tribe. Low birthrates have caused their numbers to dwindle over the years.

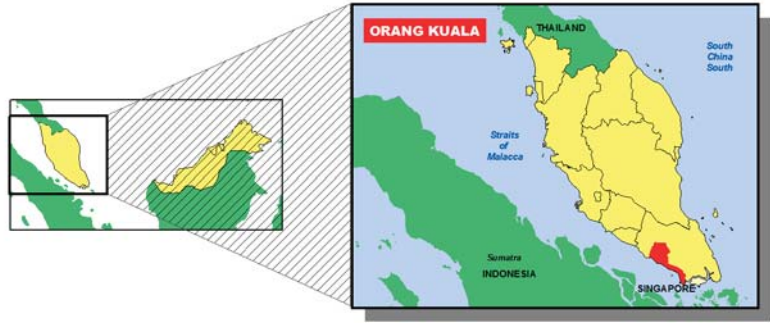
What do they believe?

The Orang Kanaq follow their traditional religion of a complex set of beliefs and practices. However, they would deny having a specific form of worship and beliefs. They have a large body of myths and legends tied up with a belief in supernatural deities. Numerous taboos, passed down from generation to generation, govern the lives of the Orang Kanaq who believe in the existence of ghosts and spiritual beings. They still believe in the power of spirits who are said to be their source of help in time of need. Traditional medicine men act as mediums to communicate with the invisible powers.

What are their needs?

In the rapidly developing Malaysian society, the Orang Kanaq face the impending threat of relocation and loss of income due to compulsory mainstreaming. More worrisome is that they are very few in number and are fast disappearing as a people group of the Orang Asli. One difficulty is that they are interested in neither education nor technology. Pray that believers will relate and respond to the needs of the Orang Kanaq. Pray that they will have wisdom to help guide these people through these difficult times.

ORANG KUALA



Population	Major Religion	Language
2,500	Islam	Duano

Who are the Orang Kuala?

The Orang Kuala, also known as Duano, are one of the nineteen Orang Asli people groups living in Peninsular Malaysia. They come under the Aboriginal Malay (officially and administratively called Proto-Malay) subgroup.

Orang Kuala means “People of the River Mouth,” but the Orang Kuala call themselves Duano. Some Orang Kuala may also use the term *Desin Dolaq*, which means “People of the Sea” (or *Orang Laut* in the Malay language). Their ancestors were Muslim immigrants from the coasts of southern Sumatra and the Riau-Lingga archipelago in Indonesia.

The Orang Kuala live mostly in the villages located near the river mouths of the Batu Pahat, and Pontian districts of Johor.

What are their lives like?

The Orang Kuala are admittedly peaceful, simple folks. They are not particularly attracted to technology, and only a small percentage completes their secondary education. In the past, they were boat-dwelling sea nomads, and specialized in sea fishing as well as searching and hunting for food on seashore. Today, most of the Orang Kuala make their living by fishing. They use different types of traps ranging from traditional to modern. In addition to fishing, small-scale farming and plantation work are important occupations for the Orang Kuala. For the most part, they specialize in harvesting the produce of the sea, shore, and mangroves for their own consumption and for trade. In at least one village, some are recognized for being quite skilled in restoring and selling second-hand furniture.

They have adopted many aspects of Malay culture and lifestyle. However, racial prejudice by neighboring ethnic groups has caused some of the Orang Kuala

to feel ashamed of their ethnic origin. Nevertheless, most remain proud of their origin. This is evident as other ethnic groups living in the same area are better off economically than most of the Orang Kuala.

What do they believe?

