

## CHAPTER - 6

### MUSLIM MINORITIES IN THE REST OF ASIA

#### 1- Introduction

Asia could be divided into five large sections as far as Muslims are concerned: 1) Muslim States; 2) India; 3) China; 4) the Soviet Union; 5) Other Muslim Minorities. India, China and the Soviet Union have been treated elsewhere in this volume; only the other Muslim minorities will be treated in this chapter.

The question now is what is a Muslim State as opposed to non-Muslim states where Muslims live as minorities? It is certainly not always easy to answer the question. The most accurate definition of a Muslim State would be the state whose entire philosophy of existence is based on the teachings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Such a state should have as its model the state established by the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) in Medina. Such a state should be a sovereign entity and exercise authority over all lands where Muslims have populations that are large enough to invest them with the governmental power. It should be the protector and the refuge of Muslims all over the world, independent of race, color, national identity or school of law (Madhhab). A state that commits itself more towards such an ideal could also be considered a Muslim State. Thus, a corollary of this definition is that 1) no Muslim can be a foreigner in the Muslim State; 2) there could be either one single Muslim State or no Muslim State at all.

However, there are states which recognize themselves in one way or another as belonging to the Muslim Ummah. The most outspoken declaration of this appartenance is membership in the "Conference of the Foreign Ministers of Muslim Countries." This organization was established as a kind of Islamic League by the Muslim heads of states at Rabat (Morocco) on 25 December 1969 in response to the burning of the Aqsa Mosque in Al-Quds (Palestine). The Conference has been growing ever since and served as a forum for bringing the member states closer together and closer to Islām. The permanent secretariat of the Conference is located in Jeddah (Saudi Arabia). It has 45 member states of which 22 are Asian states and 23 are African. These states will be considered as the Muslim States; all other communities will be considered minorities independent of the Muslim percentages. The population of the Asian Muslim states totalled 522,720,000 persons in 1982 of whom about 474,780,000 were Muslims. The list of these states and their Muslim populations are shown in Table 6.1. (See Figure 6.1).

Islam entered most of the regions of Asia during the first century of the Hijrah. The first nuclei of Muslim communities were established by Arab and Persian merchants, especially sea-farers from South Arabia. In fact, the influence of South Arabia is such that all Muslim communities of the Indian Ocean and further, from East Africa to Indochina are of the Shāfi'ī school which is predominant in South Arabia.

Muslim immigration to South-East Asia and the Far East is at present negligible and does not contribute much to the growth of the Muslim communities. More important than immigration are growth by conversion (which remains important notwithstanding the difficulties) and natural growth which is usually higher than that of non-Muslims.

Table 6.1      Muslim Countries of Asia in 1982

State	Total Population	Muslim Population	Muslim Percentage
Indonesia	157,230,000	141,500,000	90
Pakistan	91,580,000	88,830,000	97
Bangladesh	95,710,000	81,350,000	85
Turkey	47,920,000	47,440,000	99
Iran	40,610,000	39,760,000	99
Afghanistan	15,740,000	15,740,000	100
Iraq	14,270,000	13,840,000	97
Saudi Arabia	10,980,000	10,430,000	95
Syria	10,700,000	9,100,000	85
Malaysia	14,760,000	7,970,000	54
North Yemen	5,420,000	5,420,000	100
Jordan	2,840,000	2,700,000	95
Palestine	5,300,000	2,330,000	44
South Yemen	2,040,000	2,040,000	100
Lebanon	3,080,000	2,000,000	65
Kuwait	1,590,000	1,430,000	90
Oman	940,000	930,000	99
United Arab Emirates	1,020,000	920,000	90
Bahrain	370,000	330,000	90
Qatar	230,000	220,000	95
Maldives	160,000	160,000	100
Brunei	230,000	160,000	70
<b>Total</b>	<b>522,720,000</b>	<b>474,780,000</b>	<b>91</b>

Many minority communities in Asian states were in fact independent Muslim states which were forcibly incorporated into bigger non-Muslim entities. Furthermore, Muslims are persecuted in many of the Asian states as will be seen in this chapter.

Table 6.2 shows that there were 18,782,000 Muslims in the Asian states outside the Muslim states, India, China and the Soviet Union, in 1982. In that year, the percentage of Muslims over the total population exceeded 10% in five states: Singapore (17%), Mongolia (15%), Philippines (12.2%), Thailand (12%), and Burma (10.7%). It exceeds the million point in four states: Thailand, Philippines, Burma, and Sri Lanka.

Table 6.2 Muslim Minorities in 1982 (excepting India, China and USSR)

Country	Total Population	Number of Muslims	Percentage over total population
Philippines	51,200,000	6,250,000	12.2
Thailand	50,020,000	6,000,000	12.0
Burma	36,000,000	3,560,000	10.7
Sri Lanka	15,360,000	1,168,000	7.6
Nepal	15,680,000	500,000	3.2
Singapore	2,440,000	420,000	17.0
Cambodia	5,560,000	335,000	6.0
Mongolia	1,740,000	260,000	15.0
Taiwan	18,550,000	75,000	0.4
Bhutan	1,430,000	75,000	5.2
Viet Nam	55,900,000	55,000	0.1
Hong Kong	5,210,000	30,000	0.5
Japan	119,200,000	30,000	0.3
Other	64,710,000	24,000	0.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>443,000,000</b>	<b>18,782,000</b>	<b>4.2</b>

## 2- The Philippines

In the 16th century, the islands which make up today the Philippines were in an advanced state of Islamization. Three Muslim states, extended their influence on these islands: 1) The Sulu Muslim State, enclosing Sulu, Basilan, Palawan, Negros, Panay, Mindoro and Iloco in the North of Luzon Islands; 2) The Maguindanao Muslim State, enclosing the entire Island of Mindanao; and 3) the Muslim State of Manilad (today's Manilla) enclosing the Center of Luzon.

The Spanish were in the midst of their infamous Inquisition against the Muslims (Moriscos) in the Iberian Peninsula. They attacked the Muslim states of Sulu, Maguindanao and Manilad with the same fanaticism and ferocity with which they treated their own Muslim population in Spain. King Philip, after whom the islands were later to be named, gave the following order to his Admiral-in-Chief: "Conquer the lands and convert the people (to Catholicism)". It is against this background that the Muslims of the so-called Philippines (called Moros, the name given by the Spanish to the Muslims of Spain) had to struggle for survival to this day, for more than four centuries. The first victim of this colonial attack was the Muslim State of Manilad. But Muslim resistance organized itself in the South in the islands of Palawan, Sulu and Mindanao. These islands became part of a united independent Muslim State of the Sulus. Spain could never conquer this state in spite of continuous warfare, and had to recognize its independent existence.

