



# Amazing Malaysia!

## Who They Are:

Malaysia is a country in Southeast Asia that consists of two separate land masses. Peninsular Malaysia to the west & East Malaysia to the east. Peninsular Malaysia is located south of Thailand, north of Singapore & east of the Indonesian island of Sumatra. East Malaysia is located on the island of Borneo and shares borders with Brunei and Indonesia. The region is comprised of a number of ethnic groups and cultures. Malay, Chinese, Indian, Eurasian & the indigenous groups of the peninsula & north Borneo all contribute to Malaysia's eclectic existence. The country's national identity is referred to as *Kebudayaan Malaysia*.

## What They Teach Us:

**Harm No Living Thing:** Teminars (a small ethnic group in Malaysia) are farmers who reside in longhouses situated in the northern hills of the Malay Peninsula. Well known for their nonviolence and peaceful lifestyle, Teminars base their beliefs on dreams which are seen as glimpses into the spirit world. People around the world have copied their dream rituals, trying to achieve the same peaceful way of life. The Teminars remind all humans that the way to achieve lasting peace is to first respect every living creature's "right to life". When this principle is collectively realized and practiced a harmonious atmosphere is naturally formed.

**Rid Ourselves of Greed:** The main holiday in Sarawak (a state in Malaysia occupying the northwest part of Borneo) is Gawai Dayak or the Rice Harvest Festival. Many indigenous Malaysians believe it is good practice to gather villagers together to celebrate the community's victories, encourage solidarity and ultimately cast out the spirit of greed. During the ceremony, a hornbill bird (symbolic of a higher power) is believed to carry the people's selfish desires away from the village and therefore free its people from ill fate. More than a time of song and dance, the Malaysian Rice Harvest festival is a reminder that peace exists in communities where the well being of the collective is encouraged over that of the individual. This principle maybe the key to perpetual societal tranquility.

**Devotion- Good Deeds- Meditation:** Most Indians in Malaysia are Hindu Tamils and their traditions remain strong. Similar to an eightfold path, Hindus in the region believe that there are three ways to achieve a desirable state: Devotion, Good Deeds & Meditation. When practiced in a balanced manner an individual is able to free him or herself from a state of fleeting happiness to a state of joy that is more permanent.

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"Just as the bamboo cane forms a round jet of water, so taking counsel together makes men of one mind"  
~Proverb of Malaysia