

= Sibu =

Sibu / ʔsibuʔ / ( simplified Chinese : 诗巫 ; traditional Chinese : 詩巫 ; pinyin : Shīwū ) is an inland town at the central region of Sarawak and the capital of Sibu District in Sibu Division , Sarawak , Malaysia . The town is located on the island of Borneo . The town covers an area of 129 @. @ 5 square kilometres ( 50 @. @ 0 sq mi ) . It is located at the confluence of the Rajang and Igan Rivers , some 60 kilometres from the South China Sea and approximately 191 @. @ 5 kilometres ( 119 mi ) north @- @ east of the state capital Kuching . The population is mainly dominated by Chinese especially the Fuzhou people . Other ethnic groups such as indigenous Melanau , Malay , and Iban are also present in this region . The town population as of the year 2010 is 162 @, @ 676 .

Sibu was settled by James Brooke in 1862 when he built a fort in the town to fend off attacks by indigenous Dayak people . Following this , a small group of Chinese Hokkien people settled around the fort to carry out business activities safely in the town . In 1901 , Wong Nai Siong led a large scale migration numbering 1 @, @ 118 Foochow Chinese from Fujian province of China into Sibu . This made Sibu being referred popularly as " New Fuzhou " . Sibu bazaar and the first hospital in Sibu was built by the Brooke government . Lau King Howe Hospital and a number of Methodist schools and churches were built in the 1930s . However , the town of Sibu was burnt to the ground twice in 1889 and in 1928 but it was rebuilt after that . There was no fierce fighting in Sibu during the Japanese occupation of Sarawak in 1941 . The Japanese installed a new Resident at Sibu in June 1942 and Sibu was renamed to " Sibu @- @ shu " in August 1942 . After the Japanese surrender in 1945 , Sarawak was ceded to the British as Crown Colony . This has caused a dissatisfaction amongst a group of young Melanau people in Sibu who were pro @- @ independence . As a result , the second British Governor of Sarawak , Sir Duncan George Stewart was assassinated by Rosli Dhobi when he visited Sibu in December 1949 . Rosli was later hanged to death at Kuching Central Prison in 1950 . Sibu and the Rajang basin also became the centre of communist activities from 1950 and it continued even after the Sarawak independence in 1963 . A Rajang Security Command ( RASCOM ) was then established to curb Communist activities in the area . Communist insurgency in Sarawak was significantly impaired in 1973 and later ended in 1990 . Sibu was upgraded to the municipality status in 1981 . The town received a royal visit in September 2001 . The town is also a gateway to Sarawak Corridor of Renewable Energy ( SCORE ) since 2008 . In 2011 , 110th anniversary of Foochow settlement was celebrated in Sibu .

Sibu is the main tourist gateway to the Upper Rajang River , with its small riverine towns and its many Iban and Orang Ulu longhouses . Among the notable landmarks in Sibu are Wisma Sanyan , the tallest building in Sarawak , Lanang Bridge ( one of the longest river bridge in Sarawak ) and the biggest town square in Malaysia near the Wisma Sanyan . Lau King Howe Memorial Museum is the first and the only medical museum in Malaysia . Sibu Central Market is the biggest indoor market in Sarawak . Among the tourists attractions in Sibu are Sibu Heritage Centre , Tua Pek Kong Temple , Bawang Assan longhouses , Sibu Old Mosque , Jade Dragon Temple , Bukit Aup Jubilee Park , Bukit Lima Forest Park , Sibu Night Market , Borneo Cultural Festival ( BCF ) , and Sibu International Dance Festival ( SIDF ) . Timber and shipbuilding industries are the two major economic activities in Sibu .

= = Etymology = =

Before 1873 , Sibu was called " Maling " , which was named after a bend of the Rajang river called " Tanjung Maling " opposite the present day town of Sibu near the confluence of Igan and Rajang rivers . On 1 June 1873 , the third division of Sarawak ( present day Sibu Division ) was created under Brooke administration . The division was later named after the native rambutan fruit which can be found abundantly at the region . Rambutan is known as " Buah Sibau " in the Iban language .

= = History = =

== Bruneian Empire ==

In the 15th century , the Malays living in southern Sarawak displaced the immigrant Iban people towards the present @-@ day Sibu region . Throughout the 17th and 18th century , the Rajang basin was rife with tribal wars between Ibans and indigenous people in the Rajang basin . Sometimes , the Ibans would form a loose alliance with the Malays to attack the Kayan tribes and perform raids on Chinese and Indonesian ships passing through the region .

== Brooke dynasty ==

James Brooke started to rule Sarawak ( present day Kuching ) in 1841 after he obtained the territory from the Bruneian Empire . In 1853 , Sarawak has expanded its territory to include the Sibu region . Sibu was a small village with several shop @-@ houses . Such shophouses were built with atap roofs , wooden walls , and floors . The earliest inhabitants of Sibu were Melanau people , followed by Ibans , and Malay people in the 1850s . There used to be a Sibu Fort ( Fort Brooke ) , which was built by Rajah Brooke in 1862 . The fort was located at the present day Channel Road in Sibu . It served as an administrative centre for the Brookes in Sibu . However , it was demolished in 1936 . It was common for the White Rajah to build such forts to stake his territorial claim as well as means of protection . The existence of Sibu Fort is proven by historical writings :

There is a fort in Sibu , as indeed there is at most of the river places in Sarawak ...

The fort at Sibu was close to the Resident Dr. Hose 's house and was attacked by Dayaks only a few years ago . Johnson , one of Dr. Hose 's assistants , showed me a very long Dayak canoe capable of seating over one hundred men ...

The river at Sibu was of great width , over a mile across , in fact , and close to the bank is a Malay village , and a bazaar where the wily Chinaman does a thriving trade in the wild produce of the country , and makes huge profits out of the Dayaks and other natives on this river .

On 13 May 1870 , the fort was attacked by 3 @, @ 000 Kanowit Dayaks under the leadership of a Dayak chief named Lintong or Mua @-@ ri . The Dayaks tried to cut through the door of the fort by using axes but they were later defeated by the Brookes . There were 60 wooden shops in Sibu according to Sarawak Gazette published on 24 January 1871 . In 1873 , the third division of Sarawak was created with the town of Sibu included in the division .