In 1896, President McKinley of the U.S. decided to occupy the Philippines to "Christianize and civilize" the people as he put it. The Americans succeeded in conquering the Spanish Colony in 1899, but the Muslim State of Sulu resisted. It fell to the American arms in 1914 after a long and heroic struggle. For the first time in its history the Bangsa Moro (Muslim name for their homeland in the Philippines) fell to non-Muslim armies and lost its independence. On March 11, 1915, the Muslim King (Sultan) was forced to abdicate, but was recognized as head of the Muslim community. It was only in April 1940 that the Americans abolished the Sultanate of Sulu and incorporated Bangsa Moro in the Philippines.

Thus, Bangsa Moro is a Muslim land whose population follows the Shāfi'ī school. It was colonized by the Philippines in 1940 and remains so since then. After independence from the U.S., the indigenous populations of the northern islands which have been converted forcibly to Catholicism by Spain, followed up the same policy of genocide against the Muslims which they had inherited from the Spanish colonial establishment and which has been encouraged and supported by the U.S. Indeed, as soon as the U.S. completed the occupation of Bangsa Moro in 1915, it opened it up for Christian immigration from the North. In fact, the Bangsa Moro formed half the area of the islands. Immigration was slow in the beginning, but after 1939 it took alarming proportions and was even more encouraged by the government of independent Philippines. Indeed, this government encouraged and tacitly supported hords of criminals

which killed the Muslims and burned their villages, then took the emptied lands for Christian settlement. The Catholic Church remained the moving power behind the brutal de-Islamization and Christianization of the South in the same way as it had been the moving power behind the Spanish Inquisition.

This situation has forced the Muslims in recent years to take up arms once again to defend themselves. The struggle is led by the Moro National Liberation Front (Chairman: Professor Nur Miswari). The Muslim population has been suffering great hardships for the last ten years because of the fierceness with which the Philippino Army has been trying to crush the urge of the Muslims to survive and to live honorably as Muslims. A large number of Muslim villages have been destroyed. Many Muslim refugees fled to Sabah (Malaysia). The Islamic Secretariat and Libya played the roles of arbitrators between the Philippino Government and the Bangsa Moro National Liberation Front. There was an agreement for the autonomy of 13 provinces in the South with large Muslim percentages. But, it seems that the Philippino Government never wanted to find out a just solution. No wonder the negotiations soon broke down, and the Government resumed its genocidal war against the Muslims. Since March 1968 to March 1982, more than 100,000 Muslim civilians were done to death by the Philippino Army, more than 300,000 Muslim houses were destroyed and more than 50 major villages, towns and cities have been razed by the Filipino Army, including the old Muslim capital of Jolo. This Army was swollen to about 300,000 soldiers from 50,000 in the beginning of hostilities in 1972. About three million Muslims have been displaced (of whom 100,000 have found refuge in Sabah, Malaysia and hundreds of thousands live in misery around Manila) and a very large number of mosques, schools, and plantations were destroyed. The entire Muslim population is in a state of disarray and shock. The struggle of the Muslims of Bangsa Moro however goes on, in spite of all these atrocities and the weight of the entire Philippino Army.

In 1982, there were about 6,250,000 Muslims in the Philippines (12% of the total population). The Government recognizes the existence of only 2,200,000 Muslims. Muslims are in majority in the thirteen provinces about which an agreement had been reached that they should constitute a Bangsa Moro Autonomous State. These are: Palawan, Tawi-Tawi, Sulu, Basilan, Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga del Norte, North Catabato, Maguindanao, Sultan Kudarat, South Cotabato, Lanao Sur, Lanao Norte and Davao Sur. The government accepts that Muslims are in majority only in Tawi-Tawi, Sulu, Basilan, Maguindanao and Lanao Sur. It also claims that they form more than one tenth of the population but less than 50% in Zamboanga del Sur, North Catabato and Sultan Kudarat (see Figure 6.2). Actually there are large Muslim communities in all the other provinces of Mindanao as well as in the region of Manila. Many Christian Philipinos convert to Islam in spite of the war. Muslim lands have a total area of 117,000 km<sup>2</sup> (total Philippines 289,000 km<sup>2</sup>) and the area of the 13 provinces is approximately 60,000 km<sup>2</sup>, comprising the Sulu Archipelago, the island of Palawan and the Western part of Mindanao. Muslims belong to several ethnic groups: the most important being the Tausugs (Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi) and the Maguindanaos (Lanao-del-Sur).

There are about 3,000 mosques in the country, especially in the South. Marawi City and Jolo could be considered the religious



centers of the Muslim community. The meaning of the Holy Qur'ān has been translated by Dr. Ahmad Domocao Alonto into Maranao, the most common language among Muslims. The work was sponsored by the Institute of Islamic Studies of the Philippines Muslim University in Marawi City. There is no Muslim literature in local languages but Arabic is spread among the educated. About 1,000 Muslims from the Philippines perform the Hajj every year and the Shariah Courts are functioning in the South. There are about 1000 Muslim schools in the country in addition to special schools for training Imams and Qur'ān readers. The Philippines Muslim University at Marawi City imparts Islamic education at the University level and trains the 'ulamā'. It has 5,000 students. In Jolo, the Philippines Muslim College played a similar role and had 2,000 students. But the College has been closed because of the war.

Most of the Muslims are farmers and fishermen, among them illiteracy rate is high, diseases and infant mortality are widespread, and unemployment is much higher than the Filipino average. University graduates number about 15,000 persons only. In the Philippines government's higher services, the number of Muslims is negligible. The most active Islamic Associations are the Muslim Association of the Philippines (Manila); Ansar Al-Islam (Marawi City), the Converts to Islam Society (Manila) and the Sulu Islamic Foundation (Jolo); etc... In 1983, an Islamic Da'wah Council of the Philippines has been formed to unify Muslim organisations in the North and the South.

3 - Thailand

There must have been about 6,000,000 Muslims in Thailand in 1982. However, the official figures are much lower. These give an overall Muslim percentage of the population of about 4% instead of a more probable figure of 12.0%. Actually this is part of the Thai establishment's effort to reduce the importance of its Muslim population. Muslims live all over Thailand, but there are three areas of Muslim concentration: 1) the South, from the Malaysian border to the Isthmus of Kra; 2) the North, in the area of Chiang Rai; and 3) the Capital region.

The South was not part of Thailand. In fact the Malay Peninsula was inhabited by Malays who were organized in small states. There Malays adopted Islam during the fifteen century as did almost all other Malays. Since the 14th century, Thailand began a campaign of conquest of the Malay Peninsula which culminated in 1767 C.E. with the conquest of all Muslim states down to Ligor (Nakhom Sri Thammarat), thus incorporating the Muslim states of Jaya (Chaiya), Grahi (Surat-Thani) and Ligor in the Thai Empire. From Ligor, the Thais extended their conquests to the South conquering more Muslim states, such as Bedelung (Pathalung), Senggora (Songkhla) and Setul (Satun). During the 19th century, competition for the conquest of the remaining of the Malay Peninsula started between Britain and Thailand. In 1832 C.E., the Thais

conquered the Muslim state of Pattani, and this conquest was recognized by Britain in 1909. At first, the Muslim states conquered by Thailand were allowed to be administered by their own Sultans. However in 1902, Muslim administrators were deposed; the Muslim lands lost all autonomy and became administered directly by the Thais.

