

*Old
Taiping*

Old Taiping

First published 2004

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**NASKAH PEMELIHARAAN
PERPUSTAKAAN NEGARA MALAYSIA**

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Dedication

My God, the Lord Jesus Christ for this opportunity and privilege
My wife, Winnie, for her love and encouragement
My children, Serene, Vincent and Kristine for their patience

Acknowledgements

My sincere gratitude to Prof. Emeritus Dato' Dr Khoo Kay Kim for his encouragement and graciously penning the Forward.

My thanks to Ms. Teri Liew for kindly reading and editing the manuscript.

Also to Mr. Anuar Isa, Mr. Steven Tan and the Taiping Tourist Association - my appreciation for sharing information and the many illustrations on Taiping.

Foreword

In Malaysia today, history is not everybody's cup of tea. The older generation may at least enjoy reading about the past but the writing of history is usually left to scholars who, unfortunately, seldom address those who are not their peers.

The schools are also marginalizing history because it is not seen as a subject that endows students with the skills to do work in the industrial sector, so much so that children study history haphazardly and are therefore not conscious of their immediate environment, cultural or even natural.

Mr. Alex Teoh is a rare breed. There were far more people like him in the past even among Malaysians. The present generation appears to have no time to write for it is no longer common to work a maximum of eight hours a day. I was therefore pleasantly surprised when Mr. Alex Teoh told me that he wanted to do a book that would help those interested to walk through Taiping town.

Of Taiping origin, he feels strongly the vibration of the past. Taiping marked the beginnings of modernization in the Malay Peninsula, excluding the Straits Settlements which the British colonized in 1867. It experienced urbanization earlier than Kuala Lumpur. It was the first to have a library, a museum, a railway and a European club. It was also the first to publish an English and a Tamil newspaper. By the close of the 19th century, it was very much a melting pot of Asian cultures. Not many are aware that apart from the Indian sepoy brought by Capt. Speedy to Taiping and the establishment of the Malay States Guides, the Burma Rifles were also once stationed there. Soekarno visited Taiping, so did Nehru.

Taiping's decline has usually been attributed to the exhaustion of its tin deposits by the 1880s. But it could still have been the capital of the Federated Malay States in 1896 if not for the fact that, geographically, it is less centrally located between Penang and Singapore, the two major ports of the Malay Peninsula.

Mr. Alex Teoh's book will introduce visitors to many aspects of early Taiping history. He himself knows Taiping intimately and feels for it intensely. The result is the present book - completely a labour of love.

Prof. Emeritus Dato' Dr Khoo Kay Kim
Dept. of History
University of Malaya
June 2004

Preface

Despite having traveled the world and been stationed in multiple cities in South East Asia, my hometown Taiping still holds a special place in my heart.

I guess it must be the fond memories of growing up days in one's home town. But more than memories, Taiping has a unique past. From the early days when tin was discovered and mined to the huge influx of Chinese workers to work in these mines, Taiping steadily transformed to be the mining capital of Perak.

However with the migrant population, came the secret societies as well.

Soon the Larut Wars broke up and interfered with local Malay politics and things got out of hand. The Pangkor Engagement and Chinese Engagement settled the disputes but this allowed the British to intervene with the administration of the Malay States.

As the Perak state capital, Taiping achieved many firsts in the Malay States - in terms of public office, education, transport and communication, as the religious and community center as well as in the areas of recreation and publications. These milestone years of being the state capital were recorded in numerous early travelers' records.

Today, Taiping stands proud on its heritage. The many firsts still exist to be appreciated by all visitors. It continues to offer the serene beauty of the Lake Gardens and the cool resort of Bukit Larut.

It is my hope that this illustrated guide will provide an overview of the vivid history and appreciation for the many attractions in Taiping. Many illustrations found in this book are from my personal collection of photographs, family albums and books as well as with kind assistance of the Taiping Tourist Association and Mr. Steven Tan.

Like me, I hope you will enjoy tranquility of Taiping - the town of everlasting peace.

Alex Teoh Eng Kean
June 2004

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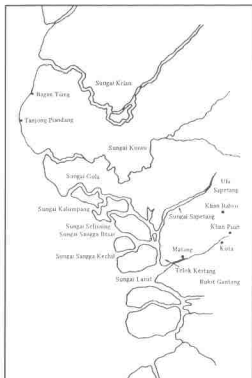
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History of Taiping

A Kampong in Perak

Taiping, before obtaining its current name, is in the district of Larut in the state of Perak. Located in between Krian River and Bruas River, Larut is in the sloping plains between the dividing hill ranges of the Peninsula Malaysia in the east and the waters of Straits of Malacca in the west. These plains are blessed with multiple rivers and rich alluvial soil. Rivers like Kurau, Gula, Selensing and Larut served as the means of transport as well as a source of livelihood for the local folks involved in fishing and agriculture.



Map of Larut and Krian

The local settlement called the kampong was mainly inhabited by Malays, working in their agriculture fields or fishing by the riverside. The native tribes lived in the interior jungles, hunting and gathering vegetation for food.

History of Taiping

Historically, Perak's days were marked by foreign invasion and internal anarchy.

It is believed that the ancient Hindu kingdom of Gangga Negara existed in the fifth century near Bruas and Dinding area. The kingdom was destroyed by war among the Archinese, local chieftains and the Siamese in the fourteen century.

By the middle of the fifteen century, Perak became part of the Malaccan Empire. After the Portuguese took over Malacca, the eldest son of the Malacca sultan (Sultan Mahmud), Muzaffar became the first sultan of Perak in 1528.

About 1620, Perak was captured by Sultan Iskandar Muda of Aceh in Sumatra and became its vassal state until 1641. After 1650, the Dutch East India Company tried at various times to establish a trading post in Perak. But this was without much success.

In the early nineteen century, Siam expanded its influence over the Malay States. Perak as a result was attacked by Kedah, the vassal state of Siam. After two years of war, Perak was defeated and had to send tributary (bunga emas -golden flower tree) to Siam in 1819.

In 1826, through negotiations with the British, Siam signed a treaty in Bangkok to respect the independence of Perak and Selangor. The British signed a treaty with Sultan Abdullah Mu'azzam Shah to acknowledge Perak's independence and provide defense against Siamese attacks in return for the territory of Dindings, Pangkor Island and other surrounding islands off the coast of Perak and trading concessions to the British.

The state through its appointed royalties and leaders implemented taxation on local traders and residents. Debt slavery (debt unpaid led to enslavement of the debtor and family until release by the creditor) was practiced. Piracy and smuggling were rampant along the rivers and coast.

In the mid 1850s, tin was found in Larut. The first mine was probably located in Klian Pauh. There was a story that an elephant, used by the mines, escaped into the adjacent jungle. Upon its recapture, the elephant was found covered with mud rich in tin. This led to more "prospecting" and new mines were opened.

History of Taiping

A local trader from Bukit Gantang, Long Jaafar rose up to administer this area. He obtained a grant over Larut from the Perak Sultan, Sultan Abdullah, to become the **Mentri** (Chief) of Larut. He also brought in the initial (20 Hakka Chinese) miners to open and operate tin mines in Larut. The tin mines were successful and soon large numbers of mines opened with investments from Straits Settlement Penang recruiting thousands of Chinese laborers from the southern province of China.