The first Chinese arrival in Sibu was in the 1860s . A group of Hokkien people built two rows of 40 shophouses around Sibu Fort ( Fort Brooke ) . The Hokkien Chinese were a minority at that time , mostly consisting of Kekhs and Min Nan people who were doing business . A small number of Chiang Chuan ( ?? ) and Amoy people later arrived at Sibu mostly due to commercial interests . By 1893 , Munan Anak Minggat and his followers arrived in Sibu . They built a longhouse at Pulau Kerto , which is an island at the bend of Rajang River opposite Sibu near the confluence of Rajang and Igan Rivers . He was a loyal war @-@ leader to the Brookes and has helped to quash Iban rebellions around Upper Katibas and Lupar rivers in the 1860s and 1880s . In 1903 , he was the first Iban to operate a rubber plantation in Kuching . He later invested the profits of his rubber plantation to shop @-@ houses and lands in Sibu .

On 10 February 1889 , the town of Sibu was burnt to the ground . This has caused a developmental delay in Sibu . The first hospital in Sibu was built by the Brooke government in 1912 . It was a wooden single @-@ storey building measuring 50 to 60 feet long , with an outpatient department , male and female wards . On 8 March 1928 , Sibu was again consumed by a great fire . However , the Tua Pek Kong Temple remained intact . The locals considered this a miracle .

== Chinese Foochow settlement ==

Wong Nai Siong , a Christian scholar from Gutian County , Fujian province of China , learnt about Sarawak and the White Rajahs through his son @-@ in @-@ law , Dr Lim Boon Keng . Disillusioned with the Qing Dynasty 's heavy handed approach against the Boxer Rebellion where Chinese Christians were specially targeted for murder , Wong Nai Siong decided to search for a new

settlement overseas , focusing on areas in South East Asia . Previously , in September 1899 , he had searched fruitlessly in Malaya and Indonesia .

Wong got an approval from Charles Brooke to look for a new settlement in the Rajang basin . In April 1900 , Wong travelled 13 days up the Rajang River before he decided to choose Sibu as the new settlement for his Foochow clansmen , because the area near Rajang delta would be suitable for growing crops . An agreement was signed on 9 July 1900 between Wong Nai Siong and the Brooke government in Kuching to allow Chinese settlers into the area .

On 21 January 1901 , the first batch of 72 settlers arrived at Sibu and settled at the Sungai Merah area , about 6 km from the town of Sibu at that time . On 16 March 1901 , the second batch of 535 settlers arrived . This day has been called as the " New Foochow Resettlement Day " . In June 1901 , final batch of 511 settlers arrived in Sibu . Sibu has been commonly referred to " New Fuzhou " ( ??? ) since then . This brought the total number of Foochow settlers to 1 @, @ 118 . Wong Nai Siong was appointed as " Kang Choo " ( ?? ) , meaning " port master " for the Foochow settlement in Sibu . The settlers planted sweet potatoes , fruits , sugar cane , vegetables , and coarse grains at high grounds and rice in wetlands . Following their work in Sibu , most settlers choose to stay and called the place as their new home . Together with American pastor , Reverend James Matthew Hoover , Wong was also involved in the building of schools and churches in Sibu such as the Methodist church in 1902 and Ying Hua Methodist school at Sungai Merah in 1903 . From 1903 to 1935 , James Hoover helped to build 41 churches and 40 schools in Sibu . Between 1902 and 1917 , 676 Cantonese people arrived in Sibu .

In 1904 , Wong opposed the sale of opium and the building of a casino in the Sibu area , proposed by the Brooke government . He was later expelled by the Sarawak government due to failure to repay debt . Wong and his family left Sibu in July 1904 . Rev. James Hoover took over Wong 's role to manage the Sibu settlement . He introduced the first rubber seedlings to Sibu in 1904 . He build a Methodist church in 1905 . The church was later renamed to Masland Methodist church in 1925 . Hoover stayed at the Rajang basin for another 31 years until his death from malaria in 1935 at Kuching general hospital . The construction of Lau King Howe Hospital was completed in 1936 to accommodate the growing population of Sibu . The hospital served Sibu people for 58 years until 1994 when a new hospital was constructed in Sibu .

By 1919 , the influence of Chinese Civil War had spread to Sarawak when Kuomintang set up its first branches in Sibu and Kuching . Charles Brooke opposed such political activity by the local Chinese and had expelled several local Kuomintang leaders . However , Charles Vyner Brooke was more receptive of such activities by local Chinese . The local Chinese also participated in a donation drive to aid Kuomintang in its fight against Japanese invasion on China mainland . After World War II ended , local Kuomintang leaders supported the cessation of Sarawak to British as Crown Colony but the local communist leaders were against it . Clashes between the communist and the Kuomintang supporters were common . The Kuomintang branches in Sarawak were finally dissolved in 1949 when the party lost a war on China mainland to the Communist party and retreated to Taiwan . However , clashes between the both sides continued until 1955 when Kuomintang 's newspaper was banned by the colonial British government in May 1951 ; while Communist 's newspaper ceased to exist in 1955 due to financial difficulties .

= = = Japanese occupation = = =

Japanese forces landed in Miri on 16 December 1941 . They conquered Kuching on 24 December 1941 . On 25 December 1941 , Sibu was bombed by 9 Japanese warplanes flown from Kuching . The Resident of Third Division , Andrew Macpherson believed that the Japanese would start to invade Sibu following the air attack . He and his officer later fled Sibu to the upstream of Rajang River . They planned to pass through Batang Ai and trek through the forests to reach Dutch Borneo . However , they were caught and killed by the Japanese at Ulu Moyan , Sarawak .

In the evening of 26 December 1941 , Sibu people started to ransack an unguarded government rice storeroom . Some villagers staying along the Rajang River also came to steal for daily necessities . The situation soon got out of control . British Sime Darby company , Borneo Company

Limited , and Chinese businessmen became the victims of the riots . The Chinese businessman decided to form a security alliance to calm down the chaos . On 29 January 1942 , a Japanese advance team was invited from Kuching to restore order in Sibu . The advance team later fled Sibu and back to Kuching . The power vacuum continued to exist in the third division until 23 June 1942 , when the Japanese headquarter in Kuching sent Senda @-@ Ni @-@ Jiro ( ????? ) to become the new Resident of the Third Division of Sarawak . After he took office , he immediately declared that Imperial Japanese Army would take total control of people 's lives and property . On 8 August 1942 , Sibu was renamed to " Sibu @-@ shu " ( ??? ) .