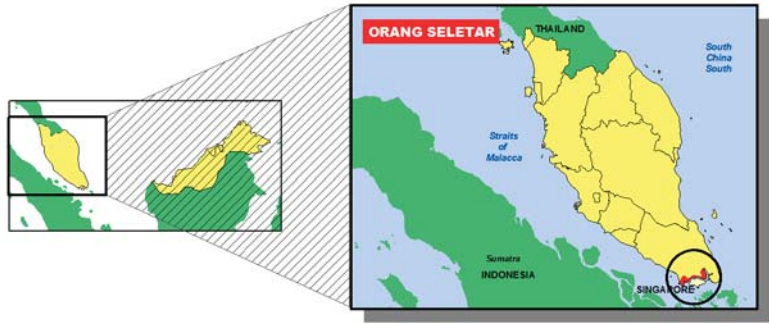
The Orang Kuala converted to Islam during the 19th century, yet many orient their daily personal and communal lives toward traditional animistic practices. For example, they believe that failure to respect the environment—the abode of the spirits (*hantu*)—results in illness, conflict, and death. A fisherman who dares to cast a net during the rainy season without performing the prescribed ritual inevitably suffers. The only cure lies in exorcism and appeasement of the spirits.

Like many Asian Muslims, they have retained many of their pre-Islamic religious beliefs and rituals. Customs and traditions have been harmonized with Islamic law. To the Orang Kuala the world is full of environmental spirits that cause either sickness or good fortune. Many of them still believe in superstition and evil spirits. They also believe that religious leaders, dwarfs, and traditional “medicine men” possess supernatural powers.

What are their needs?

Educational and economic development is spreading throughout the land of Malaysia. Like many of the other Orang Asli groups, however, the Orang Kuala are lagging behind because they are not attracted to education or technology. Pray that local believers will relate and respond to the needs of these people. Ask the Creator to give believers wisdom who are willing to sacrifice time and effort to help the Orang Kuala.

ORANG SELETAR



Population	Major Religion	Language
1,700	Animism	Bahasa Malaysia

Who are the Orang Seletar?

The Orang Seletar are one of the nineteen Orang Asli people groups living in Peninsular Malaysia. The Malaysian government classifies them under the Aboriginal Malay (officially called Proto-Malay) subgroup. Nearly half of the Orang Seletar ethnic group of 1,700, also live in northern Singapore.

They are a maritime people, the descendants of the *Orang Laut* or sea people who constituted the original navy of the Malaccan Sultanate and played a pivotal role in the region's history. Originally from the Spice Islands in Indonesia, five hundred years ago they roamed the Straits of Malacca in bands, raiding, burning, and pillaging. They were the old pirates of South East Asia. The Orang Seletar have settled down in the states of Johor and Selangor. They no longer live in boats but in huts built on water. In some places, they live in houses built on land.

What are their lives like?

The Orang Seletar have been generally integrated into the Malay community to the extent that they are in danger of forgetting the central role they played in early Malaysian history. In fact, some royal families in Malaysia have Orang Seletar ancestors! Those who have retained their old nomadic lifestyle prefer to live by the sea and remain one of the poorest minority groups of Asia. They are specialists in harvesting the produce of the sea, shore, and mangroves for their own consumption and for trade. Presently, they strive to survive through harvesting fish, rearing mussels, and catching prawns and crabs in the waters along the Tebrau Straits. The sea, however, has become polluted and their food sources are deteriorating. A few have found jobs at nearby restaurants and factories. The Orang Seletar are still nomads, but for a different reason—they are forced

to move from where they are living whenever there is government acquisition of land. In some areas, development activities have caused much anxiety and frustration among the affected villagers while they hope to get fair and adequate compensation to build their new communities.

What do they believe?

