



Let's Learn About
Tun Fatimah
Hashim

Born to Change the World

Tun Fatimah Hashim was born in Johor, Malaysia on December 25, 1924.

She had 15 brothers and sisters! It was hard for her father to support everyone financially, so young Fatimah was raised and taken care of by her aunt and uncle.

Her uncle was a muezzin, or a person who calls the adhān, telling Muslims it is time for prayer.

Her uncle taught her about Islam, but wanted her to learn all about math, science, reading, and writing, too.



No Girls Allowed

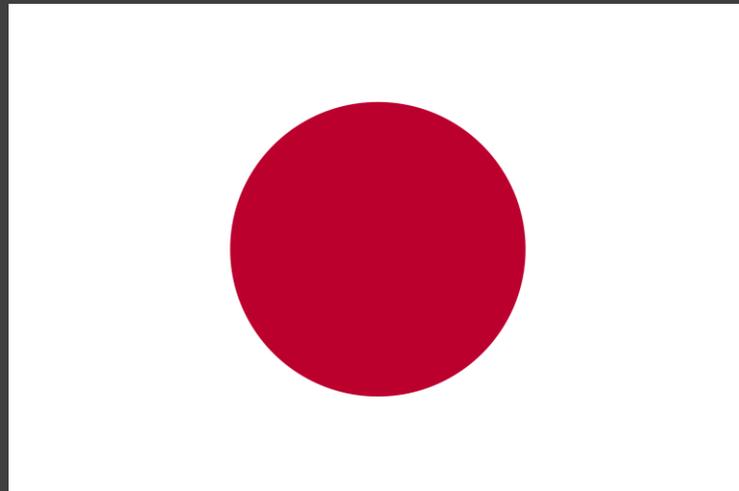
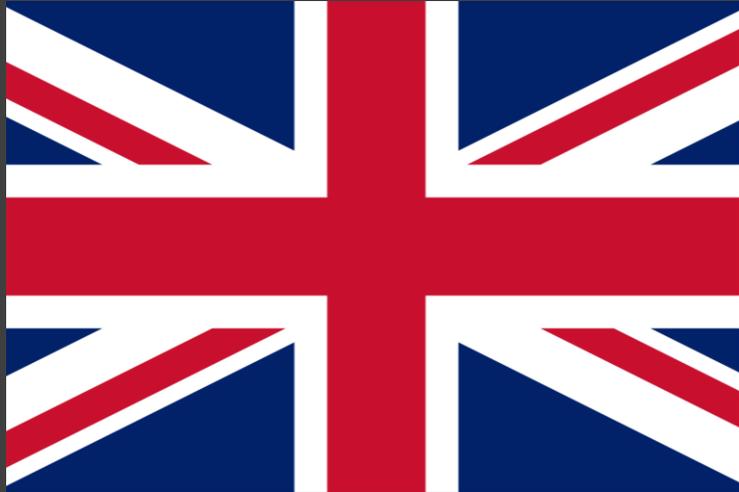


There was no girls' school nearby for her to attend, so Fatimah's uncle had to put her in an all-boys school!

Fatimah loved learning and decided she wanted to be a teacher someday.

When she turned 13, she returned to her father's house and continued to study. Her father wanted her to learn about Islam and her school subjects, just like her uncle did.

Freedom



Many years ago, Malaysia was ruled by the British. When World War II started, it was taken over by the Japanese military.

Fatimah had to stop going to school when World War II began.

She wondered: would she ever go to school again?

Tough Times



Things were difficult for Malaysians during the war.

Food and jobs were scarce.

Things were expensive to buy, even for people who had jobs.

Fatima wondered: *would Malaysia ever be free?*

Her Own Family



During the war, Fatimah married a young man named Abdul Kadir. He was a government officer. He wanted Fatimah to always do the best she could in whatever she did. He saw her brilliance and wanted her to use it.

They eventually had six children.

Equal Work, Unequal Pay



Fatimah and her husband worked side by side to plant and grow rice. Fatimah saw men and women doing the same hard work, but women were paid less than men!

Fatima wondered: *would women ever be treated as equals to men?*

Inspired By Faith



Studying Islam since childhood led Fatimah to believe that there was a better way of running things in Malaysia.

Inspired by what she learned about how Muslim men and women before her had changed their communities, Fatimah set out to change her country.

Uniting the Women



Fatimah knew that to win equal rights for women, she would first have to unite, or bring together, the women of Malaysia. So, that's what she did.

Fatimah got women together for workshops, social clubs, and even cooking groups. She took every chance she could to get women to meet, talk, and exchange ideas.

Success!



Fatimah's efforts worked. Malaysian women became more confident and wanted to be involved in their country. The number of women in the United Malays National Organization grew to 20,000!

This was just the beginning of Fatimah's amazing work. Malaysia won its independence in August of 1957. Things would never be the same.

A New Malaysia



Fatimah knew this was her chance to help make Malaysia a better country. In order to do this, she would have to be one of the people in charge of making the rules and laws.

Fatimah decided to run for office.

Women's Rights



So many people voted for Fatimah in the elections, that she had a landslide victory. In 1969, she became the first woman in Malaysia to be elected into the government.

She got right to work writing laws for women to get the same pay for doing the same work as men, and laws that allowed women to own land.

She even made August 25th a special day called National Women's Day!

Love for Learning



Fatimah remembered how much she loved school. She wanted for all Malaysians what her uncle and her father had wanted for her: the chance to attend school and to learn about Islam.

She especially wanted all Malaysians to be able to read. She built schools for children and adults.

Fatimah also had libraries built all over Malaysia.

Helping the Poor



Fatimah never forgot how hard it was for her when she was poor. She did not want any people to be poor in Malaysia. Her faith taught her to stand up for the poor.

She worked to build water systems, roads, to create jobs for people, make good use of Malaysia's resources, and much more.

Honored by her Country



In 2003, Fatimah was awarded the title of 'Tun', the highest award that can be given by the Malaysian government to a Malaysian person.

Tun Fatimah changed the lives of many people, and this was a great honor for her.

Gone, but not Forgotten



Tun Fatimah Hashim passed away on January 9, 2010. Many schools, roads, and places in Malaysia are named after her. She is remembered for all the positive changes she made in Malaysia for women, education, healthcare, and poor people.

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