The Japanese started to impose expensive taxes on Chinese people . The Japanese also started a Sook Ching operation ( ??? ) on suspected anti @-@ Japanese individuals . Under extreme torture , some Chinese individuals gave a false name @-@ list of anti @-@ Japanese groups . These lists of names would later led to death of innocent individuals at Bukit Lima execution ground while some individuals were sent to a prison at Kapit .

= = = British Crown Colony = = =

After the Japanese occupation of Sarawak ended in 1945 , the last Rajah of Sarawak , Charles Vyner Brooke , decided to cede the state as part of the British crown colony . This proposal had met with fierce opposition from the Sarawakians which later developed into the anti @-@ cession movement of Sarawak . Rosli Dhobi was a Sarawak nationalist from Sibu and a member of the Malay Youth Movement ( Gerakan Pemuda Melayu ) where the main objective of the movement was to achieve Sarawak independence from the British rule . At the age of 17 , he assassinated Sir Duncan George Stewart , the second governor of colonial Sarawak on 3 December 1949 . He and three of his friends ( Awang Ramli Amit , Bujang Suntong , and Morshidi Sidek ) were then sentenced to death by hanging and were buried at the Kuching Central Prison on 2 March 1950 .

After 46 years , his remains was moved from the Kuching Central Prison and buried at the Sarawak Heroes Mausoleum near Sibu Town Mosque on 2 March 1996 . To honour his involvement in the anti @-@ colonial movement against the British , he and his associates who were involved in the assassination were later given a full state funeral by Sarawak state government .

= = = Communist insurgency = = =

After the defeat of Kuomintang at mainland China in 1949 , Sibu communist members started to establish themselves in Sarawak in the early 1950s . Huang Sheng Zi ( ??? ) from Bintangor became the president of Borneo Communist Party ( BCP ) . BCP activities mostly concentrated in Sibu , Sarikei , and Bintangor . His brother , Huang Zeng Ting ( ??? ) , who was also a communist , played an important role in the formation of first political party in Sarawak , Sarawak United Peoples ' Party ( SUPP ) and became the party 's first executive secretary . Sarawak Liberation League ( SLL ) was formed in 1954 following the consolidation of BCP with several other communist organisations .

The expansion of communism in Sibu relied heavily on student movements in several schools such as Chung Hua Secondary School ( ??? ) , Catholic High school ( ??? ) , and Wong Nai Siong High School ( ????? ) . Some of the communist strong points in Sibu were at Oya road and Queensway ( now Jalan Tun Abang Haji Openg ) . The movement was also supported by the intelligentsia and workers in Sibu . For example , Dr Wong Soon Kai supported the movement by supplying free medication . Kampung Tanjung Kunyit villagers were among those being harassed into providing food and medical supplies to the communists . On 30 March 1971 , the communists launched an anti @-@ porn movement . In early 1973 , they launched another campaign which opposed tax increase and inflation of prices while endorsing an increase in workers ' wages . Some of the communist volunteers would start to distribute pamphlets at shophouses , schools , and the wharf terminal . The group also started military operation against police stations and naval bases . Communist guerillas would behead anyone who was suspected of being a government informant . The town was put under on @-@ and @-@ off 24 @-@ hour curfews for several months .

On 25 March 1973 , the Sarawak government , led by chief minister Abdul Rahman Ya 'kub started to clamp down on communist activities at the Rajang basin by setting up " Rajang Special Security Area " . A day later , Rajang Security Command ( RASCOM ) was formed as a result of co -@-@ operation of civil , military , and police command headquarters . By August 1973 , several communist members were captured by the government . The captured members provided crucial details for the government to further impair the communist movement . On 22 September 1973 , Abdul Rahman started " Operation Judas " . A total of 29 people from the town of Sibu were captured . Among those captured were doctors , lawyers , businessmen , teachers , and one former member of parliament . Following the surrender of a communist movement in Sri Aman on 21 October 1973 , the communist activities at Rajang basin began to subside and would not be able to recover to its previous strength . Communist movement of Sarawak finally ended in 1990 .

= = = Recent developments = = =

On 1 November 1981 , the local council which administered the town of Sibu ( Sibu Urban District Council ) was upgraded to Sibu Municipal Council . The area of administration of Sibu expanded from 50 km2 to 129 @. @ 5 km2 . In 1994 , Sibu Airport and Sibu Hospital were constructed . In 2001 , Wisma Sanyan construction was completed . Yang di @-@ Pertuan Agong of Malaysia , Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah visited Sibu from 16 to 17 September 2001 to close a month @-@ long Malaysian Independence Day Celebration at Sibu Town Square .

Between 1999 and 2004 , Sibu Municipal Council decided to adopt the swan as a symbol of Sibu to inspire the people to work towards the goal of becoming a city in the future . Since then , a Swan statue has been erected near the Sibu wharf terminal and another statue is located in the town centre . Sibu is also nicknamed as " Swan City " . This came from a legend where famine in Sibu ended when a flock of swans flew through the skies of Sibu . There is another story where the Sibu Chinese immigrants regarded Sibu Melanau people as " Go " people because a staple food of Melanau staple food was " Sago " . Coincidentally , " Go " pronunciation is similar to Hokkien pronunciation of " Swan " . This reminded Sibu Chinese immigrants of " Swan River " back in Fuzhou , China . Therefore , they decided to name the Rajang River as " Swan River " ( ?? ) .

In 2006 , the Lanang Bridge connecting Sibu to Sarikei was opened . Sibu also functions as the gateway to Sarawak Corridor of Renewable Energy ( SCORE ) . The town of Sibu and its surrounding areas has been the subject of several developmental projects since 2008 . In 2011 , the 110th anniversary of Foochow settlement was celebrated in Sibu . However , Sibu 's population growth and economic development is relatively slow when compared to Miri and Bintulu .