Long Jafaar passed away in 1858 and was succeeded by his son Ngah Ibrahim. Ngah Ibrahim managed to reconfirm the grant over Larut from the then Perak Sultan, Sultan Jaafar. He also managed to extend the grant to cover neighboring districts of Krian and Bagan Tiang. But little did he know, the times ahead were to be filled with much adventure and challenge. Larut was to become the center of fighting, rioting and devastation and the turning point in the Malaya States' history.

The Center of Larut Wars

Larut, with its many mines, was the major exporter of tin. During this time, the world's demand for tin increased with the development of the tin canning industry and Industrial Revolution in Europe.

Facilitated by the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 and the introduction of steamship, trade between East and West was faster, safer and cheaper. Malaya, strategically located in the Straits of Malacca, became increasingly important as a port between China and Europe as well.



Chinese Open Cast Tin Mine near Kamunting, 1870's

Together with the Chinese miners came their secret societies and soon two main rival societies grew in Larut. The first to arrive, the Hakkas, occupied Klian Puah and were members of the Hai San Secret Society. Then came the Cantonese who occupied Klian Bahru and were members of the Ghee Hin Secret Society. These secret societies offered friendship, protection and identity to the migrant workers, who often were disoriented and lonely in a foreign country.

Initially these groups worked in their own territories. But as the population grew, conflicts in mining claims, control of watercourses and quarrels between these groups led to much trouble and unrest in the mining field. Thus started the series of Larut Wars...

History of Taipei

The Larut Wars



The Larut War

The First Larut Wars 1861

In July 1861, quarrels over the control of watercourse to their mines led the Hai Sans (who were the larger numbers) to attack and drive the Ghee Hins out of Kilan Bahru. The Ghee Hin leader, Lee Coyen, appealed to the Straits Settlement government to get back their mines and compensation for their losses. The Governor of Straits Settlement, Colonel Cavenagh intervened. The Mentri of Larut, Ngah Ibrahim agreed to compensate \$17,447 to the Ghee Hins on behalf of the Sultan of Perak.

The Second Larut Wars 1865

Although the Chinese returned to their mines, both parties were unhappy with each other. The Ghee Hins were discriminated against with higher duties on tin. Ngah Ibrahim was said to be a member of the Hai San Secret Society, favoring the Hai Sans. The Hai Sans felt a "loss of face" with the return of the Ghee Hins and their cash compensation. A gambling quarrel between Hai San and Ghee Hin members in June 1865 sparked off a series of fighting. The Hai San members attacked and looted many Ghee Hin shops, taking 14 Ghee Hins as prisoners. 13 were killed but one escaped to inform his clan.

The next day, the Ghee Hins attacked the Hai San village. The village was burnt and 40 men killed.

The Hai Sans, with the help of Ngah Ibrahim retaliated, killing many, burning Klian Bahru and seizing the Ghee Hin tin stock. Two thousand Ghee Hins fled to Province Wellesley. This trouble spread to Penang as other secret societies joined in. The Penang Riot of 1867 clashed in the streets of Georgetown and casualties were heavy. The Penang authorities had difficulty restoring order. Both sides finally came to terms because of exhaustion. Upon official inquiry, the Hai San and Ghee Hin societies were fined \$5,000 each for violating the peace of Penang and the leaders were banished.

History of Taiping

The Third Larut Wars 1872

Over a scandal between the Ghee Hin leader, Lee Coyen and the wife of a relative of the Hai San leader, Chung Keng Kwee, the third Larut War erupted in 1872. The story goes that the couple was caught, tortured and killed by the Hai Sans.

The Ghee Hins, revenging the death of their leader, attacked the Hai Sans with 4000 professional fighting men imported from China via Penang. For the first time, the Hai Sans were driven out of Larut. About 10,000 men took refuge in Penang.

The Hai Sans recuperated and planned for a return to Larut.

Within a few months, the Hai Sans with the support of Ngah Ibrahim recovered the control of the Matang and Larut mines.

At this time Raja Abdullah, a claimant to the throne of Perak and an enemy of Ngah Ibrahim, took sides against the Hai Sans and Ngah Ibrahim. The wars between the Chinese miners now become a civil war that involved the Malay chiefs of Perak.

The Fourth Larut Wars 1873

Within a few weeks after the Hai Sans regained Larut, the Ghee Hins with the support from Raja Abdullah, counter-attacked with arms and men from Singapore and China. The Ghee Hins attacked Simpang and soon captured various strategic posts along the rivers and coast. Ngah Ibrahim's house and fort in Matang were destroyed. The Malay local residents also suffered with loss of property and lives.

Trouble also spread to neighboring Krian, Pangkor and Dindings areas.

Ngah Ibrahim appealed for help in Penang. He recruited Captain Speedy to set up a troop of 110 Sikh soldiers from India. British ships were sent to search the rivers for the Ghee Hin vessels.

Heavy fighting continued until the Treaty of Pangkor.

At this time, the Sultan of Perak, Sultan Abdullah passed away in 1857 and resulted in a series of Sultan succession disputes. Unhappy with the abuse and favoritism of various royalties, rival Malay camps took sides with the Chinese secret societies.

The situation in Perak had become serious and chaotic. The Malay chiefs, who had quarreled with one other and who had taken sides in the Larut wars, were themselves alarmed at the disorder created by the Chinese miners and secret societies.

The Strait Settlement Penang Chinese seeing their investments destroyed in the Larut Wars sought intervention from the British. Trouble spread to Penang as well.

The need to restore law and order in Perak and new British policy for intervention in the affairs of the Malay States resulted in the Treaty of Pangkor. Signed on 20 January, 1874 aboard the ship The Pluto at Pangkor island, the Pangkor Treaty edicted the Chinese Engagement to settle the Chinese dispute and the Pangkor Engagement to clear the Sultan succession dispute and pave the way for the acceptance of the British Residency system.

History of Taiping

The State Capital

With the Pangkor Treaty, Larut was at its turning point to peace, development and prosperity.

Implementing the Chinese Engagement, efforts were focused on

- *Disarming and destroying stockades (forts, weapons)*
- *Settling claims between contending parties*
- *Planning for fair distribution of water supply*
- *Rescuing hostages and slaves of Larut fights*
- *Restoring law and order for tin mining to resume*



Taiping town seen from the Residence in 1878

With the Pangkor Engagement, Sultan Abdullah was recognized as the Sultan of Perak. Sultan Abdullah was to accept and pay for a British Resident to advise on all State administration matters except Malay customs and religion.



The British Residency in Taiping

History of Taiping

The first British resident, James Woodford Wheeler Birch (JW Birch) was stationed in Bandar Bahru, Lower Perak and Captain Speedy, the Assistant Resident of Perak, resided in Larut.

The British Residents focused on implementing administration and building infrastructure. They planned for the establishment of two towns

1. Klian Pauh – named Taiping, “Everlasting Peace” in Chinese
2. Klian Bahru – became known as Kamunting

With peace and development, Taiping grew and the population increased.

year	1872-1873	end 1874 (11 months after the Treaty)
population	4000	33,000 (26,000 Chinese)



Government Office, Taiping

New public offices were established to administer Taiping.