Out of a total of 6,000,000 Muslims in Thailand in 1982 about 4,000,000 are Malay Muslims who live in the provinces of the South. The Muslims of Bangkok, numbering about 800,000 persons, are descendents of prisoners brought from the Malay states. For instance, in 1789, 4,000 Pattani Muslims were arrested and taken to Bangkok. These forced immigrants mixed later with other Muslim immigrants. In this process, they lost their Malay language and became Thai-speakers. Other Muslims of central Thailand are also descendents of Muslim prisoners who mixed with local converts. They may total about 1,000,000 Muslims. Muslims in the North-East and some of the North Region are descendents of Chams who were brought from Cambodia when it was conquered by Thailand. Many Thai converts live in these two regions. Finally, in the North, there are many Muslim descendents of Muslim immigrants from Yunnan (China) who had to flee when the Muslim rebellion was crushed in 1875. If the census of 1976 is taken into account with the estimates given by the Muslims the results shown in Table 6.3 are obtained, which gives also the number of registered mosques by Region. This Table shows that there were 5,250,000 Muslims in Thailand in 1976. Muslims constitute

half the population of the South Region, one of the 4 Regions of the Kingdom. In this region (72,961 km<sup>2</sup> in area), they are actually in majority in the provinces of Narathiwat, Yala, Pattani, Satun, Songkhla, Trang, and Krabi. The areas of Muslim concentration by Region are shown in Figure 6.3.

There must be about 2,500 mosques in Thailand, but in 1976, only 2,078 mosques were registered under the Royal Act of 1947 relating to mosques. There are 414 of such mosques in Pattani Province, 339 in Narathiwat Province, 213 in Songkhla Province, 196 in Yala Province and 139 mosques in the Capital Bangkok. By Region, there are 1,695 mosques in the South, 364 mosques in the Central Province, 18 mosques in the North East and only one registered mosque in the Eastern Province. But there are very few qualified Imams. The meaning of the Holy Qur'an has been translated into Thai. One version by Haji Ibrahim Qureshi has been published. Another version is by Sheikh-ul-Islam Haji Ismail. Copies of Malay translations are also imported from neighbouring Malaysia. Learned Muslims know Arabic, and the Holy Qur'an has constantly been printed in the country (in Arabic). However, Islamic literature in the Thai language is meagre.

Several thousand Muslims of Thailand perform the Hajj every year. Muslim personal laws are in force in four southern provinces only (Pattani, Narathiwat, Songkhla, and Yala with an area of 14010 km<sup>2</sup>). Two Qadis are appointed by the Government for each of these provinces as well as a State Committee for Islamic Affairs for all of Thailand headed by a Sheikh-ul-

Islam. Thus, the highest Muslim authority is not chosen by the Muslims, but appointed by the State.

There are about 400 Muslim schools (Pondoks). Islam is not taught in state schools. The Government established its own Islamic Education Institutions (Ponoh), and an Islamic College, thus trying to control Islamic Education as well. Few Muslims reach the college level of education. There are only several hundred college graduates among Muslims, among whom about 40 are physicians and 30 are engineers. Muslims are mostly farmers, fishermen and traders; their representation in the Government and the services is weak, and the majority community seems to have had a biased attitude towards them. In 1976, there were 14 Muslim deputies in the Parliament and two deputy Ministers in the Government.

There are many local Muslim organizations, but there is no national organization which might unite all Muslims. The most important of these associations are the Thai Welfare Association (Bangkok), the Young Muslim Association of Thailand, and the Thai Muslim Student Association.

Table 6.3 Muslims in Thailand (1976)

Region	Total Population	Number of Muslims	%	Number of registered Mosques
South Region	5,534,000	2,820,000	51	1695
Central Region	13,459,000	1,210,000	9	364
North East Region	15,584,000	930,000	6	18
North Region	9,696,000	290,000	3	1
Total	44,273,000	5,250,000	11.9	2078

The Muslims of Thailand feel persecuted and under the pressure of assimilation by the majority (e.g., they are forced to take Thai names). There is great discontent in the South against the lack of consideration on the part of the Government for the national (Malay) and religious feeling of the population. The Government tries to destroy Muslim schools and replace them by Thai ones; it also tries to destroy the influence of the Malay language among Muslims, it disregards Islamic festivals; it persecutes, imprisons and sometimes even puts to death Muslim religious and political leaders (between 1973 and 1975, about 500 Muslims were killed by the Government in the South); and last but not least, the Government forces Muslims to take non-Muslim Thai names; thus deluting their Islamic identify.

In the South, resistance against Thai colonization has been continuously going on for long, especially ever since the Government accelerated its policy of Thaisation which helped reduce the Muslim majority in the Muslim Southern Region. In 1960, the Pattani Liberation Front (PLF) was formed and in 1968, the Pattani United Liberation Organization (PULO) was established. Both of them seek independence for the 4 southernmost Muslim provinces by armed guerilla struggle.

4 - Burma

Islam reached Burma through many routes. First, there were Muslim Arab traders who settled on the shorelines during the first Hijri Century (7th C.E.) or later, first on the Arakan coast, and later more to the south. More recently, Indian and Malay traders have been effective in spreading Islam. Finally, refugees from Yunnan (China) in the nineteenth century settled in the northern parts of the country.

A Muslim state was established in Arakan when the Sultan of Muslim Bengal Naseer-ud-Deen Mahmud Shah (1442-1459 C.E.) helped King Sulayman Naramithla establish a Muslim Mrauku state. Muslim rule lasted for several centuries in Arakan and extended as far south as Moulmein during the tenure of Sultan Salim Shah Razagri (1593-1612 C.E.). Persian was the state language of the Arakan

Muslim state. The Capital was Myohaung. It was in 1784 that Buddhist Burma conquered the Muslim state, followed between the years 1824 and 1826 by the British. When Burma became independent in 1948, Arakan was incorporated in it.

The total area of Arakan is 36,762 km<sup>2</sup>, with a total population - in 1969 - of 1,847,000 persons. These are today divided into two religious communities: the Muslims (called Rohingyas) and the Buddhists (called Moghs). By 1982, there were about 2,600,000 people living in Arakan of whom about 1,460,000 were Muslims (56% of the population); another 2,100,000 Muslims lived in other parts of Burma, bringing the total Muslim population estimate to 3,560,000 persons, or 10.7% of the overall Burmese population (Burmese Muslims estimate their numbers to be double the above figure). The population of Tenasserim Division (Capital: Moulmein) is about 20% Muslim (600,000 Muslims in 1982). The remaining Muslims live mainly in the Rangoon Region and in the North East (see Figure 6.4). The cities where Muslims are in majority outside the Arakan Region are numerous, the most important being Moulmein (Tanasserim Division); Moulmeingyun (Irrawaddy Division); Pyinmana and Kyaukse (Mandalay Division); and Shwebo (Sagaing Division). However, there are no detailed statistics on Muslims in Burma.