= = Government = =

Sibu has two members of parliament representing the two parliamentary constituencies of the town : Lanang ( constituency no : P.211 ) and Sibu ( constituency no : P.212 ) . The town also elects five representatives into the Sarawak State Assembly : Bukit Assek , Dudong , Bawang Assan , Pelawan , and Nangka .

= = = Local authorities = = =

A local council was first set up in Sibu on 31 January 1925 during the era of Brooke administration . It was later upgraded to Sibu Urban District Council ( SUDC ) in 1952 . After 29 years of administration , SUDC was upgraded to Sibu Municipal Council ( SMC ) on 1 November 1981 . SMC administers the town with a jurisdiction area of 129 @. @ 5 km2 from the banks of Rajang River to Salim road uptown . SUDC and SMC headquarters were housed inside the Sibu Town Hall for 38 years from 1962 to 2000 . SMC headquarters was later relocated to Wisma Sanyan in 2001 . The chairman of SMC is Tiong Thai King . The outskirts of Sibu such as Sibu Jaya and Selangau District are administered by Sibu Rural District Council ( SRDC ) covering a total area of 6 @, @ 000 km2 . SRDC headquarters is also located inside the Wisma Sanyan tower .

Sibu Islamic Complex opened in September 2014 . It houses Sibu Resident Office , Sibu District Office , State Treasury Office , Social Welfare Department , and State Islamic Religious Department ( JAIS ) .

=== International relations ===

As of 2015 , Sibu is twinned to fifteen places in China :

=== Geography ===

Sibu town is located near the Rajang delta at the confluence of Rajang and Igan rivers . Peat swamp forests and alluvial plains are particularly prevalent in the Sibu Division . The Sibu town is located on a deep peat soil . This has caused problems in infrastructure development because buildings and roads will slowly sink into the ground after its construction completion . The location of Sibu in lowland peat swamps have subjected it to frequent floods which was about 1 to 3 times per year . Therefore , Sibu Flood Mitigation project was started to relieve the area from the floods . The highest elevation in Sibu is a peak at Bukit Aup Jubilee Park measuring 59 m above sea level .

=== Climate ===

Sibu has a tropical rainforest climate according to Köppen climate classification . The Sibu town has high temperatures of 30 ? 33 ° C ( 86 ? 91 ° F ) and low temperatures of 22 @. @ 5 ? 23 ° C ( 72 @. @ 5 ? 73 @. @ 4 ° F ) . Annual rainfall is approximately 3 @, @ 200 millimetres ( 130 in ) , with relative humidity between 80 and 87 % . Sibu receives between 4 and 5 hours of sunlight per day with yearly average daily values of global solar radiation of 15 @. @ 2 MJ / m<sup>2</sup> . Cloud cover over Sibu reduces during the months of June and July ( 6 @. @ 75 Oktas ) but increases from November to February ( 7 Oktas ) .

=== Demographics ===

The change in Sibu 's population since 1947 is shown below :

=== Ethnicity ===

According to the 2010 Malaysian census , the town of Sibu ( excluding suburban area ) has total population of 162 @, @ 676 . Chinese ( 63 @. @ 4 % , 101 @, @ 019 ) is the largest ethnic group in the town , followed by indigenous people ( 35 @. @ 7 % , 56 @, @ 949 ) , Indians ( 0 @. @ 5 % , 598 ) , and non @- @ Malaysians ( 3 @, @ 236 ) . Among the indigenous tribes , there are Iban ( 26 @, @ 777 ) , Malays ( 16 @, @ 646 ) , Melanau ( 10 @, @ 028 ) , Bidayuh ( 1 @, @ 337 ) , and other indigenous tribes ( 874 ) . A majority of the non @- @ Malaysians are Indonesian workers employed at plywood and sawmills factories . There are also a number of illegal workers employed by syndicates to tap rubber . A number of foreign Chinese nationals and Indonesians are also working in massage parlours .

=== Languages ===

Since the majority of the town population is made up of Foochow and Hokkien Chinese , Mandarin Chinese , Fuzhou dialect and Hokkien Chinese are commonly spoken . The majority of Sibu Chinese are multilingual and are able to speak both Malay and English . Indigenous languages such as Sarawak Malay , Melanau , Bidayuh and Iban are also spoken .

=== Religion ===

The majority of the Chinese population in Sibu are Christians while other Chinese practice Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism. Some of the Iban in Sibu are Christians. Malays and Melanau are Muslims. Respective religious groups are free to hold their processions in the town. Several notable religious buildings in the town are Sacred Heart Cathedral, Masland Methodist Church, Tua Pek Kong Temple, and An @-@ Nur Mosque. Yu Lun San Tien En Si ( ????? ) or Jade Dragon Temple is located at KM26 Sibu @-@ Bintulu Road. The temple combined Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism under one roof. It is claimed to be the largest temple in South East Asia.

## == Economy ==

In the early days, Chinese Foochow settlers in Sibu tried to convert the town into a rice cultivation centre. However, this vision did not materialise because the soil was not suitable for rice cultivation. In August 1909, Charles Brooke agreed to grant land titles to Sibu Chinese farmers and encouraged them to cultivate rubber plantations. The rise of rubber prices from 1909 to 1911 had encouraged another 2 @, @ 000 Foochow settlers to come to Sibu. The demand for rubber rose again during Korean War between 1950 and 1953 and has benefited Sibu rubber plantations. Local farmers later used the profits from rubber plantations into setting up shops at Sungai Merah and Durin bazaars and involve in more profitable timber industry. During the Sarawak Communist Insurgency in the 1970s, rural farmers had to abandon their rubber plantations because of martial law declared by the state government which forbade them for helping the communists operating in the jungles.