They included

- Police Force
- Mining
- Land & Survey
- Revenue / Treasury
- Sanitary Board



Taiping Central Police Station

History of Taiping



Main Road, Taiping

The British usually headed the offices with Chinese and Malays as junior staff.

Roads were repaired and new ones constructed to link Taiping and Kamunting. Trunk roads to surrounding areas were also developed, northwards towards Kurau River and Penang and southward towards Bukit Berapit and Kuala Kangsar.

In the midst of these progress in Taiping, a turn of events happened when JW Birch was murdered in Pasir Salak on November 1875. This was a result of the unhappiness and anger of the Perak chiefs over Birch's high-handed approach of administration, especially over the issue of the collection of taxes and abolishment of debt slavery.



The Expedition against the Malays of Perak: Officers Quarters Campong Boyah
(The Illustrated London News, 11 March 1876)

The British sent a huge force to capture and trailed those responsible. The guilty (Maharaja Lela and his two followers) were hanged in Matang in January 1887. Others involved (Sultan Abdullah, Laksamana, the Shahbandar and Ngah Ibrahim) were sent to Singapore and later exiled to Seychelles.

History of Taiping

The third British Resident, Sir Hugh Low (after the second British Resident JG Davison who resigned only after two months due to the many difficulties and problems) had better success. His experience as an administrator in Sarawak and North Borneo and familiarity with Malay customs and traditions, allowed him to be accepted and effective in Perak. He became the model to other Residency systems in the state of Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Pahang.

Hugh Low relocated his Residency to Kuala Kangsar, as the focal point of the Perak Kingdom shifted away from Lower Perak. By 1877, Larut outstripped Lower Perak in economic importance. Taiping became the administrative capital of Perak.

At this point, Taiping achieved many FIRSTs in the Malay States in the area of education, religious institution, transport and communication, recreation, publication and public offices, to be covered in the following chapter. Early literature on Malaya offers vivid descriptions of Taiping and is covered in the chapter, Early Travelers' Impression of Taiping.

Taiping, at that juncture, was the most important town in the Malay Peninsula. Administration of state was in Taiping until it was transferred to Ipoh in 1945. Tin mining reached its peak. As other richer mines were found in the Kinta Valley, rubber cultivation grew and maintained the local economy.

A Pensioner's Paradise

As Ipoh grew in prominence with the success in tin in the Kinta Valley and being the new Perak capital, rebuilding efforts after the Second World War concentrated in Ipoh. After seventy vibrant years, the history of Taiping gradually moved into another phase.

Depending on who is asked, perceptions of Taiping range from "a dead town" to "a pensioner's paradise". True, the town was off the main trunk road between Penang and Ipoh and many young generations migrated to bigger cities for employment. These circumstances kept Taiping intact with many heritage sites and buildings unchanged. The many FIRSTs in the Malay States can still be viewed and appreciated today (of course subjected to its share of wear and tear and poor maintenance). With new attractions like the Taiping Zoo and Malaysia's first Night Safari, domestic tourism is a major industry here. Statistics show about 200,000 visitors a year come to the Taiping Zoo and Lake Gardens.

Well-known for its hawker food, Taiping is reputed for its delicious yet affordable variety. It offers the best of char kueh teow, popiah, nyonya kueh and desserts like ice kacang and cendol.



First day-cover presentation pack commemorating Taiping 125 years (1874-1999) anniversary by Pos Malaysia

The Taiping Lake Gardens is reputed to be the best in the country and offers a sanctuary for relaxation, exercise, recreation and family activities, both to the locals as well as tourists. It is also a botanical garden with mature vegetation surrounded by rivers and lakes. The rain trees line the length of the ring road, providing shelter from the rain. Other than the inhabitants of the zoo, a variety of local wild life roam freely.



Taiping War Cemetery

Along the Waterfall Road, leading to Maxwell Hill, lays the Taiping War Cemetery which commemorates the fallen heroes of the Second World War. Maintained by the Commonwealth War Commission, this memorial has over 800 graves. One must make a stop at this memorial to remember those who sacrificed for the peace of this country.

Maxwell Hill offers a cool retreat for anyone desiring a short break and different environment. The steep slopes also provide excellent running tracks for those serious in training for endurance and mountain climbing.

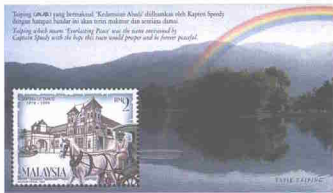
Present Kamunting is the commercial and industrial site of northern Perak. A variety of factories offer local employment.

Taiping is blessed with rich rainfall and is recorded as the wettest town in Malaysia. It has a cool and pleasant atmosphere in this warm equatorial climate. But one will quickly notice the regular pattern of rain in Taiping. It usually starts at a similar time in the day and unlike a sudden thunderstorm, the rain drizzles for hours or even the whole afternoon.

TAIPING LAKE GARDENS

Prior to these days of stock market being common to the layman in the street, rainfall betting was commonly seen in Taiping. One curiously observes a group of men in the morning looking towards the sky, usually at a corner coffee shop. After some discussion, they would agree on some bets – time of rain and amount at stake. They would meet in the afternoon to witness the event and decide on the winner. The definition of rain is when the rain wets the roof and rain water drains down the gutter. Logically, the occurrence of daily rainfall can be plainly explained. Looking at the location of Taiping, just a few kilometers from the coast and with the hill ranges in the background, the sea breeze brings the clouds towards the hill ranges. By the afternoon, clouds accumulate and as they ascend to higher altitude, condensation causes the clouds to fall as rain. Nevertheless, the local punters had their skills refined through daily winnings or losses.

Taiping with its slower pace, cool atmosphere, tranquil surroundings and choice of delicious food at affordable prices, not only makes it a pensioner's paradise but also lives up to its reputation as the town of everlasting peace.



Miniature sheet of Taiping 125 years anniversary
RM2 stamp with view of the serene
Taiping Lake Gardens

*The Many Firsts of
Taiping in the
Malay States*

The Many Firsts of Taiping in the Malay States

Taiping, being the early mining capital, achieved many firsts in the Malay States. The following list are some of the major firsts in various categories:

Public Office

1. District Office Building (1883)
2. Taiping Hospital (1880)
3. British Assistant Resident Residence (1875)
4. Taiping Goal (1879)
5. Perak Museum (1883)
6. Public Library (1882)
7. Central Market (1884)
8. Perak Armed Police (1873)
9. Taiping Police Station (1881)

Education

10. Kamunting English School (1878)
11. Taiping Teachers College (1898)
12. King Edward VII School (1883)
13. Treacher Methodist School (1889)

Transport & Communication

14. Post & Telegraph Office (1884)
15. Train Station (1885)

Religious Institutions

16. All Saints' Anglican Church (1886)
17. Kota Mosque (1897)

Recreation

18. Maxwell Hill (1880)
19. Taiping Lake Gardens (1884)
20. Perak Club (1881)
21. New Club (1892)
22. Perak Golf Club (1885)
23. Race Course Taiping (1885)
24. Coronation Park (1920)

Publications

25. Seri Perak newspaper (1893)
26. Jajahan Melayu newspaper (1896)
27. Perak Pioneer newspaper (1894)
28. Perak Varthamani (1894)
29. Perak Government Gazette (1888)

Associations

30. Kwantung Association (1887)
31. Malayan Indian Association (1894)
32. Ceylon Association (1899)
33. Khalsa Diwan
– Punjabi Association (1903)

Public Offices

1. District Office Building (1883)



The Old Government Office (1883)



The New Government Office (1897)

The initial Government Office was established in 1883. In 1897, a new Government office was opened. This Government Office building "which is well designed and constructed provided accommodation for a Council Chamber, Offices for the Secretariat, Treasury, Audit, Education and Forest Department. Today it is the premises of the Larut-Matang District Office.

