







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Kampong Bukit "Shangrila" of Kuala Lumpur

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Kampong Bukit 'Shangrila' of Kuala Lumpur

PETER KUM

By

IN one of the evergreen valleys of Kuala Lumpur's Lake Gardens is a Malay kampong which has all the beauty of "Shangrila." But, paradoxically, its name has for a long time been "Kampong Bukit Mati"—the village of the hill of the dead.

This valley is more than a mile long, with Guillemard Road snaking along the hill on its right and King's House on its left. All that visitors to the gardens see is the bottleneck leading into the valley in which is one of the most beautiful kampongs of Kuala Lumpur.

Despite its ominous name, Kampong Bukit Mati is a sanctuary of peace and contentment. And its 400 villagers live in harmony with one another like the members of a very large family.

Recently an influx of settlers flowed into the valley and turned it into a hive of activity. These settlers were Malays who had been obliged to quit their "squatter" homes behind the Lucky World Amusement Park in Batu Road.



TODAY, there are more than a hundred homes in the valley and over thirty are brand new. There is still

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JOGET RILES INCEH PAGI, 81

12 April 1953 - INC HE Pagi bin Seman, 81 -year-old Javanese Malay, who has been in domestic service in Malaya for more than 60 years, has "no time for joget modern and such things." But 63 years ago he showed his independent spirit by running away from his...

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A bold, ambitious plan to satisfy Malaya's landhungry peasants

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Half Trengganu's income is from royalties on iron

22 October 1954 - Half Trengganu's income is from royalties on iron HARRY MILLER By THE flow of iron ore to Japan and Europe is fast and never-end-ing. In the great mine at Bukit Besi, in the State of Trengganu, excavators and shovels take five-ton bites out of the 1,200-foot high hill which holds...

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room from many more homes and the kampong folk say they will welcome suitable settlers with open arms.

With the growth of its population, the people have decided that the name Kampong Bukit Mati should be discarded. And after much deliberation, they have decided to cut out the dead and make it simply Kampong Bukit.

The story of Kampong Bukit can never be complete without any mention of Inche Yahaya bin Sheik Abdul Rahman, the valley's pioneer inhabitant, who is looked upon unofficially, as the headman of the kampong.

Inche Yahaya, although only 28 years old, is undoubtedly the moving force behind all the advancement in the valley.

He was a teacher in Batang Kall shortly before the Japanese invasion which took place about two months after his arrival in the country from Menangkabau, Sumatra.

When the Japs surged south, Inche Yahaya fled to Kuala Lumpur and found security in the valley. He became the first inhabitant of the kampong.

EARLY in the occupation, thousands of his countrymen from Menangkabau were brought into the country and then moved up to work on the notorious Siamese Death Railway.

Around 1943, hundreds of these slave labourers escaped the Japs and found shelter in Inche Yahaya's valley. But medicine was scarce and many perished from diseases contracted while in Siam. The valley had become a valley of death.... Kampong Bukit Mati.

Kampong Bukit Mati needed no renaming then. Its name was a very apt one and and in fact, the pensioners

enhanced this name. It was a valley where almost everyone waited patiently for the end.

More people settled in the valley and about three years after the liberation, faced with the shortage of accommodation, many government pensioners found homes in the kampong to finish their lives in quiet enjoyment.

During all this time, Inche Yahaya had not been idle. He started a grocery business which is the only one in the valley.

He feels there is still a lot to be done. "At the moment, the people are getting their water supply from a monsoon drain which runs through the valley. I am trying to negotiate for pipes to be laid."

The Straits Times / Article

THE LABOURER WHO ROSE TO BE 'RAJA'

13 February 1955 - THE LABOURER WHO ROSE TO BE 'RAJA' P.Y.FAM By HE STARED into space and a secretive smile lingered on his wrinkled lips for a minute before he decided to share with us the secret he has kept from the public. "On one of his friendly visits he called me the...

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A Sultan keeps faith with his subjects

4 November 1956 - A. SALIM AHMAD White Area' promise to Pergau Valley fulfilled By KOTA BHARU. Sat. HALF a dozen rebana (Malay drums) beat a welcome; hundreds of pennants fluttered in salutation; gruff and shrill voices mixed in shouts of loyalty. That was the reception given...

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A JOURNAL IN THE FEDERAL CAPITAL.

13 January 1934 - Singapore Cockneys And K. L* Provincials Some Comparisons —Europeans In Exile Peace At Any Price? (By Our Kuala Lumpur Correspondent) rpHERE arrived at our house last week a married couple, friends of ours, who had Just returned from leave. They seemed delighted to be...

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It is Inche Yahaya who is called upon when there are letters to write. He is the kampong's petition writer

WHEN there is a quarrel in the village, Inche Yahaya is the peace maker. Should there be any knotty family problem, Inche Yahaya becomes an adviser. If anyone has business with the government, Inche Yahaya invariably finds himself the representative.

Inche Yahaya must be a very busy man indeed because he is also a correspondent for a Malay newspaper in Singapore.

"There are many children here who are old enough to go to school. At present, those of school age have to leave their homes early to go to the Malay schools. I would like to see a school built here.

"Children who fall sick have to be taken to town to get treatment. The people here would appreciate it very much if the authorities or the British Red Cross set up a clinic here to cater to the children and women," he said.



Inche Yahaya bin Sheik Abdul Rahman is a proud father of a bonny little boy — his "pride and joy." He left off writing a newspaper story to pose for the Sunday Times. —Sunday Times picture.

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