The timber industry in Sibu flourished during the 1940s and 1950s and its economic importance surpassed rubber plantations in the 1960s. Several global timber conglomerates such as the Rimbunan Hijau Group, Ta Ann Holdings Berhad, Sanyan Group, WTK, The Sarawak Company, and Asia Plywood Company set up their headquarters in Sibu. Timber processing and exports become the main economic driving force in Sibu. Development of the timber industry in Sibu has been supported by loans given by the earliest Chinese banks in Sibu such as Wah Tat Bank ( 1929 ), Hock Hua Bank ( 1952 ), and Kong Ming Bank ( 1965 ). Following the introduction of " Banking and Financial Institutions Act of 1989 " ( BAFIA ) by the Malaysian federal government, Kong Ming Bank was acquired by EON Bank in 1992, followed by the merger of Wah Tat Bank with Hong Leong Bank and the merger of Hock Hua Bank with Public Bank Berhad in the year 2000. In 1958, HSBC started its banking operation in Kuching, followed by Sibu in 1959. It was responsible for supporting several timber conglomerates in Sibu such as WTK and Ta Ann Holdings Berhad. In November 2013, HSBC decided to close down all its commercial banking sectors in Sarawak after the bank was alleged for supporting non @-@ sustainable logging operations in Sarawak.

Shipbuilding business in Sibu started in the 1930s to supply wooden boats for river and coastal navigation. It flourished in 1970s and 1980s along with increase in exports of tropical timber from Sarawak. It later shifted its focus into steel boat building. Some of the vessels in demand are tug boats for towing logs, barges for carrying logs, anchor handlers, Offshore Support Vessels ( OSV ), ferries, and express boats for carrying passengers. Most of the boats built are of small and medium in size. There are a total of 40 shipyards in Sibu. A majority of the workers are welders. In 2003, 17 of the shipyards were relocated to Rantau Panjang Integrated Shipyard Shipbuilding Industrial Zone, Sibu. This included Yong Chin Kui, Far East, and TuongAik. The boats built in Sibu are often exported to neighbouring state of Sabah, Peninsular Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and United Arab Emirates. In the year 1991, a total of US \$ 50 million was earned for shipbuilding business in Sibu. In 2011, Sibu ship exports stood at RM 525 million. Sibu is also the only city in Sarawak to possess a vehicle assembly plant. The plant is operated by N.B. Heavy Industries Sdn. Bhd., and it has been assembling BeiBen, International and JAC commercial vehicles since 2010. Sibu has two industrial areas: Upper Lanang Industrial estate ( Mixed Light Industries ) and Rantau Panjang Ship Building Industrial Zone.

There are two river ports at Sibu: Sibu port and Sungai Merah port, located at 113 km and 116 km along from the mouth of the Rajang river, respectively. Sibu port has maximum gross register

tonnage ( GRT ) of 10 @, @ 000 tonnes while Sungai Merah port has a maximum GRT of 2 @, @ 500 tonnes . Sibu port is used mainly for handling timber and agricultural products while Sungai Merah port is used for handling fuel oil products . Rajang Port Authority ( RPA ) is located at Sibu port operation centre . RPA has earned a total revenue of RM 30 @. @ 1 million for the financial year of 2012 .

= = Transport = =

= = = Land = = =

Roads in Sibu are under the jurisdiction of Sibu Municipal Council ( SMC ) . Some of the notable roads in Sibu are Brooke Drive , Archer Street , and Wong Nai Siong Street . Kwong Ann roundabout is located near Brooke Drive in town centre while Bukit Lima roundabout is located near Wong King Huo Street in the uptown area . Sibu is also connected to other major towns and cities in Sarawak such as Kuching by Pan Borneo Highway . In early 2011 , Sibu @- @ Tanjung Manis Highway was opened . In April 2006 , Lanang Bridge connecting Sibu to Sarikei and Bintangor across the Rajang River was opened . Toll @- @ free Durin Bridge was opened in October 2006 connecting Sibu to other places such as Julau . The Durin bridge is located near the satellite township of Sibu Jaya .

= = = Public transport = = =

The town of Sibu has two bus stations . The local bus station is located at the waterfront near the Sibu wharf terminal . The long @- @ distance bus station is located at Pahlawan Street , near the Sungai Antu region . Jaya Li Hua Commercial Centre and Medan Hotel are located next to the long @- @ distance bus station . The local bus station at the waterfront serves the town area , Sibu Airport , Sibu Jaya , Kanowit , and Sarikei . Lanang Bus serves the connection between the local bus station and the long @- @ distance bus station while Panduan Hemat buses serves Sibu Airport and satellite township of Sibu Jaya . On the other hand , the long @- @ distance bus station serves Kuching , Bintulu , and Miri via the Pan Borneo Highway . Some of the buses serving at the long @- @ distance bus station are Biaramas , Suria Bus , and Borneo Highway Express .

Taxis in Sibu operates 24 hours a day . Taxis can be found at the airport , big hotels , taxi stands at the wharf terminal , and at Lintang Street . Taxi services are also offered for travel to nearby regions such as Mukah , Bawang Assan , Sarikei , and Bintangor . Kong Teck car rental is available at the airport .

= = = Water = = =

Sibu wharf terminal is located at Kho Peng Long Street near the Rajang river waterfront . It provides an alternative means of transport for the people living along the Rajang River . Among the destinations that can be reached by express boats from Sibu includes Belaga , Dalat , Daro , Kapit , Kanowit , Kuching , Sarikei , and Song . Sibu floating market which is made up of several large boats can also be seen from the wharf terminal . The boats are responsible to carry groceries to rural communities living along the river and do not have access to roads . There used to be a Pandaw River Cruise which operated along the Rajang River from Sibu to Pelagus Rapids Resort but its operation was terminated in 2012 due to logistical and operational difficulties .

= = = Air = = =

Sibu Airport was built in 1994 , located at 25 km from the town of Sibu and 1 km from the satellite township of Sibu Jaya . In 2008 , the airport handled 831 @, @ 772 passengers on 14 @, @ 672 flights and 735 metric tonnes of cargo . In April 2010 , the airport was allocated RM130 million by the



Malaysian federal government for the upgrade of the terminal building . The airport terminal building is the second largest in Sarawak after the Kuching International Airport . The airport has a 2 @. @ 75 km runway and it serves Malaysia Airlines , Air Asia , and MASWings with direct flights to all major towns in Sarawak , such as Miri , Bintulu , Kuching , Kota Kinabalu , Kuala Lumpur , and Johor Bahru . In October 2011 , Firefly airline terminated its services in Sarawak while Malindo Air terminated its services to Sibu Airport in June 2014 due to low number of passengers .