The Muslims of Burma consist of two ethnic groups. Those who are of Indo-Pakistani origin, live mainly in the large cities, have strong links with the Indian Sub-continent and speak Urdu and Tamil fluently. The others are of Burmese origin. There are more than 5,000 mosques in Burma. In large cities, there are several mosques, many of which are several centuries old. The meaning of the Holy Qur'ān has been translated into Burmese by a team of well-versed Muslim 'ulamā'. Some books on Islam have been translated into Burmese, but there is not enough Islamic literature in that language. About 500 Muslims used to perform Hajj yearly before 1962. Muslim personal laws are in force in the country. There is also a large number of Muslim schools covering about 60% of Muslim children. There are about 20 Imām schools (Dar-ul-Ulūm). There are six institutions for Qur'ān teaching. Islam is not taught however in public schools.

Muslims were running three high schools which were nationalized in 1964. There are many Muslim university graduates, but their percentage in the community is about half that of the non-Muslims. There are Muslim lawyers, engineers, physicians and university professors; many of them, however, are reduced to emigration. The number of Muslims in the government and the armed forces is now negligible.

At present the Muslim community of Burma is highly persecuted. Their businesses have been nationalized, their lands seized, their high schools de-Islamized. They are forbidden from performing Hajj and their links with the Muslim world have been greatly curtailed. Even securing copies of the Qur'ān is becoming a problem: first, publishing it needs the permission of the government and then paper is not available. Since 1973, Muslims have not even allowed to receive free copies from abroad. Since 1982, many of them were stripped of their Burmese nationality or *officially* reduced to second class citizens.

Before the Burmese armed forces took over the country in 1962 and established their brand of socialism, Muslims were well integrated with the population. They were in top positions in the army and the government (e.g., Haji M.A. Raschid, once Burmese Central Minister). There were two Muslim judges in the High Court and four Muslims were ministers at one time or another. The mass of Muslims were farmers but many others were rich traders. Muslims established a free Muslim hospital (in the 1930's) and a Muslim Central Fund Trust. There were also many Muslim organizations. At present the leading ones are the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, the All-Burmese Muslim Organization and the Islamic Religious Affairs Council.

The brunt of the Burmese persecutions fell on the Arakanese Muslims. The efforts of the different Governments of Burma were concentrated on reducing their majority. Four major expulsions were carried out against them since 1942. Indeed, after the departure of the British in 1942, a wave of hatred against the Muslims drenched the Arakan Region in blood. Muslims were massacred en masse and 200,000 of them had to flee to East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), West Pakistan and even Saudi Arabia, whereas about 8,000 Muslims lost their lives. Before the Japanese arrived, the Muslims tried to establish an Islamic Republic in Arakan but failed. New pogroms were led against the Arakanese Muslims in 1958, in 1962, and in 1974 with thousands of victims and tens of thousands of refugees. However, the most criminal activity led by the Burmese Government with the use of its army is what it called "Operation Dragon King" which started out on Feb. 1978. The Rangoon Government introduced National Identity Cards but refused to give them to the Rohingya Muslims. They were offered, instead, Foreigners Registration Cards in spite of the fact that the Rohingyas have been citizens of Arakan for more than 1,000 years. Even those who accepted these cards subsequently saw them confiscated and destroyed. Burmese political commissars aided by armed forces launched upon an orgy <sup>of</sup> Muslim killings and Muslim village burning, especially in the two sub-divisions of Buthidaung and Maungdaw. Thousands of Muslims were thus killed and the remainder fled in terror across the border to Bangladesh. 71,000 Muslims were thus evicted by May 1, 1978, of whom 16,000 crossed the border on April 30 alone.

There were 313,000 refugee Muslims by August 1, 1978. Of these 283,000 persons were housed in makeshift camps and the others outside the camps. In August 1978, Bangladesh and Burma concluded an agreement for the repatriation of the refugees and "Operation Hintha" started. Eventually, all Burmese Rohinghas were repatriated after more than 10,000 of them died of disease and malnutrition. However, once back home they faced again the most inhuman treatment as well as disease and misery. Many found their lands confiscated and their citizenship denied. And while some of their brightest sons think of armed struggle to recover the right to their homeland under the United Islamic Organisation Burma (UIOB), another page of Muslim sufferings seem to have been turned.

Since 1980, Muslims of other areas were forced out of the country by persecution. Thousands found their way to Malaysia and Thailand.

5 - Sri Lanka

Islam entered Sri Lanka in the 7th Century C.E. with Arab traders from South Arabia. From the beginning, Muslims were well received by the local kings and they soon became a trading community with necessary international links. With the fall of Baghdad in 1258 C.E., their links with the heartland of Islam became weak, and were replaced by stronger links with the Muslims of South India, many of whom emigrated to the island and fused with the earlier Muslim elements. Thus, the present Muslim population

of Sri Lanka received from South Arabia its school (Shāfi'ī) and from South India, its language (Tamil) which is different from the language of the majority (Sinhalese). By the 16th century the Muslims were well concentrated in the South-West Coast with main centers at Colombo, Beruwala, and Galle.

The Portuguese who landed in Colombo in 1502 hit the Muslim population very hard. They broke both their political power and economic prosperity, and then embarked on a systematic policy of terror and expulsion. Muslims were officially expelled in 1526 and some more remaining Muslims were expelled in 1626. They found refuge in territories on the Island which were not under Portuguese rule such as Kandy, Sitawaka and all towns and villages of the interior, as well as on the northern (Puttalam) and eastern coast (Kalmunai). They eventually became agriculturists on the eastern coast where many of them became soldiers in the Sinhalese armies to fight the Portuguese.

The Dutch replaced the Portuguese in 1658 and followed the same policy of persecution and suppression against the Muslims. Muslims were expelled again from Galle and Matara (in 1659) and from Colombo (in 1670). They were not allowed to buy land and were forced to labor without due compensation. However, these discriminatory rules were rescinded in 1832 by the British. With the Dutch came also a new element in the Muslim population:

Javanese refugees, prisoners, soldiers, exiles, etc. These Malays have kept their language to this day.

Meanwhile the Sinhalese Kandyan Kingdom became a refuge for Muslims. They were well treated in it and they became influential in their area of excellence: commerce.

In the late eighteenth century the Dutch introduced a bill promulgating "Islamic personal laws" for the Muslims. These were retained when the British replaced the Dutch in 1796. The British treated the Muslims reasonably well during their colonial tenure. By 1937, a system of "domestic relations" courts presided over by Qadis (Muslim Judges) were established and Waqfs were organized under the aegis of Muslims.