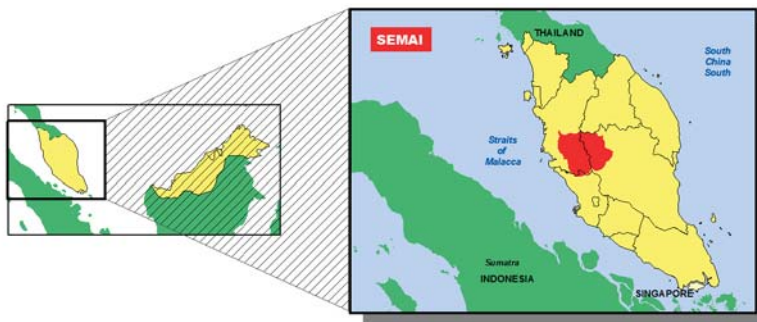
Many Orang Seletar worship spiritual beings believed to dwell in the coastal areas and in the depths of the sea. In contrast, death and illness are bound to the land. They go ashore to heal the sick or to bury their dead.

While spirits (*hantu*) roam everywhere—on trees, under water and rocks, in caves, and even in the air—the sole condition of this sea-people is respect. They believe that failure to respect the environment—the abode of the spirits—results in illness, conflict, and death. The only cure lies in exorcism and appeasement of the spirits.

What are their needs?

The Orang Seletar are one of the poorest of the poor in Malaysia. Formal education and vocational training would be helpful to the Orang Seletar. There are ongoing needs such as the setting up of infrastructure in their region which remain addressed. Pray for believers who can assist in these needs of the Orang Seletar.

SEMAI



Population	Major Religion	Language
38,500	Animism	Semai

Who are the Semai?

The Semai are by far the most numerous of the nineteen Orang Asli people groups in Peninsular Malaysia. The government categorizes them under the Senoi subgroup. They are about a quarter of the entire Orang Asli population and almost two-thirds of the Senoi.

Many Semai refer to themselves differently, like *mai darat* (People of the Hinterlands). Sometimes in self-deprecation a Semai will use a base Malay word *sakai* (slave) when talking about how his people are in comparison with the other peoples of the Malayan peninsula. However, on the lips of a non-Semai the term is offensive.

They seem to know very little about their own history beyond the fact that they were the original inhabitants of the peninsula. Semai villages are found in the states of Pahang, Perak, Selangor, and Kelantan.

What are their lives like?

Since settling down on the peninsula, the Semai's main means of livelihood has evolved into a mixed system of arboriculture, shifting cultivation, hunting, and trading forest products. Farming and hunting are their main economic activities. The more traditional Semai live in small, isolated camps on mountain slopes at high altitudes and grow mainly mountain rice, millet, and maize. They also hunt, fish, and gather. Others live lower down and grow mainly mountain rice. Yet others, who are quite adapted to Malay society, live even lower down the mountains, cultivating mountain rice and wet rice. Their literacy standard is, however, higher compared with the other Orang Asli tribes.

For the Semai the point of eating is to feel full. For a meal to be filling, it must include a starch dish,

preferably rice. When rice is scarce, roasted or boiled tapioca root may be substituted. To eat meat, fowl, or fish without a starch dish is ridiculous to the Semai.

What do they believe?

The Semai are largely animists, but a large minority profess Christianity. Many professing Christians, however, are still gripped by their old beliefs. They are more likely to believe in witchcraft than the pagan Semai.

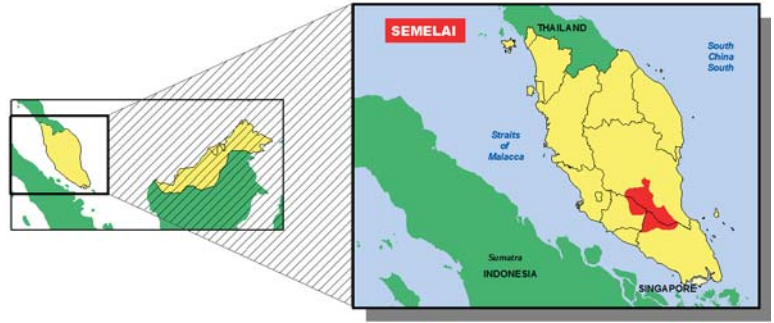
The Semai's main festival is the *Genggulang*. It is a festive ritual to appease land spirits for a good harvest and is still observed in many places where the people worship the rice spirit. In this ritual, the spirits are offered sacrificial chickens, flowers, and unhusked rice. Now, the festival has lost much of its religious meaning. It has become more of a cultural event similar to the way the Chinese celebrate Lunar New Year or Westerners celebrate Christmas.