2. Taiping Hospital (1880)

Founded in 1880 as Yeng Wah (Chinese Pauper) Hospital by the mining community in the face of the outbreak of beri-beri. It was taken over by the government and relocated to Main Road in 1881. New hospital buildings stands on this ground today.

3. British Assistant Resident Residence (1875)



The Residency, Larut 1875

Situated in Jelutong Hill in the premises of Taiping Lake Gardens, stands the grand wooden house built for the British Assistant Resident who was stationed in Taiping. Notice the mode of transport in the 1870's - elephant power. Today this building is the residence of the District Officer of Taiping.

The Mighty Prisons of Taiping in the Malay States

4. Taiping Goal (1879)

Established in 1879, this goal was the main prison for long-sentenced convicts of the Federated Malay States. It housed the Government Printing Office, a bakery and a laundry, where the prisoners did light work.

This prison still stands today.



Taiping Goal

5. Perak Museum (1883)

The Perak Museum, the first in the country, started in 1883 in the former government offices. The building was developed in stages from 1886 to 1903. The first curator was Leonard Wray, who built up the much admired natural history and ethnological collections, including a section on the aboriginal people. Assembled in the grounds today are stone marking the site of Maharaja Lela's fort and the statue of Col. Walker.



Perak Museum

6. Public Library (1882)

This government building was once the premise of the Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China, later known as the Standard Chartered Bank, which opened its Taiping agency in 1888.

Today, it houses the public library. The predecessor of this library was "an excellent Reading and Recreation Room for Officers of Government" constructed in 1882.

7. Central Market (1884)

The Taiping Market consists of two buildings, the Old Market built in 1884 and the New Market built in 1885, each one in a timber post and truss structure, "220 feet long by 60 feet wide, concrete floor and iron roof", with a middle clerestory. Possibly the largest non-indigenous historic timber structure in the country, the Taiping Market is also Malaysia's best preserved example of a major 19th century market building.

Today this market is still used as the market for all kinds of foodstuff – meat, chicken, fish, vegetables, fruits both wet and dry as well.



Central Market

The Many Pirates of Taiping in the Malay States

8. Perak Armed Police (1873)

In the midst of Larut Wars, Ngah Ibrahim recruited Captain Speedy, the Superintendent of Police in Penang, to form an armed force to maintain law and order among the Ghee Hin and Hai San clan. 110 soldiers consisting of Sikhs, Hindus and Pathans from India were recruited.

After the Larut Wars, this force became the Perak Armed Police. They also served in royal ceremonial functions and the bodyguards of the Sultan.



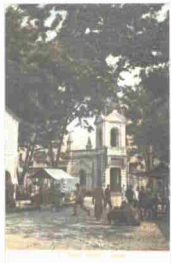
Perak Native States Guide

Other Malay states like Selangor, Pahang and Negeri Sembilan followed and established similar armed forces. In 1896, the Malay States Guides under Colonel Walker was formed from the police forces of Perak, Selangor and Pahang.

9. Town Police Station (1881)

Initially built of timber in 1881, this station is located "at a point about equidistant from the Chinese theatre, the market and other much frequented places". The fortified clock tower, with chamfered slits for guns, was probably erected some years later. The police station doubled as a fire station. The first fire brigade in the Federated Malay States was made up of the members of the Perak Armed Police and later the Malay States Guides.

Today this clock tower stand still stands in the centre of Taiping town and is appropriately the office of the Taiping Tourist Association.



Police Station, Taiping

Education

1. Kamunting English School (1878)

The first English school in the Malay States is in Kamunting. It served as a centre of education for Larut and the neighboring district of Matang and nearby towns. The school closed in the late 1930's.

2. Taiping Teachers College (1898)

This college served as the local teachers training center for schools in Perak and Selangor. Prior to 1898, few teachers were appointed to Malay schools and they had to be trained in Singapore. This school closed when the Malacca Training College opened in 1900. Perak was dissatisfied with the results and decided to open its own training college at Matang in 1912.



King Edward School

3. King Edward VII School (1883)

The first school established in Taiping was the Central School. It was reputed to be one of the finest schools in the Malay Peninsula and excelled in many sports. The name was changed to King Edward VII in honor of England's new monarch in 1901. During the Japanese Occupation, the school was the base of the garrison commander who converted the classrooms into torture chambers and dug up the playgrounds to grow food.

Today, this building is the premise of the Primary School of King Edward VII.

4. Treacher Methodist School (1889)

The first girl's school in the Malay States was established by the Perak Government in 1889. The Methodist Church later took over the school and renamed it after the wife of the British Resident William Hood Treacher in 1901. During the Japanese Occupation, the school was an army barrack.

Today, the school is still a major girls' school in Taiping.

Transport & Communication

1. Post and Telegraph Office (1884)

The first Post and Telegraph Office in the Malay States, built in 1884, replaced an earlier timber building. The post from Taiping was carried by a relay of runners and ponies.



Taiping Post & Telegraph Office

2. Train Station (1885)



Taiping Station 1885

The first railway ran from Port Weld (the coastal town) to Taiping, passing through Simpang. This track was constructed with the assistance of Ceylon's Pioneer Corps, experienced in constructing military roads and railways through Ceylon's mountainous terrain. The tracks were opened in 1885 and piled by a steam powered locomotive.



Simpang Station, Port Weld Branch 1886

Religious Institutions

1. *All Saints' Anglican Church (1886)*



The first Anglican Church in the Malay States opened in 1886. The timber building was designed by D. Lithroy, an Austrian architect and the site donated by W.V.Drummond, a planter from Shanghai.

Regular weekend church services are still held at this church today.

2. *Kota Mosque (1897)*



Built by the family of the Mentri of Larut in 1897, this mosque along Kota Road is the oldest in Taiping. It has an intriguing six-sided facade. In the 20th century, it was given over to the Malay community and called "the Malay mosque" (Masjid Melayu).

Recreation

1. Maxwell Hill (1880)

The first health resort to cater to Government servants especially the Europeans is located in the hills at Taiping. Rising to 4000 feet (over 1300 meters), it has 7 bungalows, a garden for tea and vegetable growing and a meteorological station. The bungalows were accessible via walking or ponies or chair transport.

Today, Maxwell Hill or Bukit Larut is still a popular cool hill resort, opened to the public.

