



Mount Kinabalu's peak

The majestic Mount Kinabalu, rising from the mist with its rugged terrain and rich biodiversity has always been a significant feature in the lives and legends of the early KadazanDusun. The most famous legend to emerge from this community is of the Kinabalu dragon that possessed a *Butiza* or luminous jewel that he used as a toy. It is said that on moonlit nights people could see this bright gem being tossed again and again on the dragon's forked tongue.

The story of the dragon spread beyond the seas as far as China. The Chinese Emperor hearing of the precious gem wanted it for himself. He decided to send his sons, Wong Wang Kong and Wong Song Ping to get it.

When the brothers reached Borneo and came to Mount Kinabalu, they came to realise the difficulty of the task. Frustrated by their futile attempts Wong Wang Kong gave up but Wong Song Ping persevered on. He made a colourful Chinese lantern that glowed like a fabulous gem when lit. He then made a giant kite and waited for the moment the dragon would look for food and leave the jewel unguarded. When the time came he mounted the kite with help of his men. The kite rose up till it reached the mouth of the dragon cave and he quickly switched the gem with the lantern.

When the dragon returned, he realised he had been tricked. Quickly he swam toward the departing ships. The men thought they would perish but Wong Song Ping had another bright idea. He ordered his men to heat up canon balls until it was red hot and launched them at the dragon.

## THE KINABALU DRAGON'S GEM

Longing for its gleaming toy, the dragon caught and swallowed one of the glowing balls. Seared by the heat and heavy with the iron within him, the dragon sank below the waters.

The brothers continued on to China. When they reached their homeland Wong Wang Kong, who was consumed with jealousy seized the jewel from his younger brother and presented the gem to their father. He told of their successful mission omitting Wong Song Ping's heroic efforts to get the stone.

Angry and disappointed by his brother's actions, Wong Song Ping left China. He set sail and allowed the monsoon to take him away. He finally reached the coast of Brunei where he anchored. The Sultan of Brunei heard of his arrival and sent his brother to receive him.

Today, Mount Kinabalu is one of the most popular mountains to climb in the world. Located less than 10 kilometres from Ranau and 90 kilometres from Kota Kinabalu it receives over 100,000 visitors annually. Visitors to Mount Kinabalu should also visit the Poring Hot Springs located nearby. First developed by the Japanese during World War II, the hot spring water contains sulphur, which is believed to have curative properties.



Trekking Mount Kinabalu



Mount Kinabalu