



Out in the Midday Sun: The British in Malaya 1880-1960

Margaret Shennan

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The story of British Malaya and Singapore, from the days of Victorian pioneers to the denouement of independence, is a momentous episode in Britain's colonial past. Through memoirs, letters and interviews, Margaret Shennan chronicles its halcyon years, the two World Wars, economic depression and diaspora, revealing the attitudes of the diverse quixotic characters of this now quite vanished world. The British came as fortune-seekers to exploit Asian trade shipped through Penang and Singapore. They found a mature Asian culture in a land of palm-fringed shores and primeval jungle. Like modern Romans, they built townships, defences, communications and hill stations, they spurred a rivalry between the fledgling commercial centres of Singapore, Penang and Kuala Lumpur, and they superimposed their law and established an idiosyncratic political system. They also developed the tin and rubber of the Malay States, encouraging Chinese and Indian immigrants by their open-door policy. The outcome was a vibrant multi-racial society – the most cosmopolitan in the East.



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