2. Taiping Lake Gardens (1884)

Heavily mined in the past with the grounds overturned, scattered ponds and swamps, this large area of abandoned tin mines was drained, leveled, planted and fenced to become the public gardens of Taiping.

Over the years, various individuals including Leonard Wray, the Superintendent of Government Hill at Larut, W.R. Scott, the Inspector of Mines, Frank Swettenham and his wife, Constance Sydney Holmes, contributed to the design, landscaping and beautification of the gardens. Convict prisoners provided the labour.

Today it is still the most beautiful lake garden in Malaysia.

3. Perak Club (1881)



An exclusive recreation club for Europeans and Eurasians (mainly military personnel).

4. New Club (1892)

Another exclusive club popular among civil servants. The New Club premise is just opposite the Perak Club, separated by the Taiping esplanade field.

Today, the New Club is a still popular recreation club hosting many social and sporting activities.

The Many Firsts of Taiping in the Malay States



5. Perak Golf Club (1885)

This nine-hole golf course is the first in the Malay States. Located in Taiping Lake Gardens, the greens were situated between the British Residency and Taiping Goal.

6. Race Course Taiping (1885)

The Taiping race course is the oldest and one of best in the Malay States. Initially located at Larut Tin premises and then in the Taiping Lake Gardens, the race course had a length of 7 furlongs and 157 yards of tracks. Held twice a year, the races were popular social functions among the Europeans and the elite locals.



7. Coronation Park (1920)

The first amusement park in the Federated Malay States opened in the 1920s when Run Run Shaw of Shaw Brothers fame from Hong Kong ran two reels of silent movies to entertain miners. It was renamed Coronation Park after the coronation of King George V.



Publications

Taiping when it was the state capital, produced the earliest newspaper. Owned by Syed Abdul Hassan Ibnay Burham, the publisher was the Taiping Press, later renamed Perak Pioneer Press, which published the following:

1. Seri Perak newspaper (1893) – Malay weekly
2. Jajahan Melayu newspaper (1896) – Malay weekly
3. Perak Pioneer and Native States Advertisers newspaper (1894) – English biweekly
4. Perak Varthamani (1894) – Tamil weekly

5. Perak Government Gazette (1888)

This annual is the official Perak Government publication printed by the Government Printing Office in Taiping Goal.

Associations

A number of associations catering to the migrant population were established in Taiping. They are:

1. Kwantung Association (1887)

Founded by early Chinese pioneer leaders including the Kapitan China, Chung Keng Kwee in 1887, this association caters to the welfare of people from Kwantung (Canton) province in South China.

2. Malayan Indian Association (1894)

The Indian Association was formed in 1894 and the association building in Kota Road, Taiping was officially opened in 1906.

3. Ceylon Association (1899)

The Ceylonese Tamils came to Perak in the 1880's to join the civil service and build the railways. In 1899, they founded the Ceylonese Association and put up the building two years later.

4. Khalsa Diwan – Punjabi Association (1903)

This association was founded by the Sikhs of the Malay States Guides with the objective of improving the social position of the Sikhs in Malaya.

*Early Travelers'
Impression
of Taiping*

Early Travelers' Impression of Taiping

1. The Golden Chersonese and the Way Thither , Isabella Bird 1883
2. Twentieth Century Impressions of British Malaya –
Its History, People, Commerce, Industries and Resources, Arnold Wright 1908
3. Illustrated Guide to The Federated Malay States,
Cuthbert Woodville Harrison 1910
4. Federated Malay States Railways –
Pamphlet of Information for Travelers 1914
5. Malaya –
An Account of Its People, Flora and Fauna, Major CM Enriquz 1927
6. Malaysia and Indochina –
Information for Visitors to British Malaya, Dutch East Indies, Siam,
French Indo-China, Thomas Cook & Sons 1929

The Golden Chersonese and the Way Thither , *Isabella Bird, 1883*

Perhaps the most prolific travel writer in the nineteenth century, Isabella Bird recorded her five weeks trip to the Malay Peninsula in 1879. She provides in details the vivid glimpses of her adventure through the Malay States and the society then.



Photo of Isabella Bird

... this important Chinese town, with a street about a mile long, with large bazaars and shops making a fine appearance, being much decorated in Chinese style : halls of meeting for the different tribes, gambling houses, workshops, the Treasury, a substantial dark wood building, large detached barracks for the Sikh police, a hospital, a powder magazine, a parade ground, a Government storehouse, a large, new jail, neat bungalows for the minor English officials, and on the top of a steep, isolated terraced hill, the British Residency. This hill is really too steep for a vehicle to ascend, but the plucky pony and the Kling driver together pulled the gharries up the zigzags in a series of spasms, and I was glad to get out of the sunshine into a cool, airy house ...

Taipeng is thriving, increasing place, over six thousand inhabitants, solely Chinese, with the exception of a small Kling population, which keeps small shops, lends money, drives gharries and bullock-carts, and washes clothes. This place was the focus of the disturbances in 1873, and the Chinese seem still to need to be held in check, for they are not allowed to go out at night without passes and lanterns. They are miners, except those who keep the innumerable shops which supply miners, and some of them are rich. Taipeng is tolerably empty during the day, but at dusk, when the miners return, the streets and gambling dens are crowded, and the usual babel of Chinese tongues begins. There are scarcely any Malays in the town.

Twentieth Century Impressions of British Malaya – Its History, People, Commerce, Industries and Resources, *Arnold Wright 1908*

The most comprehensive early twentieth century book written on British Malaya with excellent details and illustrations on the history, geography, people, customs, lifestyle, art, trade and flora and fauna of the Straits Settlement and Federated Malay States.



Taiping, situated in the Larut district, is the capital of the State of Perak, the seat of the British Resident and the headquarters of the Malay States Guides. It contains the principal Government buildings, a Museum which is one of the most complete of its kind in existence, and a large prison which has lately been converted into a convict establishment for the whole of Federated Malay States. The Perak and New Club exist in friendly rivalry and have in their padang, which they overlook, a spacious playground. The extensive public gardens are a popular resort and there are good golf links situated amidst the most delightful surroundings. The climate is somewhat enervating, but relief is to be had in the sanatoria known as "The Tea Gardens" and Maxwell's Hill", situated in the range of hills above the town at elevation of 2,500 to 3,000 feet respectively. It is interesting to note that the first railway in Perak was that constructed between Port Weld and Taiping in 1881, some eight years subsequent to the British occupation. The name of Taiping, which means "Grand Peace" is reminiscent of the pacific settlement of the factions troubles amongst the Chinese which led up to that occupation. In 1874, a regular battle was fought in what was then Geluntong, and 2,000 lives are said to be lost. Sir Andrew Clarke, then Governor of the Straits Settlement, succeeded in reconciling the rival leaders, and the name of "Taiping" was bestowed on the place. The population of Taiping was returned at 13,331 when census was taken at 1901, but there has been a gradual increase since that date and a certain danger of overcrowding exist. The town has an excellent supply of good water and is well lighted.

Illustrated Guide to The Federated Malay States, Cuthbert Woodville Harrison 1910

A comprehensive and excellent tour guide to the Malay Peninsula, covering all major towns and attractions (big game shooting and museums). Published in four editions, this guide gives abundant information, photographs, illustrations and maps to the Malay Peninsula.