= = Other utilities = =

= = = Courts of law , legal enforcement , and crime = = =

The court complex is located at Tun Abang Haji Openg Street , Sibu . It contains the High Court , Sessions Court , and the Magistrate Court . The Sibu town also has a Syariah Court located at Kampung Nyabor Street with jurisdictions in Sibu , Kanowit and Selangau districts . There is one district police headquarters at Tun Abang Haji Openg Street . The Sibu central police station is located at Kampung Nyabor Street . Sungai Merah police station and Lanang police station are also located in Sibu town area . There is also a prison in Sibu .

Tiong King Sing , an MP from Bintulu , has voiced concerns about gangsterism in Sarawak especially the Sibu town back in 2007 . As a result , " Operation Cantas Kenyalang " was started in 2008 to clamp down gangsterism in Sarawak . In September 2013 , Sibu police chief announced that " Lee Long " , " Sungai Merah " , and " Tua Chak Lee " gangs ceased to exist and Sibu town is free from organised gangsterism . There were 25 gangster groups in Sibu back in 2007 ; there are 7 groups as of 9 October 2013 . In September 2014 , Royal Malaysian Police headquarter at Bukit Aman , Kuala Lumpur , stated that 16 local gangster groups are still active in Sarawak especially in Sibu but they do not pose any serious security threats . This raised new concerns that such groups still pose a serious security risk in Sibu town and Sarawak in general .

= = = Healthcare = = =

Sibu Hospital is the second largest hospital in Sarawak and the secondary referral hospital for the central region of Sarawak which includes 5 divisions : Sibu , Kapit , Mukah , Sarikei , and Betong . There are 8 district hospitals in these divisions that are referred to Sibu . Sibu Hospital is also a teaching hospital for undergraduates from Universiti Malaysia Sarawak ( UNIMAS ) . There are also two private medical centres in Sibu : KPJ Sibu Specialist Medical Centre and Rejang Medical Centre .

Lanang and Oya Polyclinics are located in Sibu . There are also five 1Malaysia clinics in Sibu . The Bandong 1Malaysia clinic became the first 1Malaysia Clinic nationwide to offer echocardiography screening . There are also several pharmacy outlets in Sibu : B Y Chan pharmacy , Central Pharmacy , Lot 9 Pharmacy near by Delta Mall and Cosway Pharmacy .

= = = Education = = =

Sibu has about 85 primary schools and 23 secondary schools . The Sibu primary and secondary schools under the National Education System are managed by Sibu District Education Office located at Brooke Drive , Sibu . The oldest school in Sibu is Sacred Heart High School which was formed in 1902 by Rev. Father Hopfgarther . This was followed by Rev James Hoover where he formed Methodist Anglo @-@ Chinese School in 1903 . The school later evolved into Methodist primary and secondary schools in 1947 . Uk Daik primary school , built in 1926 , is one of the oldest Chinese primary schools in Sibu . Built in 1954 , St Mary primary school is the oldest English stream school in Sibu Division . Sibu also has five Chinese independent schools . The most notable ones are Catholic High School ( 1961 ) and Wong Nai Siong High School ( 1967 ) . All the Chinese independent schools in Sibu are under the purview of The United Association of Private Chinese

Secondary School , Sibu Division , which is in turn under the purview of Sarawak Dong Zong and Dong Zong headquarters in Selangor . All the Chinese independent schools students will sit for Unified Examination Certificate ( UEC ) In 2013 , Woodlands International School opened in Sibu offering Cambridge International Examinations ( CIE ) course .

In 1997 , United College Sarawak ( UCS ) was established in Sibu at Teku Street . It was renamed to Kolej Laila Taib ( KLT ) in 2010 . This college offers business , accounting , civil engineering , architecture , Electrical and Electronic Engineering and quantity surveying courses . University College of Technology Sarawak ( UCTS ) , located just opposite the KLT , commenced its maiden intake of new undergraduate students in September 2013 . This university is established to provide human capital for the development of Sarawak Corridor of Renewable Energy ( SCORE ) . In 1967 , Pilley Memorial Secondary School was established in Sibu . In April 1991 , the school was upgraded to Methodist Pilley Institute ( MPI ) and it started to offer accounting , business management , and computer science courses .

Sarawak Maritime Academy was formed under the Shin Yang Group of Companies . It offers Diploma in Nautical ( DNS ) and Diploma in Marine Engineering courses . Sacred Heart College started to offer Diploma in Hotel Management courses in 2010 . Rimbunan Hijau ( RH ) Academy was established in 2005 and it started to offer training in automotive , oil palm plantations , hospitality , and business management in 2007 . Sibu Nursing College and ITA college offers nursing @-@ related programmes . In 1954 , the Methodist Theological School was established in Sibu . It is affiliated with Methodist Church in Malaysia and is accredited by the Association for Theological Education in South East Asia ( ATESEA ) .

Long distance study centres ( Pendidikan Jarak Jauh , PJJ ) in Sibu are opened by Universiti Utara Malaysia ( UUM ) at Lanang and Universiti Putra Malaysia ( UPM ) at Sibu Jaya . Universiti Malaysia Sarawak ( UNIMAS ) opened its Centre for Academic Information Services ( CAIS ) - Integrated Learning Facilities ( ILF ) at Sibu for undergraduate medical students undergoing their training at Sibu Hospital . Open University Malaysia ( OUM ) also opens a Sibu Learning Centre .

= = = Libraries = = =

The first public library in Sibu was started as Methodist Missionary Library in the 1950s . It was taken over by Sibu Urban District Council ( SUDC ) in 1955 . It was moved to the present location at Keranji road in 1986 as SMC public library . The library underwent a major upgrade in 2014 . Another public library named " Ling Zi Ming Cultural centre " ( ?????? ) was established by the local Chinese community under the Sibu Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry ( SCCCCI , ??????? ) in 1980 . It houses Chinese books collections . Another library named Sibu Jaya public library is located at the satellite township of Sibu Jaya , 26 km from the town of Sibu .