In 1901, the number of Muslims was 248,000 persons and they formed 6.9% of Sri Lanka's population. In 1963, they kept the same percentage as their number grew to 731,000. By 1971, they became 910,000 Muslims (7.2% of total population) and by 1981, there was 1,134,000 Muslims (or 7.6% of the total population). The total population was 14,850,000 in 1981. In 1971, the Muslim population comprised 824,000 Ceylon "Moors" (Tamil-speaking); 42,000 Malays (Malay-speaking); 29,000 Indian "Moors" (Gujrati-speaking); and 15,000 Muslims of mainly Maldivian origin. In 1981, the number of Ceylon "Moors" reached 1,057,000 people, and the three other groups totalled 77,000 Muslims. By 1982, the Muslim population could be estimated at 1,168,000.

Table 6.4 shows their province-wise distributions in 1971 and 1981 censuses. Table 6.5 reports the results of the 1981 census on a map. Muslims form more than 10% of the population in seven districts out of 24 districts. They are more than 20% of the population only in four districts. Muslims are concentrated in four areas where they form more than 10% of the total population; the East Coast (Trincomalee, Batticaloa, Amparai); the North-West Coast (Mannar and Puttalam); Colombo; and Kandy; with the highest concentration in the agricultural East Coast. No district has a Muslim absolute majority. Almost all Malays are concentrated in Colombo (Western). From Table 6.4 it is clearly seen that Muslim percentages are decreasing in the two districts of highest Muslim concentration: Amparai and Trincomalee. This means that the Muslim population, as dispersed as it is, tends towards more dispersion, either through Government policy of colonization of Muslim lands as some claim, or by natural forces on population movements, or both. Table 6.5 shows Muslim percentages by region.

There are about 2,000 mosques in Sri Lanka, with 63 mosques in Colombo alone. Large mosques are governed by boards of trustees and most mosques are administered by the Waqf Board (around 1500 mosques). The Waqf Board is a Government Department and the Waqf Commissioner is appointed by the Government. Qur'an is taught in all mosques. Its meaning has been translated into Tamil and more recently into Sinhalese. There is a shortage of Islamic books and restrictions have been imposed on the import of books. There are also restrictions on Hajj because of foreign exchange shortage. Still several hundred Sri Lanka Muslims manage to reach Mecca every year. Muslim personal laws are in force.

Table 6.4 : Muslims in Sri Lanka

Year	1 9 7 1		1 9 8 1	
District	Muslim Population	Percentage	Muslim Population	Percentage
Amparai	126,033	46.2	163,000	41.9
Trincomalee	62,613	32.4	76,000	29.7
Bathcaloa	62,519	24.2	80,000	24.2
Colombo )	187,987	7.0	178,000	10.5
Gampaha )			53,000	3.8
Kalutara	49,600	6.8	64,000	7.7
Kandy	104,469	8.8	119,000	10.6
Matale	21,825	6.9	27,000	7.5
Muara Eliya	9,609	2.1	17,000	3.3
Kurunegala	48,881	4.8	64,000	5.3
Puttalam	39,548	10.4	50,000	10.1
Jaffna	15,520	2.2	14,000	1.7
Mannar )	28,009	16.2	30,000	28.1
Vavuniya )			7,000	7.1
Mullaitivu)			4,000	5.0
Galle	22,555	3.1	27,000	3.3
Matara	14,960	2.5	17,000	2.6
Hambantota	7,634	2.2	9,000	2.1
Annuradhapura	27,274	7.0	43,000	7.3
Polōnnaruwa	11,603	7.1	17,000	6.6
Ratnapur	10,218	1.5	15,000	1.9
Kegalle	30,151	4.6	24,000	3.5
Badulla	24,888	3.9	30,000	4.7
Moneragala	4,195	2.2	6,000	2.0
<b>Total :</b>	<b>910,091</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>1,134,000</b>	<b>7.6</b>



Table 6.5

Year	1 9 7 1		% of total Muslims	1 9 8 2		% of total Muslims
	Region	Muslim Population		% in Region	Muslim Population	
Eastern Region	254,936	35.3	28.0	319,000	32.7	28.1
Mannar/ Puttalam	60,444	13.5	6.6	80,000	13.3	7.1
Colombo	-	-	-	178,000	10.5	15.7
Kandy	-	-	-	119,000	10.6	10.5
Other	594,561	5.2	65.4	438,000	4.2	38.6
Total	909,941	7.2	100.0	1,134,000	7.6	100

All schools, including Muslims schools, have been nationalized. But in the Ministry of Education there exists a Muslim School section which controls 200 primary and high schools. In these schools the same official curriculum is taught along with Arabic and Islamic education. There is only one single private Muslim School left, the Zahira College, which was established in Colombo in 1892. It is constituted of a primary and a high school and has an all-male student body of 2,000. There is a Muslim Ladies College (Government-run) and one Muslim Training College for teachers in the Eastern Province. Muslim percentage in the University barely reaches 4%, thus lower than their national percentage.

There are six Imam schools, five for boys and one for girls. These are in Amparai District (Addlaichani); in Galle (Galle and Weligama); in Colombo (Maharagama); in Puttalam and in Kandy (Galeliya for girls). These schools have a total enrolment of 500 and dozens of students are enrolled in Islamic universities abroad.

Muslims have the lowest percentage of education in Sri Lanka and are at present poorer than the rest of the population. About 90% are farmers and laborers, 9% traders and 1% government employees.

Muslims are reasonably well treated, but from time to time communal problems arise due to political polarization (e.g., the anti-Muslim riots of Puttalam in 1976 and Galle in 1982). Relations between the Muslims and the Sinhalese Buddhist majority are much better than with the Hindu (Tamil) minority with which they share the same language. There is always one Muslim minister in the government, sometimes two. The Mayor of Colombo is traditionally a Muslim and Muslims had 21 representatives out of the 151 constituencies in the country (double their national percentage). Muslims are completely integrated in the country and serve it most sincerely as they did for one thousand years. However, the new Constitution of 1978 implies proportional representation only when a community forms a high percentage of the electoral district. The dispersion of the

Muslim community works against them under the new constitution. Thus, their representatives end up being chosen for them by other communities. Many Muslims resent this situation.

The most important Muslim organizations are the Muslim League, the Ceylon Moors League, the Islamic Socialist Front, the Jama'at-e-Islami, the All-Ceylon Council of 'ulama', the Muslim Youth League; the All-Ceylon Muslim Educational Conference, the University Muslim Majlis, etc. However, there is no over-all Muslim organization representing all the Muslims of Sri Lanka.

#### 6 - Cambodia

In the Middle Ages, Indochina was divided into three kingdoms: 1) Annam (the Viet-Nam of today), 2) Cambodia; and 3) Champa. Annam (Viet-Nam) consisted only of the northern plains of Tonkin, i.e., the delta of the Red River. It was a Buddhist state. Cambodia was of Hindu tradition and occupied a much larger area than today's Cambodia. It enclosed also Cochinchina, i.e., the delta of the Mekong River. The central part of today's Viet-Nam was the domain of the Kingdom of Champa. This Kingdom which existed for more than 15 centuries had Hindu culture.