Taiping

The town of Taiping (Chinese word – everlasting peace) lies on the Larut alluvial mining field which first attracted the Chinese, and later served as the battle ground between opposing Chinese fractions, until the arrival of the British. For nearly fifty years this field has been turned over and over by tin miners, till it is now a wilderness of dumps and ponds. With the possible exception of the centre of the town itself there is probably not a square yard which has not either been worked for tin or covered with over-burden. Even in the town itself mining is still, by special permission, going on, and were the cricket-field between the two clubs to be put up to auction as a mining block it would find ready purchasers. Large areas of the valley were until recently reckoned as exhausted, but the perseverance of the miners has at last proved what has been supposed for long, namely, that underneath the old surface workings is a deeper deposit.

The town itself is one of the most picturesque in Malaya. It's public offices are handsome and contain a fine State Council Chamber. The road from the railway station, a quarter of a mile down which is the rest house, is the boundary between the native and the English part of town. To the north lies the English quarters. ... On the south of the Station Road is the Chinese town, with broader streets than those in most Malayan cities.

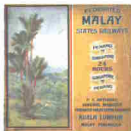
The streets are shaded by rows of the angseña tree, which at irregular intervals bursts forth into a riot of blossoms, even more yellow than those of the laburnum, providing a carpet fit for a Sultan, for yellow is the royal color in the East. With its golden snow, the angseña spreads abroad an almost overpowering scent, even more sweet than the smell of the pinang blossom. Most of the towns in Malaya have planted this ptero-carpus Indicus as shade tree, but in Taiping it has grown to a greater height than elsewhere.

The rainfall in Taiping is heavier than that elsewhere where recorded in the Federated Malay States. The rain usually falls in the afternoon and arrangements involving exposure to probable rainstorms are best avoided. The morning are generally light and sunny and also, owing to the effect of the heavy rains of the evening upon the atmosphere, the early part of the day is cool.

Early Travellers' Impression of Taiping

Federated Malay States Railways – Pamphlet of Information for Travelers 1914

The 1914 official railway information book describing all destination from Penang to Singapore.



Taiping

This town is the headquarters of the British administration of the State of Perak and the seat of the British Resident. It is probably the most beautiful town in the Peninsula. It possess a limpid lake surrounded by public gardens, a race course, a polo ground, a rifle range, a golf course, a museum and cricket and football grounds.

The Malay States Guides, a regiment upkept by the Malay Sultans as part of their treaty obligations, is quartered here. It consists of Sikhs and Panjabi Muhammadans and is officered by British officers.

The central goal of the Federated Malay States is in Taiping.

On the hills (four hours walking or three hours carried) are gardens where are grown English flowers and vegetables. There are several bungalows on the hills upkept by Government. Permission to stay in them is to be obtained from the Secretary to Resident. Chairs and coolies can be arranged by the firm of Taik Ho & Co.



Taiping Lake

Taiping is the centre of the famous Larut Plains, where tin has been successfully mined for the last fifty years. It is also a centre for some sixty rubber estates. From it a branch railway runs to the local port, Port Weld.

Malaya – An Account of Its People, Flora and Fauna, Major CM Enriquez 1927

Major CM Enriquez, who was stationed in Malaya with his Burmese troops, provides excellent description on the history, people, flora and fauna of Malaya and Borneo and with many specific experiences in Taiping area itself.



Taiping

...you come to the greater towns, of which the first is Taiping – that “City of Lasting Peace,” whose Angsana trees shower a golden rain of blossom upon the streets. It lies in flat ground immediately at the foot of the Larut Hills that rise 4,000 feet above it with a waterfall and a bathing –pool at their feet. Its Public Gardens are the prettiest in the Federated States – the Lakes fringed with those same Rain Trees that surround the Moat at Mandalay, its grounds scattered with casuarinas, palm and golden bamboo, its vistas dominated always by the distant uplands of Bubu – the ‘Fish Trap Peak’ – Bubu backed with a pile of high white clouds, or radiant in the sunset glow, with perhaps a rainbow flung from it across the Larut Hills. A common phenomenon at dusk is the return of daylight from behind low clouds out at sea, the hills and forest foliage being then radiated with a suffused “Alpine glow”.

Upon the Larut Hills, 4000 feet above Taiping, and nine miles distant by bridle-path, is the charming little retreat called Maxwell’s Hill. The mule track rises steeply to it through a dense and stately forest, laced with creepers, and with the great trees rising from impenetrable undergrowth. The Sanatorium consists of garden and a dozen Government bungalows – one or two of them almost palatial – where the sick and weary may recuperate. From this high ridge Taiping is seen at one’s feet in the plain, half buried in foliage, and surrounded by patches of glistening water where, from Matang to Kamuning, the tin dredgers toil with ceasing night and day. Beyond Bukit Merah, the shadowy lines of Penang Island are visible in the distance. A lovely panorama it is, and soothing, with the bays and capes of the coast spread out, and the sea streaked with touches of sunshine to the line of little white clouds strung along the horizon...

Early Travelers' Impression of Taiping



Taiping Temple

Taiping is almost entirely Chinese, which means that its streets are gay with Celestial signboards, stores and eating-shops, with their questionable sausages, and grim corpses of flattened fowls (waxed duck from China). There is a continual fusillade of crackers. A woman at a door is waving a loudly protesting baby in a fog of demon-dispersing incense. Over the way is an old man grinding knives, and by the lamp-post a dentist performs "20-cents extractions" to an admiring crowd.



Street barber and dentist

The hawkers beat gongs and sticks, or play flutes or violins, to advertise their specialties, each according to his kind. I take my hat off to the willing, cheery rickshaw-pullers of Taiping. Only a few survive long, like "Death" who wrinkles up his old face as if he understood, when you ask him "Where's your sting?"



Taiping taxi stand

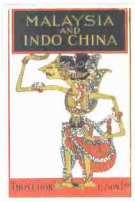
A park of twenty taxis adds a modern note. So does a Chinaman on a motor-bike with a girl (in semi-European) on the mudguard. Lastly, there is the poor, long-suffering push-bike that has fallen to the level of a load-carrier, and is taxed as, and performs the most unnatural feats, piled high with boxes over the rider's head. Many Chinese prefer to sit on the hind mudguard and pedal from there, regardless of their absurd appearance. It is positively more usual to see two persons on a bike than one, and often as many as four are to be seen on one suffering machine, sedately taking the air in the gardens.

Early Travelers' Impression of Taiping

Malaysia and Indochina – Information for Visitors to British Malaya, Dutch East Indies, Siam, French Indo-China,

Thomas Cook & Sons 1929

The 1927 tour book introducing South East Asia published by the reputed Thomas Cook & Sons, Singapore



Taiping

*Formerly a Chinese mining camp, now capital of the State of Perak
Perhaps, the most beautiful town in British Malaya.*

Population 21,111

An Indian Regiment is stationed here.