= = Culture and leisure = =

= = = Attractions and recreational spots = = =

= = = Cultural = = =

Since 2005 , Borneo Cultural Festival ( BCF ) is held by Sibu Municipal Council ( SMC ) in July every year at Sibu Town Square , for a period of 10 days . It is a celebration of traditional music , dances , contests , beauty pageant , food stalls , fun fairs , and product exhibitions . There are 3 separate stages for Iban , Chinese , and Malay performances . It draws around 20 @, @ 000 people every year . BCF was stopped briefly in 2011 before it was resumed in 2012 . Sibu has hosted the National Chinese Cultural Festival ( ??????? ) twice : in 2001 ( 18th Festival ) and 2009 ( 26th Festival ) which lasted for 3 days . Among the activities organised during this festival were cultural village ( a venue designated to showcase cultural heritages from various ethnicity ) , lantern riddles ,

cultural dances , Chinese songs , dragon dances , and Chinese calligraphy . Sibuan International Dance Festival ( SIDF ) was started in 2012 . It is usually held between June to September every year , which lasted for 5 days . It attracted around 14 to 18 international dance troupes for performances in Sibuan . It includes activities such as workshops , conferences , outdoor performances , and a dance concert .

There are 9 Bawang Assan Iban longhouses which are 40 minutes away from the town of Sibuan . The longhouses can be dated back from 18th century traditional longhouses to present day modern longhouses . Visitors can enjoy traditional rice wine tuak and other delicacies such as sarang semut , kain kebat , and pansuh . These Iban longhouses showcase their lifestyles , customs , traditional dance , and music . Homestays are also available at these longhouses . There are 3 ceramic factories in Sibuan . Ceramic designs mainly depicts traditional culture of the natives .

===== Historical =====

Sibuan Heritage Trail was launched in 2012 to include 9 landmarks in Sibuan , which are : Sibuan Heritage Centre , Sibuan Old Mosque ( Masjid Al @-@ Qadim , built in 1883 ) , Warriors Memorial Site ( present burial site of Rosli Dhobi , near An @-@ Nur Mosque ) , oldest Muslim cemetery , Lau King Howe Hospital Memorial Museum , Hoover Memorial Square , Tua Pek Kong Temple , and Sibuan Central Market . All the 9 landmarks can be reached by 2 kilometres of walking distance from each other . Sibuan Heritage Centre is housed in a former Sibuan Town Hall . It displays the early beginnings of Sibuan , Iban and Malay cultures , with Chinese porcelain and clay vases which can be dated back to the era of Imperial China . Tua Pek Kong Temple is a Buddhist and Taoist Temple which was established in 1870 . The 7 @-@ storey Guanyin Pagoda ( Goddess of Mercy ) was built in the 1980s . The Lau King Howe Hospital Memorial Museum is the only medical museum in Malaysia . It displays dental , surgical , and obstetric services offered by the hospital from the 1950s to 1990s . Sungai Merah ( Red River ) Heritage Walk is the landmark of the earliest settlement of Foochow Chinese in Sibuan in 1901 . There is a walking trail at the Sungai Merah river front leading up to Wong Nai Siong Memorial Garden . James Hoover Memorial Garden is also located near the Sungai Merah Heritage Walk .

===== Leisure and conservation areas =====

Bukit Aup Jubilee Park was opened in March 1993 . It is located 10 km away from the town of Sibuan . It has a total undulating land of 24 acres ( 0 @.@ 097 km<sup>2</sup> ) . The park was the two consecutive winner of National Landscaping Competition Award in 1997 and 1998 . The highest peak in the park , Bukit Aup ( 59 m above sea level ) was originally a traditional burial ground for Iban warriors . The burial ground has since been relocated to a nearby village for the development of the park . However , the Iban community still regarded the peak as a sacred place and frequently brought offerings for the benevolent spirit named Nanga Bari .

Bukit Lima peat swamp forest reserve , covering 390 hectares ( 3 @.@ 9 km<sup>2</sup> ) , was gazetted as protected area since October 1929 . In January 2001 , Bukit Lima Forest Park covering 219 hectares ( 2 @.@ 19 km<sup>2</sup> ) was constructed in the peat swamp forest and opened to the public . It has two separate trails of wooden planks of 3 @.@ 5 km and 2 @.@ 5 km long respectively . The park also has a 3 @-@ storey concrete watchtower for sightseeing . The park is managed by Sarawak Forestry Corporation ( SFC ) .

Sibuan has other urban and suburban parks such as Kutien Memorial Garden , Hin Hua Memorial Park , and Permai Lake Garden . The Kutien Memorial Garden located at Lanang Street is managed by Sibuan Kutien Association . The Kutien Garden showcase the association 's history and events . The Hin Hua Memorial Park is established by Sibuan Heng Hua community where their earliest arrival in Sibuan was in 1911 . YMCA Camp Resort is located away from the town . It provides facilities for camping and retreat .

===== Sports =====

Sibu has one stadium named Tun Zaidi Stadium at Old Airport Road . A new indoor stadium construction is also planned to replace the old stadium .

Sibu BASE jump is an annual event that is held in September every year since 2009 , which lasts for 3 days . Night jumps are also performed if the weather is fair . The BASE jumping usually takes place from the top of Wisma Sanyan which is 126 m high and is the tallest building in Sarawak . The number of jumpers has increased from 11 jumpers in 2009 to 45 jumpers in 2014 . In 2013 , world 's first tandem BASE jumping from a building ( Wisma Sanyan in Sibu ) was done by Sean Chuma ( world @-@ renowned BASE jumper ) , carrying Rudy Anoi ( chief executive of Sarawak Tourism Board , Sibu branch ) with him .

Since 2001 , Sarawak Health Marathon is held every year at Bukit Aup Jubilee Park , Sibu . The run can be divided into 6 categories , including 21 km Men ? s and Ladies ? Open , 7 km Men ? s Fun Run and Boys ? Junior , 2 @.@ 5 km Girls ? Junior , and 2 @.@ 5 km Ladies Fun Run .