There was a continuous warfare between the three Kingdoms, with Annam as the invading and aggressive power. In 1471, the new

capital of Champa was destroyed; by the turn of the 16th century Annam conquered the area of Hue; and by the end of the same century, it absorbed all of the Champa Kingdom. Annam then proceeded to absorb Cambodia as well by conquering the entire Mekong delta during the 18th and 19th centuries. Total absorption of Cambodia was halted by the French.

The Kingdom of Champa had affinities with the Hindu states of Java and Malacca. When these regions adopted Islam, the Chams, persecuted and subjugated by the invading Viet-Nameese, embraced Islam en masse. They also emigrated in large numbers to the Kingdom of Cambodia where they found protection and refuge. Thus, the greatest majority of the Muslims of Cambodia today are Chams; i.e., the real indigenous population of Indochina before the Viet-Nameese invasion from the North.

In 1971, the number of Muslims in Cambodia would have been about 500,000 persons, of whom 480,000 were Chams and 20,000 were of Javanese origin whose ancestors emigrated to Cambodia in the 13th century. All these Muslims follow the Shafi'i school. By 1974, just before the onslaught of the Khmer Rouge on the country, there must have been about 550,000 Muslims in Cambodia. Muslims live in 14 of the 17 provinces of the country, with the highest concentration in Kampong Cham where they formed about 36% of the total population (about 300,000 Muslims). There were also high percentages

of Muslims in the following provinces: Kampot, Kandal, Phnom-Penh, Kampong Chhang, Kampong Thum, Kracheh and Batdambang, (see Figure 6.6). The Chams speak their own language and the Javanese speak the Cambodian language. There were, in 1974, about 185 mosques in the country of which 59 were in Kampong Cham Province and 9 in the city of Phnom Penh. About half the Muslim population must have been slaughtered by the Khmer Rouge. By 1982, the number of Muslims would be estimated to no more than 335,000

A majority of the Muslims lives in compact villages. Some live in the cities and engage in trade and industry. The spiritual center of the Muslims is Chruoy Changvar, near Phnom Penh, where most of the high Muslim officials live including their supreme chief. Most Muslims are farmers; others are butchers, fishermen and boat-builders. Most of the Muslims of Javanese origin live in Chruoy Changvar. All Muslims were members of the Islamic Association whose headquarters were in Phnom Penh and whose sections enclosed all Muslim villages. Historically, the Cambodian King bestowed his favors on the Muslims, and the Supreme Chief of the Muslim community was appointed by the King and was considered a member of the royal court.

The Muslim community of Cambodia was well organized. Each Muslim village was headed by a "Hakam", helped by a "Kalik" (Qadi). The "Imam" led the prayers, the "Ketip" (Katib) taught Qur'an, the

"Bilal" calls the people for prayer. The "Hakam" is elected by the community. Each village had an Islamic school. The most advanced students were sent to Malaysia, Saudi Arabia and Egypt for higher Islamic education. Several hundreds Muslims from Cambodia went yearly to Mecca for pilgrimage.

This situation changed dramatically when Khmer Rouge took over in 1974. Since the take-over of power by these modern-day brutes, hundreds of thousands of citizens have been killed, millions displaced and all forms of religion banned. Many citizens fled the country and narrated horrifying stories of the brutal treatment that had been meted out to them. Among them there were about 25,000 Muslims who were received by Malaysia and settled mostly in Kelantan. Some emigrated to Thailand, and scores went to Saudi Arabia, France and the U.S.A.

These Muslim refugees narrated horrifying tales of killing, forced labor and the breaking of the family units. Murders hit more specifically the leaders of the Community such as Colonel Hamzah; Colonel Sit Met; Second Lt Lee Seman; Nong Mat Cit; Captain Yok Rani and the representative for Serirod Constituency in Phnom Penh, Oh Sulaiman. Mosques have been closed and Muslim religious leaders who resisted this step were shot dead. Thus were killed Imam Tabib Ahmad and Tuan Syahed Ali of Tebor among many others. Muslim girls were defiled by the savage Khmer Rouge and when they resisted in such places

as Kompong Deras, the whole community was massacred. The Chief Qādī of the Muslim community Serong Yusof was killed along with other leading Imams such as Ustaz Yaakub; Ustaz Sulaiman (who had studied in Cairo); Ustaz Ahmad (who had studied in India); etc.

The fall of the Khmer Rouge in January 1979 was certainly good news for the Muslims; but it is not clear whether the damage done in four years of brutal persecution would be a lasting one or the new regime would restore the religious freedom which they had enjoyed up until a few years ago. The trend is however good, since the Islamic Development Bank was able to contact the surviving Muslims and bring them some humble relief, with no objection from the government.

#### 7 - Nepal

The first Muslim presence in Nepal occurred by the end of the fourteenth century when Sultan Shamsuddin of Bengal launched an attack on the Kathmandu Valley. Under the Moghul Emperor Akbar, however, Muslim influence increased. The first Muslim settlers came to Nepal in the 15th century, especially as traders, teachers of Islam, and were allowed to stay in the country by the Nepali Kings. Some of these Muslims raised to prominence in government circles in the 18th century.

Today, the Muslims of Nepal have very strong links with those of India, one evident manifestation of which is the use of the Urdu language as the main language of culture. Muslims of Nepal are also of the Hanafi school which is predominant in Northern India. In the 1971 census, they numbered 351,156 persons, or 3.04 of the total population of Nepal. They could be estimated in 1982 at 500,000 Muslims, or 3.2% of the total population.

Muslims are mostly concentrated in the Tarai region along the Eastern border with India. They formed in 1971 more than 10% of the population in 6 of the 75 districts of Nepal. These are Banke (19.3%), Kapilbastu (16.9%), Parsa (13.3%), Bara (11.6%), Rantahat (14.2%), and Mohotari (11.0%). The location of these areas is shown in the map of Figure 6.6. This figure shows the Muslim distribution in different parts of the country. Table 6.6 gives, however, an idea about Muslim dispersion, by district.

Table 6.6 : Muslim dispersion in Nepal in 1971

% in District Pop	>10%	<10%	Total
Muslim Population	193,750	157,406	351,156
Percentage	55.2	44.8	100



It should be noted that the Muslim population of Nepal increases at a slightly faster rate than the rest of the population. Indeed, in 1953, Muslims numbered 208,900 or 2.53% of the total population.

The majority of the Muslims of Nepal are agriculturists. Some Muslims are artisans in the public sectors and others work with government agencies. In Kathmandu, most Muslims are traders.

A small group of Muslims are Shia, especially concentrated in the Sunsari district of Eastern Nepal. Ethnically, some Nepali Muslims claim Arab, Afghan and Turkish origin, but the majority are Nepali descendents of converts. The Muslims of Kathmandu are known as Kashmiri Muslims, most probably because of their Kashmiri origin. Muslims in Nepal speak many languages. In Kathmandu, Urdu is the mother tongue of Muslims, although most of them speak Nepali and Newari. In Western Nepal, Muslims speak also Urdu. However, in the districts of Bara and Parsa, Muslims speak Bhojpuri, whereas those of Eastern Nepal speak Maithali.

