

MONSOPIAD

THE LEGENDARY WARRIOR





Skull trophies of the headhunters

Long ago, Kizabon, the daughter of the Kuai Village's headman, was blessed with a baby boy named Monsopiad. During her pregnancy, her husband, Dunggou, realised a sacred *Bugang* bird had nested and laid eggs on the roof of their house. Such a good omen was a sign that their child would possess extraordinary abilities. When their child was born, the *Bugang* eggs hatched. Every day, the couple bathed their baby together with the young *Bugang* chicks, a routine they observed until the sacred birds were able to fly.

A natural fighter that handled every weapon with ease, Monsopiad soon grew into a handsome and promising warrior. Unfortunately, Monsopiad grew in trying times. The vicious Balinini pirates often came down from Marudu to plunder his village. Like many small villages, Kuai offered little defence. During each raid, the villagers cowered and hid in the jungle until it was safe to return.

One day, as Monsopiad was tilling his father's paddy field, a group of women started taunting him for working so hard for the benefit of the marauding pirates. The women continued to provoke, calling the village men weaklings that were unable to protect their village effectively. Enraged, Monsopiad swore that he would hunt and kill all the pirates. As proof he promised to cut off the head of the pirate leader. Before he left, he threatened to kill the mocking ladies if they failed to honour his return as a grand warrior.

Monsopiad went after the pillaging pirates with three boys as witnesses. Once he found them, a violent fight ensued. After fighting ceaselessly for days,

Monsopiad finally fought the pirate chief. The special strength bestowed on him by the sacred *Bugang* bird helped him defeat and behead the cruel chief. The three boys sped back to Kuai to announce Monsopiad's victory and herald his impending arrival.

When the village women heard the news, they were terrified, for they had never welcomed a warrior home. Fortunately, the *Bobohizan* priestesses knew what to do and dressed the women in their best costumes and fineries, and led them in a procession bearing bamboo trays to ensure that the spirits surrounding Monsopiad would know they were honoured, too. Their songs of victory welcomed Monsopiad and inspired him to continue vanquishing all the enemies of his village.

To honour the memory of the great Kadazan Warrior Monsopiad, the Kadazans erected a small village to ensure future generations could experience the Kadazan's fascinating heritage and thrilling legends. His direct descendants built the Monsopiad Cultural Village with authentic traditional materials as a tribute to the KadazanDusun heritage. Visitors can use public transportation from Kota Kinabalu city direct to Monsopiad Cultural Village or utilise the village's shuttle service that collects and drops-off visitors from selected locations. Open daily from 9am to 6pm, the village also offers guided tours, cultural shows and unique wedding packages. For more information, go to www.monsopiad.com



KadazanDusun couple in traditional attire