== == Other sights == ==

Sibu Gateway is a landmark at the downtown area which includes an illuminated fountain , a garden , and a Swan statue surrounded by 12 Chinese zodiac signs . Rajang Esplanade is one of the 22 community parks in Sibu , mostly donated by Chinese clan associations . Rajang Esplanade has a walkway along the Rajang riverfront from Sibu wharf terminal to Kingwood Hotel with Hii 's association playground along the way . It offers a scene of muddy river with timber barges , express boats , and fishing boats commuting on the river . Several mural paintings depicting historical lifestyles and local cuisines are found at various locations in Sibu .

== == Other events == ==

Sibu Bike Week is an event that is held in December every year since 2011 . It is a 3 @-@ day event aimed to bring all the enthusiasts of motocyclists , cars , audio systems , BMX , Zumba , and paintball to share their hobbies and experiences . It has attracted about 2 @,@ 000 bikers around the world . Among the activities held during Sibu Bike Week are Miss Sibu Bike Week Pageant , Tattoo queen and King competition . Borneo Talent Award ( BTA ) is held every year in Sibu since 2011 at Sibu Civic Centre . It showcases performances of singing , dancing , acrobatics , mimicry , playing musical instruments , magic show , and art performances .

== == Shopping == ==

Sibu features a number of shopping malls : Wisma Sanyan , Medan Mall , Sing Kwong Shopping Complex , Farley Departmental Store , Delta Mall , Star Mega Mall , Everwin and Giant Hypermarket .

The Sibu Night Market was established in 1973 . It was situated in the town centre . Local traders will usually set up their mobile stalls from 5 pm to 10 pm every day . The stalls offer household goods , footwear , fashion items , and varieties of food . In August 2012 , the market was relocated to Butterfly Garden at Cross Road near the Tua Pek Kong Temple to ease traffic jams .

The Sibu Central Market is the biggest indoor market in Sarawak . It is located at Channel Street , opposite the Sibu wharf terminal . The central market has food stalls on top floor with dry and wet market on the ground floor . Among the items on sale in this market are exotic fruits , jungle produce , handicrafts , Bario rice , and poultry . There are 1 @,@ 100 stalls in the market on weekdays and 400 @-@ 500 additional stalls on weekends when the indigenous people from the interior brought their jungle produce to the market .

== Cuisine ==

The " Bandong walk " project was started in 2012 and is scheduled to be completed in 2015 . This

project is set to make the Bandong area a halal food hub of local delicacies for the locals and the tourists . Common dishes in Sibü include :

Kam Pua noodle ( also known as ??? ) ? noodles tossed in pork lard or vegetable oil , fried shallots , spring onions and sometimes soy sauce and / or chili sauce . It is available at almost all coffee shops and food stalls . Halal kampua noodles are available .

Du?ng Mian Ngu ( also known as ??? ) ? a savoury soup with soft rice cake is available at several stalls as a hefty breakfast or a late night supper . It is often served with fish balls and squid .

Bian Nyuk ( also known as ?? , ?? , or Wonton ) ? a meat dumpling which can be served dry or in a soup .

Gom bian ( also known as ?? or Kompia ) ? a Foochow delicacy made with flour , baked in an oven and eaten either with or without meat and gravy . It is somewhat similar to a bagel . However , it can be either in a crisp or soft version . Traditional soft kompia dipped in pork sauce can be sought from Chung Hua road and the Sunday Market at Pedada road . There are deep fried variations available throughout the town of Sibü .

You Zhar Gui ( also known as ??? , ?? , Yau Char Kway , or Kueh Cakoi in Malay ) ? deep fried twin dough batter often dipped in soup or chili sauce . It is often eaten together with porridge or " Bak Kut Teh " ? ??? ? .

Bek Ding Yuok ( also known as ??? or Pek Ting Ngor ) : The soup of eight essences ? Chinese soup containing at least eight herbal ingredients .

Rojak Kassim ? Indian @-@ style rojak ( also known as pasembur or Mamak Rojak ) .

= = Notable people = =

= = = Politics = = =

Tun Datuk Patinggi Abang Muhammad Salahuddin Abang Barieng , 3rd and 6th Governor of Sarawak .

Tun Datuk Patinggi Ahmad Zaidi Adruce , 5th Governor of Sarawak .

Tun Datuk Patinggi Tuanku Bujang Tuanku Othman , 2nd Governor of Sarawak .

YBhg . Tan Sri Dr. Wong Soon Kai , former Deputy Chief Minister of Sarawak and former President of Sarawak United People 's Party ( SUPP ) .

Datuk Robert Lau Hoi Chew , former Member of Parliament for Sibü and former Malaysian Deputy Minister of Transport .

YB Datuk Tiong Thai King , former Member of Parliament for Lanang and chairman of Sibü Municipal Council ( SMC ) .

Wong Ho Leng , former Member of Parliament for Sibü , Sarawak State Legislative Member for Bukit Assek and former Chairman of Sarawak Democratic Action Party ( DAP ) .

YB Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof , Minister of Public Works and Member of Parliament for Petra Jaya , Kuching .

YBhg . Dato ' Awang Bemee Awang Ali Basah , former Sarawak State Legislative Member for Nangka and former Chairman of Kuching Port Authority .

YBhg . Vincent Goh Chung Siong , former Sarawak State Legislative Member for Pelawan and Chairman of Rajang Port Authority .

YB Dr. Annuar Rapae , Assistant Minister for Science Research and Biotechnology and Sarawak State Legislative Member for Nangka .

= = = Business = = =

Tan Sri Datuk Sir Tiong Hiew King , Chairman of Rimbunan Hijau Group and elder brother of Datuk Tiong Thai King . He was listed as one of the 10 richest Malaysians and also one of the Malaysians receiving the knighthood from the British Government .

Datuk Lau Hui Siong , Founder of See Hua Group which publishes See Hua Daily News , The

Borneo Post , and Utusan Borneo .

= = = Others = = =

Ting Ming Siong , a food stall operator , known as the Guinness World Record Holder for the " Most wedding attended by a best man " . He attended 1 @, @ 393 weddings from September 1975 to 2 February 2006 )

Gloria Ting Mei Ru , Miss Malaysia World 2004 .

Datuk Dr. Matnor Daim , former Director of Education , Malaysia and recipient of National Education Leadership 2011 Award in conjunction of National Level Teachers Day 2011 in Kuching .