*Chief local industries – rubber planting, tin mining, rice and coconut growing.
Station from which the sanatorium on the Larut Hills (3,300 to 4,500 feet)
is reached.*

*On main railway line and trunk road from
Penang to Singapore.*

*Road and rail to Port Weld, a small seaport 11 miles away on the west coast.
There are public, gardens, museum, clubs etc.
Government Rest House.*

Taiping Lake Gardens

Taiping Lake Gardens

Just 222 acres in area, yet the Taiping Lake Gardens is reputed throughout Malaysia.

Known for its beauty and tranquility, the Lake Gardens is many things to many people especially Taipingnites. One can safely say that all Taipingnites and visitors alike are touched by the memory and ambience of the Lake Gardens.

Acknowledged to be the one of the earliest, if not the first public garden in the Federated Malay States, this area was heavily mined for tin and left with many disused mining ponds and undulating heaps of gravel. Over time, the soil stabilized and vegetation grew.

The landscape of the Lake Garden does seem to have the outline of ex-mining features but the wide array of botanical plants must have been cultivated under serious planning for a botanical garden.

Today, metallic roads ring the different parts of the Lake Gardens, surrounding the

- District Officer Hill
- Bukit Larut (Maxwell Hills)
- Taiping War Cemetery
- Taiping Prison (Goal)
- Public pools (Coronation pool and Burmese pool)

Above these roads (Circular Road) is the canopy of rain trees that offers motorists and pedestrians shelter from direct sunlight and rainfall.

Nature-wise, the venue is a sanctuary for ecology and zoology. A wide variety of plant life surrounds the road, lakes, ponds and meandering rivers.

Within the gardens, the Taiping Zoo and Night Safari display a choice of tropical animals and birds that can be viewed day or night. Besides the caged creatures, one has to beware of the families of monkeys who prey on the rubbish bins and are often responsible for "daylight" snatching of handbags or carrier bags in their search for food.

Health-wise, the Lake Gardens is a hub for all sorts of physical activities and for all ages. In the wee hours of the morning, even before sunrise, the gardens starts to be populated with different pockets of people, namely:

Taiping Lake Gardens

- Joggers and brisk walkers around the gentle terrain of gardens or the steep ascend of District Officer's Hill and the Larut Hill
- Fan dancers swaying to the rhythm
- Tai Chee and Chi Kong enthusiasts moving in their own graceful pace
- Martial art practitioners with their "fake" wooden swords
- Aerobics dancers (both female and male) jumping and stretching
- Couples doing the tango
- Ladies in line dancing steps

As the sun rises, the crowds stream towards the town, heading to the coffee shops for breakfast and onwards to daily marketing or home to prepare for work.

Late morning, one would often witness entourage of wedding couples at bridal photo taking sessions. The abundant, mature vegetation provides perfect scenic background for the bride and groom to capture their most memorial day.

On weekends, the greenery of the Lake Garden provides popular picnic spots for families and friends.

In the late afternoon just before sunset, the health conscious are seen strolling, jogging and sweating it out in the gardens. The multiple play grounds, if they are not wet from rain, are filled with joyful laughter of children and families especially on weekends and public holidays.

In the evenings, a totally different set of activity comes alive. Of course, like all public gardens, it is an ideal place for dating couples to stroll and "communicate".

Uniquely, these Gardens are also notorious for "other" night activities. Come past 9 pm, "he/she" dressed to catch men's eyes head towards the dimmer parts of the garden. Under the lumination of the single street lamp and maybe the moonlight, a "contract" may be struck. One often wonders how they put up with the mosquitoes and other flying insects standing under the street lights especially in their short skirts.

In the later part of the night, the crowd may change to a younger audience. Often on weekends, the Circular Road turns into a racing track for young daredevils in their motorcars or worse still, on their noisy motorcycles.

Yes, the Taiping Lake Gardens is a hive of many activities catering for all ages, races and lifestyles...

Taiping Lake Gardens

A view of Taiping Lake Gardens through the decades ...



The Lakes 1908 (Twentieth Century Impression of British Malaya)



Taiping Lakes 1914

(Federated Malay States Railways- Pamphlet of Information for Travelers)



The Public Gardens of Taiping 1927

(Malaya- An Account of Its People, Flora and Fauna)

Taiping Lake Gardens



Post card of Lake Gardens,
Taiping, Perak 1930's



Post card of Botanical Gardens,
Taiping 1930's



TAIPING LAKES



TAIPING LAKES



TAIPING LAKES

Hand coloured series of scenes of Taiping Lakes 1940's



Queen Elizabeth II Coronation Celebrations on
June 1953 - a floating dragon on the lake

Taiping Lake Gardens



Post card of Taiping Lake Garden 1950's



Post card of Taiping Lake Garden 1950's



太平湖 TAIPING LAKE PK.

1960's



太平湖 TAIPING LAKE PK.

1960's



太平湖 TAIPING LAKE PK.

1960's



太平湖 TAIPING LAKE PK.

1960's

Black and white photos of Taiping Lake Pk taken by Bee Ah Photo 1960's

Taiping Lake Gardens



Present day Taiping Lake Gardens, still as serene and refreshing



Lake Garden, Taiping

This scenic playing card (Envoy Brand) says it best – Lake Garden, Taiping is selected as the DIAMOND ONE among all the scenic views in Malaya, Singapore and Borneo.

*A Walk Through
Taiping Today*

A Walk Through Taiping Today

It is now more than 130 years since the town establishment and Taiping today is still a major attraction especially in northern Peninsula Malaysia. The population has remained stable at 200,000 people with a mix of Chinese, Malays, Indians and Eurasians living harmoniously together.

Taiping is easily accessible by road along the North-South Highway or rail via the Malayan Railways. Visitors do have a choice of accommodations from budget inns and rest houses to quality hotels. Depending on the number of days' stay, this place offers the choice of history, nature, recreation, shopping and food.

Historically, Taiping's many firsts are still available for viewing and to be appreciated today. One can easily take a walk or drive tour around the town.

Starting from the town centre and following the roads, watch out for the following landmarks and buildings of historic and architectural design:

Kota Road (Jalan Kota)

- Clock Tower (Taiping Tourist Association)
- Kwantung Association & Temple for the Immortal Girl
- Government Office
- Public Library
- Central Market
- Kota Mosque
- Indian Association
- Hokkien Association

Main Road (Jalan Taming Sari)

- Bee Poh (Kapitan Chung Keng Kwee Town House)
- Rows of 1930's buildings
- Taiping General Hospital

Station Road (Jalan Stesen)

- Post & Telegraph Office
- Town Rest House – built in 1894
- King Edward School
- Ceylon Association
- St. George's Institution - built in 1913
- Railway Station

Map 1:

