



The Maiden Stone viewed from Lake of the Pregnant Maiden

## THE MAGICAL LAKE OF THE PREGNANT MAIDEN

Another prominent Langkawi legend is a story of a pregnant maiden or *Dayang Bunting*. The legend is intricately intertwined with the amorous exploit of Mat Teja, a male genie, and Mambang Sari, a beautiful female sprite.

Mambang Sari and her maids loved to frolic at a cove called Teluk Lawak. One day, as he was passing through, Mat Teja caught a glimpse of Mambang Sari and was struck by her beauty that he instantaneously fell passionately in love. Fearing his love might not be reciprocated he sought Tok Dian's advice, the local sage (*Dian* is old Malay for candle). To win her heart, Tok Dian informed Mat Teja to wipe his face with mermaid tears. After following the instructions diligently, Mat Teja swiftly sought after the love of his life. When Mambang Sari saw him, she fell in love immediately and before long, they were happily married.

During her pregnancy, Mambang Sari sojourned at a serene lake, now famously known as *Tasik Dayang Bunting* or Lake of the Pregnant Maiden. Soon it was time for Mambang Sari to give birth but the baby died seven days later. In intense sorrow, she laid the body to rest in the deep lake. Since then, villagers began to associate the lake with magical powers. They believed the lake's water possessed mystical ability of healing barren women.

As time went on, another legend that is closely connected to the magical powers of the lake emerged. A powerful King came with his hunting entourage. Upon reaching the lake, Dayang Telani, the King's maid drank from it. Suddenly, tempestuous wind, thunder and lightning raged across the land. Soon after, Dayang Telani was expecting but the King was furious because her child was not naturally conceived. As a punishment, she was sent to reside alone at the lake and there she gave birth to a handsome boy.

One day, she spotted a boat and as she longingly looked on, her toddler accidentally drowned in the lake. In her distress, Dayang Telani pleaded with the magical force of the lake to save her boy and take her instead. Immediately, at the very spot the boy drowned, emerged a white crocodile and Dayang Telani was instantly transformed into a rock, now known as *Batu Dayang* or Maiden Stone, which looks like the shape of a maiden lying on her back. Locals also believe the white crocodile occasionally seen guarding the lake is actually Dayang Telani's son. Though many have allegedly caught sight of the white crocodile, it is held that only the pure and innocent may do so.

Located in an island south of Langkawi, *Tasik Dayang Bunting* is Langkawi's largest freshwater lake. Equipped with modern conveniences, the lake is a cool and enjoyable destination for picnics, water biking, swimming, canoeing or just basking in the lushness of its surrounding beauty.



Visitors taking a pleasurable boat ride on the lake