

# MAHSURI...

## A WOMAN WRONGED

The most famous legend to emerge from Langkawi Island is of Mahsuri, a ravishing maiden who lived over 400 years ago.

The tale begins with a childless couple that prayed for a child of their own. Their prayers were answered when they were blessed with a beautiful daughter they named Mahsuri. Mahsuri grew into a beautiful and captivating woman that captured the heart of Mat Deris, the son of Langkawi's ruler.

Mat Deris and Mahsuri married. However, their idyllic lives were disrupted when Mat Deris, went off to Siam to trade. After his departure, Mahsuri was lonely and yearned for company. In his absence, she befriended a travelling minstrel named Deramang.



*A replica of Mahsuri's house*



*Mahsuri's tomb*

Mahsuri's friendship with Deramang soon gave rise to vicious gossip, as many villagers believed she was a faithless wife. Mahsuri's mother-in-law, jealous of her beauty, falsely accused Mahsuri of committing adultery. Enraged by her alleged affair, Mahsuri's father-in-law, Dato' Seri Kerma Jaya, who was secretly enamoured with Mahsuri ordered that she be captured and immediately put to death.

Mahsuri was caught and tied to a tree. Protesting her innocence, she begged for mercy. Her executioners ignored her pleas and threw spears at her. Their efforts were useless, as Mahsuri remained uninjured. Resigned that only her death would appease them, Mahsuri revealed that only the sword kept at her home could kill her. Someone fetched the sword and Mahsuri was stabbed to death. The villagers were shocked to discover white blood flowed from Mahsuri's wounds signifying her innocence. With her dying breath Mahsuri cursed the island for seven generations to come.

Soon after her death, Siam invaded Langkawi. To protect the island, Dato' Seri Kerma Jaya decided to starve the Siamese soldiers by burning all the rice on the island at Padang Mat Sirat. A foolish act, for soon the people of Langkawi were faced with starvation. Dato' Seri Kerma Jaya and his family were killed during the battle.

Decades after Mahsuri's death, Langkawi became an island plagued by misfortune. Many believed Mahsuri's curse had truly befallen the island. Mahsuri was laid to rest near the main town of Kuah. Her tomb aptly named *Kota Mahsuri* is now a famous tourist attraction. Many come to Langkawi to experience and see the evidence of this heart-rending legend. Kota Mahsuri is made of fine white marble that is surrounded by white walls – a clear reminder of her innocence. Here, visitors can read the full story at her tomb or view a recorded interpretation of the legend at the museum in Kota Mahsuri, which opens from 8am – 6.30pm, daily.

Not far from her tomb visitors can also visit the well, where she washed and bathed known as *Telaga Mahsuri* (Mahsuri's Well). Even the burnt rice grains can still be seen on the ground at Padang Mat Sirat till this very day. Mahsuri's life and sad story is also commemorated at Mahsuri Memorial located near Padang Mat Sirat where she was unjustly executed.



*Mahsuri's headstone*



*Mahsuri's well*