The State religion of Nepal is Hinduism. In this system the State promulgated in 1852 the Muluki Ain code distinguishing between foreign Muslims (highest among the empire castes) and native Muslims (lowest). This caste

system has been abolished in 1963, but it is still prevalent socially, putting the Muslim community at great handicap. The law prohibits Hindus to convert. Nepal does not accord any official recognition to Islam, but Muslims are free to exercise their "customs" and have been treated as an integral part of Nepalese society. Muslims are in general free to build mosques and perform their religious duties, but Muslim personal law is not in force.

Until a generation ago, Muslim children were not allowed in school, being considered impure, nor were they allowed to build their own schools. However, this situation changed now. Muslim children are in increasing numbers in public schools and they have now about 20 Islamic schools. Islamic education for children is imparted in these schools as well as in mosques, covering only 40% of the Muslim children. There are no Imam schools, and most Imams are trained in India. Thus, Muslims are being assimilated in remote areas and their illiteracy rate is higher than the average in the country. There are several hundred Muslim students at the University and about 200 university graduates. There is a Muslim Deputy Minister and two Muslim university lecturers.

There are scores of mosques in the country, including two major ones in the capital Kathmandu: the Nepali Jama

Masjid and the Kashmiri Mosque. There are mosques in most villages having a Muslim community. Muslims are free to perform Hajj; under the aegis of the Home Ministry about 60 Nepalese Muslims become Hajji yearly.

The most active Islamic organisations are the "All-Nepal Anjuman Islah Samity", the "Muslim Seva Samity", the "Bajme Adab" and the "All-Nepal Muslim Sudhar Samity".

#### 8 - Singapore

Singapore, which is an island Republic of 544 km<sup>2</sup> area, was part of the Muslim State of Johore when the British made a bid for its conquest. Pressures on the Sultan of Johore in 1819 forced an agreement on ceding the island to the British. The latter took over effectively in 1824. By then the island had a small population, but totally Malay Muslim. The British opened the door wide open to Chinese immigration which resulted in the dwarfing of the original population. Most of the Chinese immigrants were non-Muslim. In 1963, the State of Singapore joined Malaysia as one of its 14 states. However, this union did not last long. Thus, agreement was signed for Singapore to secede as an independent Republic. This became effective on August 9, 1965, thus creating a new Muslim minority.

The census of 1980 showed a total population of

Singapore of 2,414,000 persons of whom 400,000 were Muslims. In 1982, the number of Muslims can be estimated to be around 420,000 or 17.0% of the population. In the 1980 census, of the 400,000 Muslims, about 360,000 were Malays, 34,000 were Indians, 6,000 were Chinese and of different origins.

There are about 155 mosques in Singapore, the oldest being Masjid Molaka erected in 1820. The biggest mosques, which are real national monuments in Singapore, are the Sultan Mosque and Chulia Mosque. The Majlis-Ul-Ulama is building a series of modern new Islamic centers around the island. Of these, four are already completed. There is complete free movement of Islamic literature in English, Malay and Tamil (language of Indian Muslims) and freedom to go to Hajj (1,000 pilgrims yearly).

Muslim personal laws are in force and Shariah Courts have been established since 1958. In 1968, a Majlis-ul-Ulama (Ulama Council) has been established. It supervises mosques, Awqāf, Islamic schools as well as Muslim cemeteries. The Council supervises the Shariah Courts as well as collects the Zakat. Islamic education is imparted in some mosques as well as in the Government Malay schools as an "optional" subject. There are 90 schools for Islamic education but they cover only 15% of Muslim children. There is no Imam School. Most Imams are trained abroad. Arabic is taught by some Islamic organizations.

Muslims are less advanced than the rest of the population in all fields. The number of Muslim graduates of universities formed only 2.7% of the total number of graduates. The percentage of Muslims in the professions and higher services is also much below their national average. However, the government has usually at least one Muslim minister in the Cabinet, such as the Acting Minister of Social Affairs (Dr. Mattar) at present. Some Muslims occupy high positions in the legal sphere and in the University.

Economically, Muslims are among the poorest. Muslim youths face difficulties in seeking employment. Only a small percentage among them is called up for national service. There is neither open persecution of Muslims nor much effort to help them as a minority and to protect them until they reach the level of the rest of the population. It is clear that the present level at which they found themselves is a result of a century and half of colonization and unrestricted immigration of non-Muslims. There are 10 Muslims in the parliament out of a total of 69 members (14.5% Muslims).

The leading Islamic organization is the Muslim Missionary Society, established in 1932. It has erected a large Islamic Center, King Faisal Memorial Hall. It also runs a medical clinic and a legal center. They imparted Islamic education (including Arabic language) to more than 6,000

students by 1982. They also have a welfare department, a ladies department and a youth section. Other important Muslim societies are the Muslim Convert Society (Dar-ul-Arqam) which is the main Da'wah organisation in the country and which managed to bring to Islam more than 8,000 people since 1982. Others are Yayasan Mendaki, the Scholarship Fund Board, and the Tamil Muslim Jamaat which erected an Islamic Hall, the Shahul-Hameed Muslim Lecture Hall, among many others.

#### 9- Other Countries

There are Muslims in all other countries of Asia and they are organized in most of these countries. In the following pages we will consider specifically the situation of Muslims in each one of the remaining countries.

When the Mongol armies conquered a good part of the Muslim World, the Muslim element became very important even in the heartland of the new empire. Almost all Turkish peoples adopted Islam and many Mongols did the same. The present-day Mongolian People's Republic has been carved out from regions which were for long under Islamic influence. Muslims were always present in these areas. In 1982, they amounted to approximately 260,000 persons, or 15% of the population of the Republic. These Muslims are all traditionally of the Hanafi school. Ethnically, they comprise three main ethnic groups: Kazakhs (80,000 persons),

Ghor (60,000 persons); and Mongols (120,000 persons). Mongolia became a People's Republic in 1921 and abolished all forms of religion in the 1930's. Therefore, it is not quite clear what happened to the Muslims. The fact is that they are at present completely cut-off from the rest of the Muslim ummah, and none of them had come to Hajj for a good number of years. High Muslim officials who visited Outer Mongolia mentioned meeting Ministers in the Government who said to be Muslim.

Islam entered Taiwan in a first wave in 1661 C.E. in the era of the Ming Dynasty, when a Chinese army landed in the island and freed it from Dutch colonialism. There were among the Chinese soldiers many Muslims from the Fukien Province. These Muslims grew in numbers with time and when the Japanese took the island in 1895 they followed a policy of persecution against the Muslims which continued until they left in 1945. With the defeat of the Nationalist Chinese and their emigration to Taiwan a new wave of Chinese Muslims arrived with them, numbering about 20,000 persons. These Muslims came from all parts of China (Khansu, Yunnan, Ninghsia) and even from Eastern Turkestan. Many of these were high officials of the Nationalist Chinese Army and Government including General Ma Ching-Chiang. There was, in 1982, in Taiwan a total of no more than 75,000 Muslims, including the descendants of the first immigration. They are all of the Hanafi school. Muslims are united in a Chinese Muslim Organization, headed by Mr. Abu Bakr Chao Ming-Yuan. They have five mosques, two in Taipei and one in each of Chungli, Taitung and Kaohsiung. There is

no Islamic teaching in public schools. However, Muslims are treated equally with all others and there are Muslims in the legislative body (Yuan) and in the National Assembly of Taiwan. Most of the Muslims are in the independent professions. Some are in the government and the armed forces.