The Semai tend to be unconcerned and skeptical about religious dogma. For example, people describing life after death almost always conclude by saying, "That's just a story of bygone days. I don't believe it."

What are their needs?

The Semai people need to be introduced to modern farming of a more practical and productive nature in place of their traditional methods. This would help increase crop yield and sale value. Pray for the needed agricultural training for the Semai community. Pray for local believers who will relate to the spiritual needs of the Semai.

SEMELAI



Population	Major Religion	Language
5,000	Animism	Semelai

Who are the Semelai?

The Semelai are one of the nineteen Orang Asli people groups of Peninsular Malaysia. They are part of the Aboriginal Malay (officially called Proto-Malay) subgroup.

Semelai is literally translated, “man of the land.” Archaeological evidence has shown that the Semelai folk have been natives of the land for more than 600 years. They live in the states of Negeri Sembilan, Pahang, Selangor, Malacca, and Johor. Most of their villages sit along the wetlands surrounding Lake Bera in Southwest Pahang. Many new settlements have been opened along nearby riverbanks.

What are their lives like?

Prior to government-imposed oil palm and rubber estates, the Semelai were shifting agriculturalists who were also actively trading in minor forest products. They were basically wage-earners. For example, they were employed for clearing the forests to make way for the first rubber plantations in Negeri Sembilan.

Today, many of the Semelai settlers have found a new occupation of introducing urban dwellers and other tourists to their way of life in the lake and wetland sanctuary of Lake Bera. This not only supports a diversity of animal and plant life, but also sustains the livelihood of the Semelai tribe. The Semelai have a vast knowledge of plants and their qualities. They are skilled at identifying animals from their tracks. They are well-versed in legends of their traditions, culture, and way of life. They were, and still are, very aquatic and agriculturally oriented. Apart from hunting and fishing, the Semelai also cultivate crops and collect jungle produce. They fish more than hunt. Semelai women are known for their skills in weaving mats.

The Semelai, interestingly, have a rich tradition of

oral histories, folklore, and mythology. Story telling has long been an important genre of expression in Semelai culture. Myths told at night are believed to describe events that occurred before one’s remembered ancestors. Stories, told at any time, are believed to have occurred in the historical past.

What do they believe?

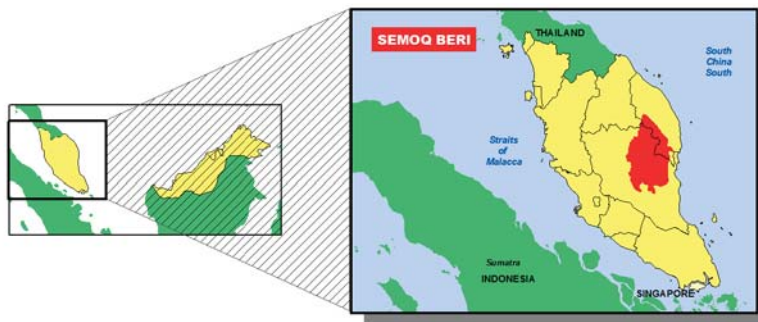
Numerous taboos govern the lives of the Semelai who believe in the existence of ghosts and spiritual beings. For instance, the Semelai believe when people are asleep their souls travel to the places they dream about. As in other Orang Asli cultures, dreaming is an important means of divination in Semelai culture. Different kinds of people, spirits, or animals appearing in dreams have different cultural interpretations.