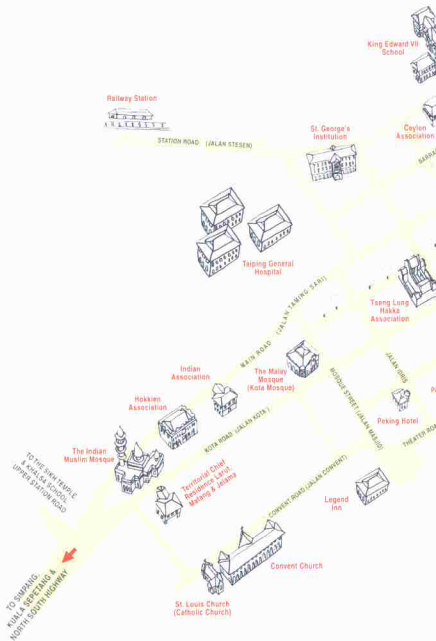
A Walk Through Taiping Today

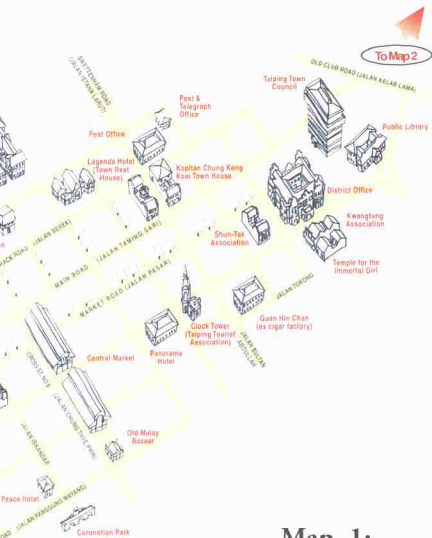


Town

Old Taiping

oldtaiping2004@yahoo.com





Map 1:
 A Walk Through Taiping Today

Town

A Walk Through Taiping Today

Taiping Lake Gardens

- Military Barracks (Malay States Guides Barracks)
- Wisma Perwira (Military Officer Mess)
- *Fort Carnarvon*



- All Saints' Anglican Church
- Taiping Goal/Prison
- Perak Museum
- The Residency
- The New Club
- Cenotaph (War Memorial)
- District Officer Hill – The Secretary to Resident's House
- Taiping War Cemetery
- Burmese Pool/ Coronation Pool
- Maxwell Hill/Larut Hill

Along these roads, one will surely notice the grand colonial lampposts that line the town roads. These lampposts, repainted black and gold, were imported from:

"Kitson Light Foreign Supply Co.,
Willesden London,
Watson Lamppost
1903"

In the Central Market area, do keep a watchful eye for any rainfall betting activities. You will see some men looking up towards the sky in various directions and discussing among themselves usually over a cup of coffee or tea. You may be fortunate to witness or even participate in Malaysia's unique betting game and make a quick buck – cash without government duties too.

For nature lovers, Taiping greens and surrounding wetlands offer havens for birdwatchers, butterfly enthusiasts and mangrove naturists. With the rich rainfall, the Larut Hills and rivers provide a homeland for thousands of species of flora and fauna unique to this region.

Map 2:

A Walk Through Taiping Today



Lake Gardens

Old Taiping

oldtaiping2004@yahoo.com

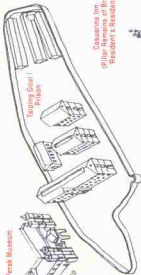
TO MANJUNTING
AND KLIAN PAUH

TO THE LADY
TEACHER GIRLS
SCHOOL

TO WATERFALL ROAD
(JALAN LUMBA KUDA)



Seri Malaysia
Hotel



Taiping Geol /
Prison

Casuarina Inn
(Pillar Remains of British
Resident's Residence)



Perak Museum



UPPER MUSEUM ROAD

All Saints'
Anglican Church



Fort Cameron



Wisma Perak
(Military Officer
Mess)



New Club



Cenotaph
(War Memorial)



ESPLANADE



Military Barracks
(Malay States
Guides Barracks)

OLD CLUB ROAD (JALAN KELAS LAMA)

WATERFALL ROAD (JALAN KEDAMUAN)



Ng Boon Bee
Fountain

TO THE TAIPING WAR CELESTERY,
CORONATION & BURMESE POOL,
AND MAXWELL HILL (BUKIT LAPU).

From Map 1

District Officers' Residence

TAIPIING ZOO /
NIGHT SAFARI

TAIPIING LAKE GARDENS

CIRCULAR ROAD (JALAN PEKELING)

Map 2:

A Walk Through Taiping Today



Lake Gardens



A Walk Through Taiping Today

And just 10 kilometers from Taiping, the mangrove reserves of Matang offer rich seawater vegetation and plentiful bird and wildlife of the mangrove swamps.

For the resort seekers, Taiping provides easy access to the cool hill resorts in Bukit Larut and the water resorts of Bukit Merah.

Bukit Larut, formerly known as Maxwell Hill, is Malaysia's smallest hill resort. Approximately 1035 meters above sea level, it holds unspoilt natural beauty. Temperature hovers around 15C to 25C and sometimes dips to 10C in the night. Accessible only by government Land Rovers, it ascends in steep and rapid climb in a series of 72 breath-taking hairpin bends. Alternatively, one has the option of manually tracking the hill which takes about 4 - 6 hours - be prepared to sweat it out. Whichever way you choose, Bukit Larut is definitely a perfect retreat away from the crowd and to be one with nature in a cool, tranquil environment.

Just 20 minutes driving from Taiping along the North-South Highway, Bukit Merah Resort with its 7000-acre fresh water lake is the ideal location for relaxation. With the abundant lush greenery and clear blue waters, this resort offers the excitement of a water park, nature education through the Eco park and Orang Utan Island sanctuary and promises lots of fun in the amusement facilities. Complemented with the wide choice of resort-styled accommodations, Bukit Merah Resort is definitely a popular leisure, adventure and discovery resort.

For the avid shoppers, Taiping has a variety of sizeable departmental stores. Reputed for its attractive prices, many from neighboring towns and cities do their shopping for daily necessities in the wet market and shopping complexes.

After all these sightseeing and activities, one can be treated to a choice of popular local treats in the many Taiping coffeeshops and casual markets. From the various races, the choice of food at affordable prices include

- Tim sum
- Popiah (spring rolls)
- Char kueh teow (fried flat noodles)
- Murtabak (Indian omelette with minced meat)
- Cendul with pulut rice (sweet dessert)
- Gantung (wheat boiled in coconut milk)

Taiping is also the home to popular local fruits. Seasonal fruits like durian, mangosteen and langsat from nearby Batu Kurau and Bukit Berapit are well known in Peninsula Malaysia.

A Walk Through Taiping Today

Meanwhile in the neighboring township of Kamunting, commercial expansion can be seen with new office buildings, government infrastructure and industries. The Kamunting industrial estate is the home of some major textile, electrical, tyre and agriculture production.

The military camp in Kamunting is one of the biggest army bases in Malaysia. New shopping complexes and office building are still being constructed to cater to the demand and expansion of the local economy.

During the festive holidays, Taiping is a hive of activity with the return of outstation residents from other cities and towns. Other than visiting their families and relatives, they throng the shopping centers and public attractions causing the unusual traffic congestion at road intersections, car parks and of course, payment counters in shops. The local businesses welcome such return and the local residence are prepared for these occasional interruptions.

Yes, with the choice of treats and activities, Taiping definitely offers the best of local food, recreation, culture and rich history, continuing the legacy of the town of Everlasting Peace.

So see you in Taiping or is it WELCOME back to Taiping...



Commemorative stamps of 125 years anniversary of Taiping

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