Bhutan had a total population of 1,430,000 in 1982 of whom about 75,000 were Muslims. These Muslims are in good contact with the Muslims of West Bengal and Assam in India. There seems no evidence of their being persecuted.

Muslims in Viet-Nam are in their majority from the same ethnic origin as those of Cambodia, i.e. Cham. They are the original inhabitants of what is called Viet-Nam today. There were about 55,000 Muslims in 1982. Two-thirds of the Muslims are Chams, the others are from different origins including Viet-Nameese converts or vietnamized Muslims, especially in the city of Saigon (Hoshiminville). The Muslims in Viet-Nam lived in 1982 in three little groups: 1) about 20,000 Chams in the provinces of Ninh-Thuan and Binh-Tuan living in a multitude of small villages with Chams who are still Hindus (50,000 in Viet-Nam); 2) about 25,000 Chams of Cochinchina in the Mekong Delta; and 3) about 9,000 Muslims of Saigon of different origins. There is also a small Muslim community and a mosque in Hanoi. Before the communist take-over in 1975, the Muslims of Viet-Nam had lived peace-



fully in the country in spite of continuous warfare. Since then, many Hoshiminville Muslims have left the country. They were indeed of diverse origins and they did not feel welcome in the new state, (1750 Muslims came to Yemen in 1976 and settled in Ta'iz). Many Chams are requesting to emigrate to Malaysia. The Cham Muslims were not subjected to physical extermination but the fact that their mosques were closed, Islamic schools were prevented from functioning, made the Muslims fear that their culture might be destroyed.

There were 30,000 Muslims in Hong-Kong in 1982. The first wave of Muslims came from the Kwantung Province of China. They were followed by a new wave in 1949, and a trickle of Muslims from India and Indonesia. The Muslims of Hong-Kong are mostly tradesmen, most of their children go to non-Muslim schools and they are worried about their future. There are several Muslim organizations, all united into one national body. The most important organizations are the Islamic Union, the Pakistan Association of Hong Kong, the Dawoodi Bohra Association, the Chinese Cultural and Fraternal Association, the Hong Kong Islamic Youth Association, the Hong Kong Muslim Women Association, the International Islamic Society, and the Islamic Social Service Association. The Muslim community has a Muslim Secondary School, the Islamic College, four Mosques, of which the Kowloon Mosque is the largest, and several newsletters and magazines (Muslim News, Strive, Muslim Herald, etc.)

Islam was introduced in Japan around the turn of the present century by Muslim Tatars from the Russian Empire. One of the first such preachers, Abdul-Rashid Ibrahim arrived to Japan in 1909. More Tatar Muslims arrived and more Japanese converted to Islam. In 1935, the Muslims established the first mosque in Japan in Kobe, and in 1938 they built the Tokyo Mosque. There are at present about 10 Muslim associations gathering the community in the following cities: Tokyo, Kyoto, Kobe, Naruta, Tokoshima, Sendai, Nagoya and Kamizawa. The number of Muslims in 1982 was about 30,000, of whom 15,000 were Japanese, and the rest were from a wide variety of origins. Many Japanese are presently embracing Islam, and the number of Muslims is expected to rise. There is complete freedom of religion in Japan.

The case of South Korea has been treated in detail in Chapter 1. The first Muslims of South Korea embraced Islam during the Korean War by the Turkish army. Their number increased to 3,000 in 1971 and there were about 22,000 Muslims in 1982, all Korean converts. These are organized under the "Korea Muslim Federation". They built three mosques, one in Seoul, another in Pusan and a third in Kwanju. Their number is expected to increase greatly.

In Laos, there are about 1,000 Muslims (1978), Chams and Chinese. Many of the Chams requested to emigrate to Malaysia.

Macao has a Muslim population which is in close contact with that of Hong Kong. Their number decreased to less than 100 in 1982. They are organized and have a mosque.

In North Korea, there are several hundred Muslims, but they do not seem to be organized.

#### 10- Conclusions

If we consider the large Muslim communities in the rest of Asia, i.e. Philippines, Thailand, Burma and Sri Lanka, we see that they all share in one single characteristic: their Muslim population is indigenous to the country. In all these states, there are regions where Muslims are in majority, or near majority. In the Philippines, Thailand, and Burma, these regions have been parts of full-fledged Muslim states that have been absorbed by neighboring non-Muslim powers. The situation of Muslims is tragic in the three above-mentioned states. In two of them (Philippines and Thailand) wars of liberation are waged by the Muslims to free their lands from foreign domination. Those Muslims would have been happy if only they could receive some autonomy and safeguard to their Islamic identity. In Burma the Muslims are being eliminated by the terrorism of the state and mass expulsions. It is only in Sri Lanka where Muslims never established any state and where their situation remains satisfactory. In all these states the Muslim communities are very old, and can be traced to almost thirteen

centuries back for Burma and Sri Lanka and to six centuries in Thailand and the Philippines, i.e. since the beginning of the Islamization of the Malay people.

The Islamic institutions of all these states are well established and their link with the Muslim world is solid. Only Burma's Muslims have been cut off for more than one decade from the rest of the Muslims of the world. The Muslim cultural language is Malay in Thailand and the Philippines, it is Urdu in Burma and Tamil in Sri Lanka. Islamic literature is available in all these languages. Arabic is also known among the educated. Muslim personal law is applied in all the above-mentioned countries.

The Muslims of Cambodia and Viet-Nam are mostly Chams; i.e. the original people of the area. Their Islamization took place after the fall of their empire. Their situation at the present is most tragic so much that their very survival is in question. In Mongolia, again a Communist State, Muslims are suppressed and cut-off completely from the rest of the ummah. Muslims in Nepal live peacefully, but are not recognized as a national religious community; the same could be said about Bhutan. Muslims in Singapore became a minority in their own country because of mass Chinese immigration. They are however treated relatively well. As for Brunei, it is, for all practical purposes a Muslim state, due to be independent in 1983. In Taiwan,

Hong Kong, and Macao, the Muslims are part of the Chinese world and their numbers are small. They suffer no persecution. The greatest hopes for the future of Islam are indeed on Japan and Korea. Both the Muslim communities are characterized by a fast expanding convert population. The Japanese Islamic dream is more than 80 years old, the Korean one is less than ten years old. Both dreams are still far from being fulfilled. There is also complete freedom of religion in both Japan and South Korea.

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