For example, if one dreams of a Chinese asking to marry a particular Semelai girl, that girl is in danger of deadly mishap. If made aware of the dream, she would probably not go out of the house the following day. Although a particular Chinese may be considered dangerous, it can also be good fortune to marry a Chinese man because he is likely to have more money than a Semelai man. She would also benefit from the Chinese social networks in towns.

What are their needs?

The Semelai people are fortunate to find a safe haven in the wetland sanctuary of Lake Bera. However, they need to habituate to their new surrounding. Ask the Creator to send workers to help them develop their surrounding environment. Pray for local believers to relate and respond to all the needs of these people.

SEMOQ BERI



Population	Major Religion	Language
2,500	Animism	Semaq Beri

Who are the Semoq Beri?

The Semoq Beri (“people of the jungle”) are one of the nineteen Orang Asli people groups of Peninsular Malaysia. They belong to the Senoi subgroup.

They refer to themselves as Semoq (“people”) and are called Semoq Beri by their neighbors. They are also referred to in relevant literature as the Jakun of Tekai River and erroneously as the Semelai. The Semoq Beri live in settlements located in the jungles of the Jerantut, Kuantan, and Maran districts in Pahang and the Hulu Terengganu and Kemaman districts in Terengganu.

In the Malaysian Department of Aborigines nomenclature, Semoq Beri refers to a culturally diverse grouping of Orang Asli living in a large area along the eastern and northern tributaries of the Tembeling and Pahang Rivers.

What are their lives like?

The Semoq Beri have a common understanding within their society that each group has its own territory. The boundaries are clearly defined and maintained through mutual respect and any access to resources is available on demand—for instance, rights to make a garden are acquired by felling trees.

All types of subsistence activities are represented in Semoq Beri society—from hunting to slash and burn agriculture. Those living in government settlements are semi-nomads. Although less dependent on forest produce, they still hunt and fish regularly and collect some forest produce for trade (rattan, aromatic woods).

The traditional Semoq Beri are hunter-gatherers and

are completely dependent on the forest. They use the government village settlement only as a base camp. Except during the rainy season, they move around the forest all year round, hunting and collecting forest produce. They put up temporary camps within the jungle and move from one location to another. Each move can last from two to thirty-six days and cover a distance of up to 375 miles (or 600 km).

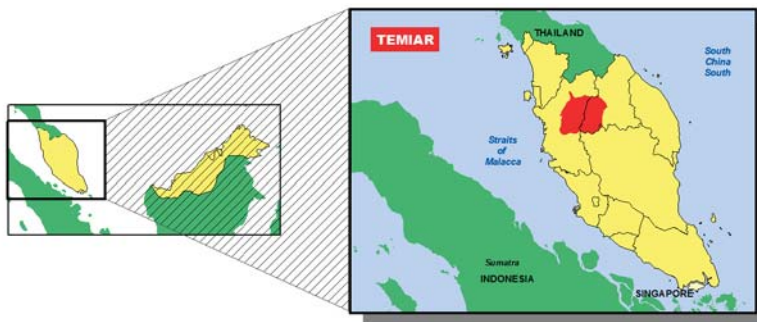
What do they believe?

The Semoq Beri believe in the existence of a Creator God called *Tohan* as well as numerous genies, spirits, ghosts, and supernatural beings. Certain natural phenomenon such as thunder, lightning, and eclipses are still feared by some of the Semoq Beri. They believe the forest is full of spirits that are an integral part of the human environment and these spirits communicate with and guide humans during dreams and trances. These non-human beings are everywhere in the forest; not only are they in plants and animals, but also in stones and mountains. Religious rituals are closely linked to their use of the forest. Their lives are also filled with taboos and superstitions due to the fear of spirits that dominate their lives. A small minority of the Semoq Beri are Christian.

What are their needs?

The Semoq Beri are hunter-gatherers and are dependent on the forest. They are a remote and highly mobile people. They are also isolated and impoverished. Pray for positive efforts for outside the culture to help improve their way of life. Pray for believers who will seek to relate the True Creator God to others within the Semoq Beri mobile community.

TEMIAR



Population	Major Religion	Language
23,000	Animism	Temiar

Who are the Temiar?

The Temiar are among the most publicized of the nineteen Orang Asli people groups in Peninsular Malaysia. They are officially classified under the Senoi subgroup and are the fourth largest of the Orang Asli groups.

The Malay people call them *sakai* (a disparaging Malay word for slave). Temiar settlements can be found in the states of Perak, Kelantan, Pahang, Selangor, and Negeri Sembilan. Many Temiar live on the fringes of the rainforest while some live in towns.

What are their lives like?

The Temiar live in an extended family social structure. They used to live in longhouses, but today most have individual houses made of split bamboo. Each village or community has a headman or chief, which is based on heredity.

Their staple food is tapioca, which they cultivate around their villages. They also collect fruit from the forest and hunt small mammals and fish. They harvest rattan and bamboo that have multiple uses for the Temiar community. Others work on plantations where they grow tapioca and sometimes maize or hill rice. They used to grow their own fruit, vegetables, tobacco, and medicinal herbs, but now they buy these products.

Temiar life is greatly dependent on bamboo, which is used for building houses, receptacles, food (bamboo shoots), musical instruments, and for weapons. Nowadays, when they hunt animals, they use blowpipes and spears, along with various traps and nooses. The Temiar are easygoing, peaceful people. There appears to be an absence of conflict or violence within their society. Although the Temiar have been known to take revenge against outsiders, many of

their cultural beliefs help promote non-violence. By the time they become adults, they have learned to feel anxious that their actions might cause someone else harm.

What do they believe?

Traditionally animists, the Temiar have some vague idea of a supreme being but like many Orang Asli they have little confidence in an afterlife. They aim to live in harmony with nature in this life through the intercession of the several types of medicine men or spirit mediums.

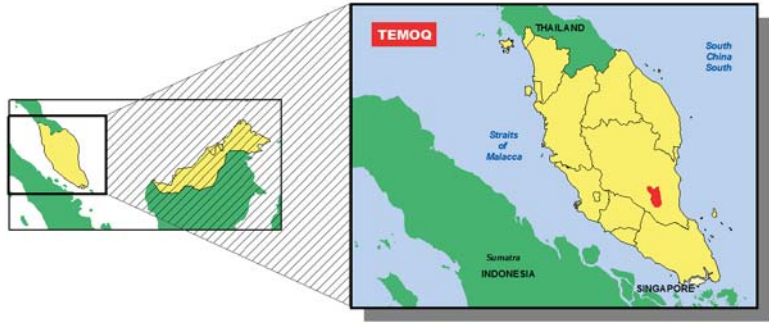
Temiar spirit mediums often hold night ceremonies where spirit guides are evoked amidst much singing, dancing, and trances. In a trance, possession by the familiar "tiger spirit" enables the medium to cure somatic or psychological sickness and to ensure the fortunes of his group.

Dreams play an important role in the daily lives of the Temiar. They consider dreams to be a link between the natural world and the spirit world. They believe that a dream is a mystical experience in which the person's soul wanders about the forests in search of guidance. Even their dances and songs are dream inspired.

What are their needs?

Though highly publicized, the Temiar remain poor and often lack adequate medical care. Pray for those who will assist the Temiar in their physical needs and in the transitions they must face in the modern world. Pray for local believers who will relate and respond to the needs of these people.

TEMOQ



Population	Major Religion	Language
350	Animism	Temoq

Who are the Temoq?

The Temoq are one of the nineteen Orang Asli people groups of Peninsular Malaysia. The government categorizes them under the Senoi subgroup.

The name Temoq means “wild people,” and they tend to be disliked by the ethnic groups around them. A nickname for the Temoq is “people of the forest fringe”. Other tribes think of the Temoq as wild and uncultured. They claim the Temoq do not cook their meat or eat salt. It is said they share a heritage with the Semelai people – a cultural legacy connecting them to the forest and the power that lies there. In fact, they are closely related to the Semelai linguistically.

The Temoq are largely found in the Jeram River valley in the Termerluh district of Pahang. In the past they were also living in the upper reaches of the Sungei Bera and on the eastern side of Tasek Bera in Pahang.

What are their lives like?

Traditionally, the Temoq were hunters and gatherers who sometimes had small rice plots on the hillsides. They also practiced blowpipe hunting. With their greater orientation to blowpipe hunting, the Temoq appear to have been much more land-oriented in their meat procurement. They were also more likely to hunt land turtles with dogs. It appeared that the only goods they needed from the outside world were knives, spear and axe heads, tobacco and salt, which they got by barter.

However, the loss of forest to logging and land development has been devastating to the Temoq economy. They depend on wild tubers, fruit, game, and fish for their basic nutrition. They practice

shifting cultivation and collect jungle produce while

growing a wide variety of crops and raising chickens and goats. The loss of raw materials from the forest means substitutes must be bought from their already modest incomes.

What do they believe?

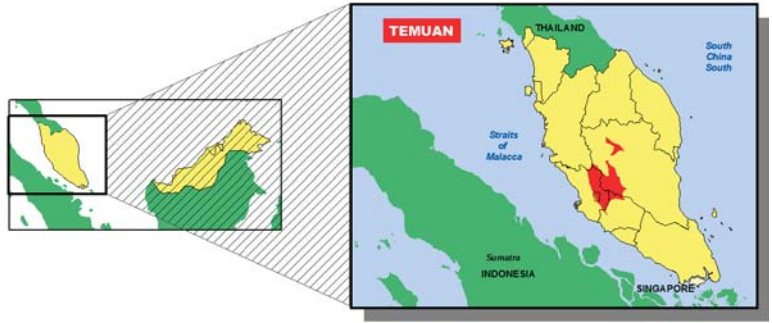
The religion of the Temoq people has been described as “formless animism” due to their belief in a vague spirit world made up of ghosts and disease spirits. They are also deep in occult practice. A certain Temoq charm is said to be able to give its owner the supernatural ability to travel great distances in very short time periods. It is believed that Temoq shamans often perform healing rituals for people of other tribes, especially the Semelai tribe.

Two features characterize their culture: they have a great fear of violence and a strong belief in each individual’s personal freedom. These characteristics permeate every part of the society and influence most of their actions. They view man as free but also alone in the world and thus continually exposed to danger.

What are their needs?

Development projects are rapidly taking over huge pieces of forested land, which the Temoq once roamed freely in search of food. Some Temoq can no longer find their daily supply of resources from the forest. Pray that God will grant wisdom to believers so that they may know the best way to help the Temoq people. Pray also for local believers to reach out to their unique needs.

TEMUAN



Population	Major Religion	Language
21,300	Animism	Bahasa Malaysia

Who are the Temuan?

The Temuan are the third largest tribe of the nineteen Orang Asli people groups living in Peninsular Malaysia. The government categorizes them under the Aboriginal Malay (officially called Proto-Malay) subgroup.

The Temuan villages (between 50 to 500 people) are found on the lowland valleys of districts in the states of Malacca, Negeri Sembilan, Pahang, Selangor, and Johor.

What are their lives like?

The Temuan are physically indistinguishable from Malays. They are very much influenced by the culture of the Malay people with whom they frequently come into contact. In the past, they were basically rural peasants. They grew some subsistence crops, hunted and gathered in nearby forests, and fished in rivers. To get cash for food, cigarettes, clothing, and tools, they tapped rubber, collected forest produce, sold fruit, and did occasional wage labor.

In the past, their main economic activity was cultivating irrigated rice. The Temuan villagers were skillful rice planters, experienced in engineering skills needed to regulate the flow of water to the fields. Too much or too little water will adversely affect the growth of rice plants. Shortly before harvest time, the people will drain the water from the fields.

Throughout the rice growing process, people had to continuously guard the rice from ricebirds, field rats, and insects. Every family member was involved in guarding the ripening rice in some way. It was common to see young children armed with slingshots shooting at the ricebirds. During the rice harvest, groups wielding sticks hunted rats in the field.

Today, only a few Temuan are involved in planting seedlings in compact nursery plots, hoeing the main fields, and constructing dikes and canals. Increasing contact with the "outside world" has caused many Temuan villages, like some other Orang Asli groups, to turn from being sedentary rice farmers to become nomads living in uncertainty. To expand their rice fields, Malays from neighboring villages gradually took over the best Temuan rice land by obtaining legal titles to it. To avoid confrontation and further harassment as the Malay population increased, they have moved to other locations.

What do they believe?

While the Temuan speak of a high god called *Tuhan*, they are basically animists. They believe that spirits, known as *hantu*, inhabit large boulders, rivers, tall trees, and mountains. Raja Mountain, which sits on the Selangor-Negeri Sembilan border, is considered sacred. An ancient legend states that it was on this mountain that their ancestors took refuge during the Great Flood which wiped out mankind.

What are their needs?

Development and modernization have adversely affected the Temuan. Their land to grow crops, their forest to collect produce or to hunt for food, and their streams to fish are diminishing. Pray that local believers will relate and respond to all the needs of the Temuan.

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Day	Cluster/People Group	Population
1	Malay Orang Pantai Timur Malay of Peninsular Malaysia	2,100,000 7,500,000
2	Mincangkabau East Malaysia/Malay	375,000 250,000
3	Singapore Malay Brunei Malay	400,000 175,000
4	Sabab Coastal Sama	125,000 80,000
5	Bajau Tausug	110,000 7,000
6	Molbog Illanun, Maranao (Iranun) Banggi Dusun (Bonggi)	20,000 2,000
7	Orang Jawa Bugis Bisayan-Tutung Tutung Kedayan	10,000 20,000 55,000 10,000 54,000
8	Sabab Tribal Kadazan Dusun Murut	480,000 136,000
9	Sarawak Tribal Paitanic Barum, Kenyah Ihan	55,000 45,000 480,000
10	Bidayuh Penan Batu Punan	132,000 10,000 1,000
11	Sarawak Coastal Melanau	115,000
12	Migrant Filipino Indonesian	430,000 750,000
13	Vietnamese Nepalese Singapore Indian	80,000 200,000 30,000
14	Chinese Cantonese Hokkien	1,400,000 1,450,000
15	Tscheor Hainanese Hakka Brunei Chinese	450,000 100,000 225,000 53,000

Day	Cluster/People Group	Population
16	Peranakan Baba Chinese Sino-Native	230,000 85,000
17	Indiane Eurasian Tamil Jaffna Tamil	45,000 1,500,000 25,000
18	Telugu Mamak Malayali	90,000 100,000 135,000
19	Sindhi Brunei Gurkha Bengali	1,000 2,300 2,500
20	Brunei Indo-Pakistani Gujarati Punjabi	4,300 3,000 90,000
21	Sinhalese Malaccan Chitty Orang Asli	5,000 1,000 24,000
22	Jakun Orang Kanaq Orang Kuala	65 2,500
23	Orang Seletar Semelai	800 5,000
24	TEMUAN Bateq Jahai	21,300 1,000 1,000
25	Kenoi KINENg Lanoh	220 220 230
26	Mendriq Cheowng Jak Hut	150 400 3,200
27	Mak Meri Semai Semaq Beri	2,200 38,500 2,500
28	Temiar Temog	23,000 350

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Brunei

*Malaysia
(Eastern)*

*Malaysia
(Peninsular)*

Singapore

